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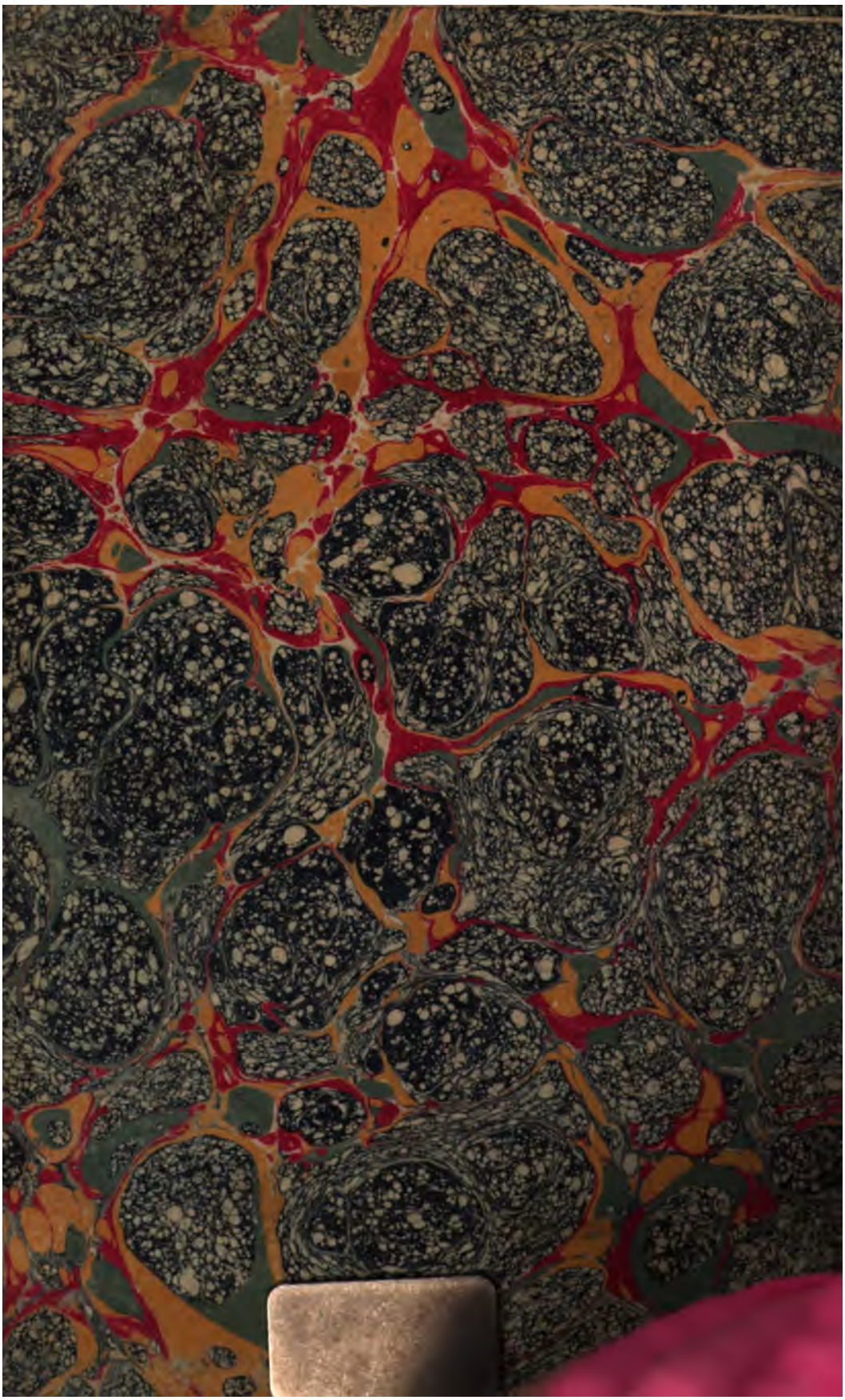

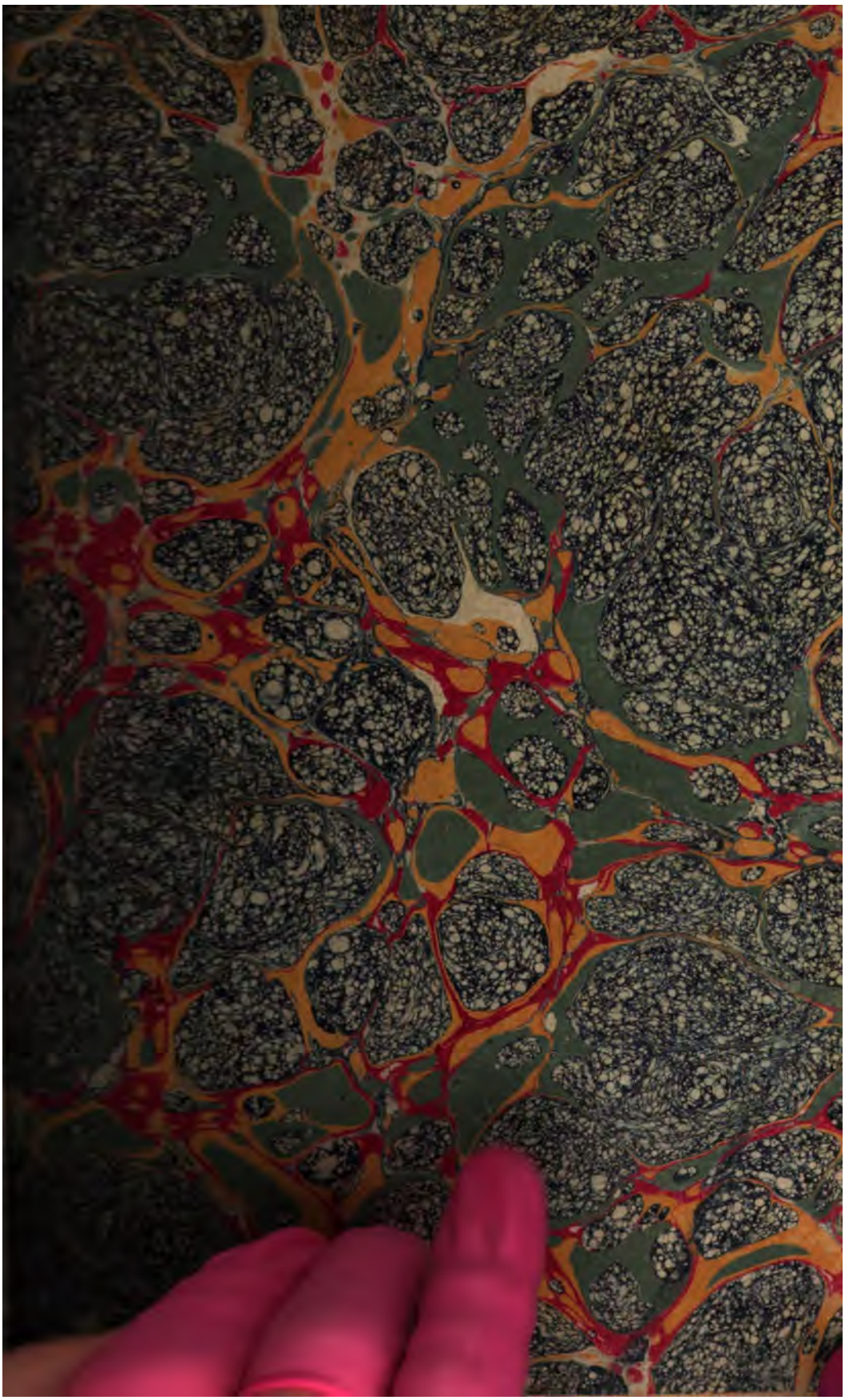

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THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

BRITISH DRAMA;

COMPREHENDING

THE BEST PLAYS

IN

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

TRAGEDIES.

LONDON,

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM MILLER, OLD BOND-STREET.

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PREFACE

OF

THE EDITOR.

It is peculiarly pleasing to trace the history of every science through its progressive changes. The examination of each distinct epoch, and of every individual amendment, tends to gratify the curiosity; while a comparison of the first rude attempts with the grandeur of modern improvements cannot fail to awaken emulation, and inspirit all our efforts, in the career of literary advancement. These observations will be found to apply, with peculiar justice, to the Dramatic Art. For, on perusing the finished productions of the modern drama, we can scarcely believe, that this splendid style of composition owes its origin to the wild and uncouth ballads of strolling singers in Greece, who met at certain seasons of the year, to celebrate the festival of Bacchus. Yet no fact is better authenticated in history, than that Tragedy derives its existence from the choral songs in honour of that god.

The Chorus, as these singers were afterwards called, whether composed of itinerant rhapsodists, or appropriate minstrels, confined their effusions, in the first instance, to the praise of the deity, whom they met to celebrate; and, as the entertainment was yet entirely musical, the festival consisted of an uninterrupted flow of song, till the 536th year before the Christian æra, when Thespis conceived the design of introducing an actor, to amuse the people by recitation, while the chorus enjoyed a few moments of repose. This bold innovation was followed by others, still more daring, which led to unforeseen and incalculable improvements. Æschylus introduced a second actor, who

conversed with the first, and thus laid the foundation of dramatic dialogue. But, as the *dramatis personæ* increased, the subject of their discourse also gradually underwent a change. At first, the praise of other heroes was interwoven with that of Bacchus. As the dialogue became more extensive, it became more interesting; till, at length, the chorus, from a principal, began to be considered as a subordinate part; and Bacchus, from being the hero of every line, lost, by degrees, his ascendancy in the entertainment, till, at length, he was altogether set aside; and subjects of general history, dramatically disposed, now entirely supplied the place of bare dithyrambics. These important changes, begun by Thespis, were improved and confirmed by Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the illustrious dramatic triumvirate of Greece, who were justly the favourites of their own times, and whose works have been handed down to posterity with the accumulated admiration of each succeeding age.

Notwithstanding, however, the fame which the works of these illustrious tragedians so justly enjoy, an accurate inquiry into the laws of the Grecian drama, will prove it to have been marred by a singular defect, from which the more judicious compositions of modern times are happily exempt. We have already observed, that, as the dialogue of the drama improved and extended itself, the chorus, which had given birth to it, sunk in importance, and, at last, became altogether unnecessary. Yet Tragedy, in the full maturity of its ancient splendour, as if afraid of giving the parricidal blow, never ventured to cut off the chorus, though it had now become a useless and embarrassing appendage of the stage, no less an enemy to verisimilitude, than a bar to scenic variety. For, as the persons, who composed it, never quitted the stage, they were the auditors and spectators of all that passed, the necessary confidants of all parties; by which means probability was violated, and the common characteristics of human nature confounded and lost. What, indeed, can be more incredible, than that Phœdra should trust her incestuous passion, or Medea her murderous revenge, to an undistinguished troop of attendants? In addition to this, the constant presence of the choral band imposed on the dramatist the necessity of preserving the unities of time and place. The scene could not be changed, when the stage was never clear; nor the time of action prolonged beyond that of the representation. Accordingly, we find (with a few exceptions) that, in the Greek tragedy, the place is never varied, the action never suspended, and the dramatic time exactly commensurate with the time

of performance. Such inconveniences may, in some measure, be surmounted by the first masters; but, in other hands, must necessarily have the effect of rendering the piece barren of incident, languid, and uninteresting. It is then to the taste and genius of later times, that we are indebted for the more finished productions of the Tragic Muse. As the first grand and necessary step in improvement, the modern dramatist disbanded the chorus, and thus released himself from the shackles of ancient thraldom. He is no longer obliged to make a court-yard, or the street, or the sea-shore, serve for the same dull scene through the whole performance. He is no longer forced to measure his time by the hour-glass: for, as the falling curtain, at stated intervals, suspends the action, and clears the stage, the imagination of the audience is, as it were, in the hands of the poet, and the lapse of minutes can easily be fancied the flight of hours. Thus, then, the tragic writer of our days, though he still observe the unity of action, as necessary to just delineation of character, and progressive developement of plot, has seized on a greater latitude of time and place, by which he is enabled to throw more variety of scene, intrigue, incident, and action, into his piece. The examination of any modern tragedy will illustrate the truth of these assertions. In Gustavus Vasa, for instance, the action first lies in the copper-mines, then in the mountains of Dalecarlia; now in the camp, now in its precincts. And in Philaster, if we include the various apartments of the palace, the scene changes no less than twelve times. It is by this single power over place, that the modern dramatist is enabled so to involve his argument and aggregate events, as to arrest attention by multiplicity of incident, interest by perplexity of plot, and surprize by unexpected catastrophe. To employ such extensive materials, and include such variety of occurrence, in one scene, would be impossible: and all the interest of an English tragedy, nay, the tragedy itself, would be annihilated in an attempt to adjust it to the ancient model.

Besides the advantages already enumerated, we possess, in the passion of love, a rich and invaluable mine of dramatic gold, so little explored by the ancients, that that tender sentiment does not form the foundation-plot of more than one of the Greek tragedies. And this will appear the less surprising, when we contemplate the amazing distance, at which women were kept in those primæval times; and recollect, that female performers were not allowed on the stage. Happily for us, juster notions of human nature, and purer feelings of generous attachment, have so interwoven and blended us in one com-

mon interest with the fair sex, that their pleasures and pains are ours, nay, rise pre-eminent over those of man, and never fail to excite a more lively sympathy. Accordingly, though overlooked by the ancients, to what interesting scenes does the passion of love give birth in the hands of a Southern, a Congreve, and an Otway? Is it possible to view the romantic feelings of Isabella, without sentiments of admiration and sympathetic sorrow? Where shall we find, in tragedy, a scene more truly affecting, than the tenderness and distress of Castalio, in the fine interview with Monimia, in the fifth act of the Orphan? Can any thing be imagined so exquisite, as the picture of conjugal affection, and persisting fidelity, in the characters of Almeria and Belvidera?

Having thus vindicated the superior excellencies of the modern drama against the boasted claims of Greece, it would be agreeable to the tenor of the editor's plan, and the objects he has in view, to shew, that Britain possesses as decided a pre-eminence, in this branch of literature, over contemporary nations, as she does over remote antiquity. An examination into the state of the various theatres of Europe would incontestably prove the truth of this remark. But, as our right to the dramatic palm has never been disputed, such an inquiry seems unnecessary. It remains, therefore, to explain the motives, which led the editor to the present undertaking.

Impressed with the highest admiration of our Tragic Muse, the editor conceived, that a collection of her best works would be highly acceptable to the public, on account of the difficulty, that at present exists, of procuring the favourite productions of the stage in a convenient form. For many of our best tragedies are not to be obtained, except in a detached state, and others are only to be found in a complete edition of the works of the respective author. So that, a lover of the drama is reduced to the necessity, either of scattering his room with heaps of pamphlets, or loading his shelves with numerous volumes, of which the dramatic contents bear but a small proportion to the bulk of foreign matter. It is the purpose of publications like the present to obviate these inconveniences. But his predecessors, in this humble walk of literature, have given to the world miscellanies, rather than selections: they have frequently jumbled together, in the same volume, Tragedy, Comedy, and Farce, without attention either to choice or arrangement. They have preferred without taste, and distributed without judgment. So that, in such volumes, it is no uncommon thing to see the "Lying Valet" precede "Cato," and the "Roman Father" following "Miss in her Teens."

But, as Tragedy and Comedy possess entirely distinct characters, the former being intimately related to epic poetry, and rising above it in lofty style and sublime imagery, while the latter is the most perfect, as it more resembles common conversation, it has been thought more classical to publish performances, so essentially different from each other, in distinct volumes, rather than confound them in heterogeneous combination. The editor has therefore prepared one volume of Tragedies, another of Comedies, and a third of Farces and Operas, which, *together*, will, it is presumed, be found to constitute a commodious, cheap, and judicious theatrical library, while the public will find the advantage of arrangement, in being able to procure either volume *separately*, if there should be any persons, who exclusively prefer either species of composition. The man of sentiment and the humourist can now suit themselves according to their respective tastes. Nor is Heraclitus obliged to buy glees, nor Democritus ditties, bound up with the appropriate objects of their individual pursuit. Even those, who are equally admirers of the Comic and Tragic Muse, will find a convenience in this division, as they will hereby be better enabled to gratify the inclination of the moment, whether it tend to the grave or gay. And, as each play has been chronologically arranged, the reflecting mind will be able to see the progressive changes, that have taken place in dramatic composition, and mark the distinct æra of improvement.

Such, then, have been the motives of this publication, and the principles which have guided the editor in its arrangement. If the execution be answerable to his own wishes and intentions, this volume of *Tragedies* may serve as a register of national genius. For dramatic composition, of this kind, as it is the most valuable, so is it the most difficult of all the species of poetry: it demands the most bold and vigorous conceptions, the most rich imagery, tender description, and impassioned language; it imposes a restraint on the inordinate flights of poetic enthusiasm, and forbids imagination to overstep the lines of character, or soar beyond the regions of probability. Yet this is not all, that is required of the Tragic writer. It is not sufficient, that he be poetical and chaste, unless his plot be so conducted as to excite a perpetual interest; the incidents must seem to retard, while they hurry on, the main object; and neither glowing thoughts, nor melodious numbers, will compensate for tediousness of dialogue. Criticism, in no instance, dispenses with the observance of these rules. And while Dryden and Lee are condemned for extravagant thoughts and glowing superfluities,

Thomson and Johnson have not escaped censure for nakedness of plot, and the want of a rapid succession of unexpected incidents. In a style of composition, therefore, which requires such concentrated talents to succeed, a bold imagination to conceive, and a correct taste to execute, it is thought that a selection of the best performances may be justly admitted as the testimony of national genius; and in the specimens which are now submitted to the public, the editor is confident, that the manifold beauties will not only gratify the taste, but flatter the patriot-pride of an English reader, when he contemplates, in their unrivalled excellencies, the literary superiority of Britain, not only over ancient Greece, but over all the kingdoms of modern Europe.

It was the editor's wish to insert a few of the best of Shakespeare's plays in these volumes, but several causes have prevented it: the difficulty of selection, the number that are truly excellent, and the universal practice of publishing his immortal works in a body by themselves. Besides, there is already an edition of his plays, in a form similar to the present, which, with these volumes, will form a complete BRITISH DRAMA.

LONDON,
January, 1804.

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THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

MAID'S TRAGEDY.

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

KING.
LYSIPPUS, *brother to the king.*
AMINTOR, *a noble gentleman.*
MELANTIUS, } *brothers to Evadne.*
DIPHILUS, }
CALIANAX, *an old humourous lord, and father to Aspatia.*
CLEON, } *gentlemen.*
STRATO, }
DIAGORAS, *a servant to Calianax.*

WOMEN.

EVADNE, *wife to Amintor.*
ASPATIA, *troth-plight wife to Amintor.*
ANTIPHILA, } *waiting gentlewomen to Aspatia.*
OLYMPIAS, }
DULA, *a lady.*
NIGHT, }
CYNTHIA, } *masquers.*
NEPTUNE, }
ÆOLUS, }

Scene,—Rhodes.

ACT I.

Enter CLEON, STRATO, LYSIPPUS, *and* DIPHILUS.

Cleon. THE rest are making ready, sir.

Lys. So let them; there is time enough.

Diph. You are the brother to the king, my lord; we will take your word.

Lys. Strato, thou hast some skill in poetry: What think'st thou of the masque? Will it be well?

Strat. As well as masque can be.

Lys. As masque can be?

Strat. Yes; they must commend their king, and speak in praise of the assembly; bless the bride and bridegroom, in person of some god. They are tied to rules of flattery.

Cle. See, good my lord, who is returned!

Enter MELANTIUS.

Lys. Noble Melantius! the land, by me,
Welcomes thy virtues home to Rhodes.
Thou, that with blood abroad buyest us our peace!
The breath of kings is like the breath of gods;
My brother wished thee here, and thou art here.
He will be too kind, and weary thee with
Often welcomes. But the time doth give thee
A welcome above his, or all the world's.

Mel. My lord, my thanks; but these scratch'd limbs of mine
Have spoke my love and truth unto my friends,
More than my tongue e'er could. My mind's the same
It ever was to you: Where I find worth

I love the keeper till he let it go,
And then I follow it.
Diph. Hail, worthy brother!
He, that rejoices not at your return
In safety, is mine enemy for ever.
Mel. I thank thee, Diphilus. But thou art faulty;
I sent for thee to exercise thine arms
With me at Patria: Thou cam'st not, Diphilus;
It was ill.
Diph. My noble brother, my excuse
Is my king's straight command; which you, my lord,
Can witness with me.
Lys. It is true, Melantius;
He might not come, till the solemnity
Of this great match was past.
Diph. Have you heard of it?
Mel. Yes. I have given cause to those, that
Envy my deeds abroad, to call me gamesome:
I have no other business here at Rhodes.
Lys. We have a masque to-night, and you must tread
A soldier's measure.
Mel. These soft and silken wars are not for me:
The music must be shrill, and all confused,
That stirs my blood; and then I dance with arms.
But is Amintor wed?
Diph. This day.
Mel. All joys upon him! for he is my friend.
Wonder not, that I call a man so young my friend:
His worth is great; valiant he is, and temperate;
And one that never thinks his life his own,
If his friend need it. When he was a boy,
As oft as I returned (as, without boast,
I brought home conquest) he would gaze upon me,
And view me round, to find in what one limb
The virtue lay to do those things he heard.
Then would he wish to see my sword, and feel
The quickness of the edge, and in his hand
Weigh it: He oft would make me smile at this.
His youth did promise much, and his ripe years
Will see it all performed.

Enter ASPATIA, *passing by.*

Hail, maid and wife!
Thou fair Aspatia, may the holy knot,
That thou hast tied to-day, last till the hand
Of age undo it! mayest thou bring a race
Unto Amintor, that may fill the world
Successively with soldiers!
Asp. My hard fortunes
Deserve not scorn; for I was never proud,
When they were good. [*Exit.*
Mel. How is this?
Lys. You are mistaken,
For she is not married.
Mel. You said Amintor was,
Diph. It is true; but——
Mel. Pardon me, I did receive
Letters at Patria from my Amintor,
That he should marry her.
Diph. And so it stood
In all opinion long; but your arrival
Made me imagine, you had heard the change.
Mel. Who hath he taken then?
Lys. A lady, sir,
That bears the light above her, and strikes dead
With flashes of her eye: the fair Evadne,
Your virtuous sister.
Mel. Peace of heart betwixt them!
But this is strange.
Lys. The king my brother did it
To honour you; and these solemnities
Are at his charge.
Mel. It is royal, like himself. But I am sad
My speech bears so unfortunate a sound
To beautiful Aspatia. There is rage
Hid in her father's breast, Calianax,
Bent long against me; and he should not think,
If I could call it back, that I would take
So base revenges, as to scorn the state
Of his neglected daughter. Holds he still
His greatness with the king?
Lys. Yes. But this lady
Walks discontented, with her watery eyes
Bent on the earth. The unfrequented woods
Are her delight; and, when she sees a bank
Stuck full of flowers, she, with a sigh, will tell
Her servants, what a pretty place it were
To bury lovers in; and make her maids
Pluck them, and strew her over like a corse.
She carries with her an infectious grief,
That strikes all her beholders; she will sing
The mournfullest things, that ever ear hath heard,
And sigh, and sing again; and, when the rest
Of our young ladies, in their wanton blood,
Tell mirthful tales in course, that fill the room
With laughter, she will, with so sad a look,
Bring forth a story of the silent death
Of some forsaken virgin, which her grief
Will put in such a phrase, that, ere she end,
She'll send them weeping one by one away.
Mel. She has a brother under my command,
Like her; a face as womanish as hers;
But with a spirit, that hath much out-grown
The number of his years.

Enter AMINTOR.

Cle. My lord, the bridegroom!
Mel. I might run fiercely, not more hastily,
Upon my foe. I love thee well, Amintor;
My mouth is much too narrow for my heart;
I joy to look upon those eyes of thine;
Thou art my friend, but my disorder'd speech
Cuts off my love.
Amin. Thou art Melantius;
All love is spoke in that. A sacrifice,
To thank the gods Melantius is return'd
In safety! Victory sits on his sword,
As she was wont: May she build there and dwell;
And may thy armour be, as it hath been,
Only thy valour and thy innocence!
What endless treasures would our enemies give,
That I might hold thee still thus!
Mel. I am but poor
In words; but credit me, young man, thy mother

Could do no more but weep for joy to see thee
After long absence: All the wounds, I have,
Fetch'd not so much away, nor all the cries
Of widowed mothers. But this is peace,
And that was war.

Amin. Pardon, thou holy god
Of marriage-bed, and frown not; I am forc'd,
In answer of such noble tears as those,
To weep upon my wedding-day.

Mel. I fear thou art grown too fickle; for I hear
A lady mourns for thee; men say, to death;
Forsaken of thee; on what terms I know not.

Amin. She had my promise; but the king forbad it,
And made me make this worthy change, thy sister,
Accompanied with graces far above her;
With whom I long to lose my lusty youth,
And grow old in her arms.

Mel. Be prosperous!

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, the masquers rage for you.

Lys. We are gone. Cleon, Strato, Diphilus—

Amin. We will all attend you. We shall trouble you
With our solemnities.

Mel. Not so, Amintor:
But if you laugh at my rude carriage
In peace, I'll do as much for you in war,
When you come thither. Yet I have a mistress
To bring to your delights; rough though I am,
I have a mistress, and she has a heart,
She says; but, trust me, it is stone, no better;
There is no place, that I can challenge in it.
But you stand still, and here my way lies.

Enter CALIANAX *with* DIAGORAS.

Cal. Diagoras, look to the doors better, for shame! you let in all the world, and anon the king will rail at me—why, very well said—by Jove, the king will have the show in the court.

Diag. Why do you swear so, my lord? You know, he will have it here.

Cal. By this light, if he be wise, he will not.

Diag. And, if he will not be wise, you are forsworn.

Cal. One may wear out his heart with swearing, and get thanks on no side. I'll be gone—look to it, who will.

Diag. My lord, I shall never keep them out. Pray, stay; your looks will terrify them.

Cal. My looks terrify them, you coxcombly ass, you! I will be judged by all the company, whether thou hast not a worse face than I.

Diag. I mean, because they know you and your office.

Cal. Office! I would I could put it off: I am sure I sweat quite through my office. I might have made room at my daughter's wedding: they have near killed her among them; and now I must do service for him, that hath forsaken her. Serve, that will. [*Exit.*

Diag. He is so humourous since his daughter was forsaken.—Hark, hark! there, there! so, so! Codes, Codes! [*Knock within.*] What now?

Mel. [*within.*] Open the door.

Diag. Who is there?

Mel. [*within*] Melantius.

Diag. I hope your lordship brings no troop with you; for, if you do, I must return them.

Enter MELANTIUS *and a Lady.*

Mel. None but this lady, sir.

Diag. The ladies are all placed above, save those, that come in the king's troop: The best of Rhodes sit there, and there is room.

Mel. I thank you, sir. When I have seen you placed, madam, I must attend the king; but, the masque done, I'll wait on you again.

Diag. Stand back there—room for my lord Melantius—pray, bear back—this is no place for such youths and their trulls—let the doors shut again.—No!—do your heads itch? I will scratch them for you.—So, now thrust and hang.—Again! who is it now?—I cannot blame my lord Calianax for going away: Would he were here! he would run raging among them, and break a dozen wiser heads than his own, in the twinkling of an eye.—What's the news now?

Within.] I pray you, can you help me to the speech of the master-cook?

Diag. If I open the door, I will cook some of your calves heads. Peace, rogues!—Again! who is it?

Mel. [*within.*] Melantius.

Enter CALIANAX.

Cal. Let him not in.

Diag. O, my lord, I must. Make room there for my lord.

Enter MELANTIUS.

Is your lady placed? [*To Mel.*

Mel. Yes, sir,
I thank you. My lord Calianax, well met.
Your causeless hate to me, I hope, is buried.

Cal. Yes, I do service for your sister here,
That brings my own poor child to timeless death:
She loves your friend Amintor; such another
False-hearted lord as you.

Mel. You do me wrong,
A most unmanly one, and I am slow
In taking vengeance! But be well advised.

Cal. It may be so. Who placed the lady there,
So near the presence of the king?

Mel. I did.

Cal. My lord, she must not sit there.

Mel. Why?

Cal. The place is kep for women of more worth.

Mel. More worth than she? It mis-becomes your age,
And place, to be thus womanish. Forbear!
What you have spoke, I am content to think
The palsy shook your tongue to.

Cal. Why, it is well, if I stand here to place men's wenches.

Mel. I shall forget this place, thy age, my safety,
And, thorough all, cut that poor sickly week,
Thou hast to live, away from thee.

Cal. Nay, I know you can fight for your whore.

Mel. Bate the king, and be he flesh and blood,
He lies, that says it! Thy mother at fifteen
Was black and sinful to her.
Diag. Good my lord!
Mel. Some god pluck threescore years from that fond man,
That I may kill him, and not stain mine honour.
It is the curse of soldiers, that in peace
They shall be braved by such ignoble men,
As, if the land were troubled, would with tears
And knees beg succour from them. 'Would, that blood,
That sea of blood, that I have lost in fight,
Were running in thy veins, that it might make thee
Apt to say less, or able to maintain,
Should'st thou say more! This Rhodes, I see, is nought
But a place privileged to do men wrong.
Cal. Ay, you may say your pleasure.

Enter AMINTOR.

Amin. What vile injury
Has stirred my worthy friend, who is as slow
To fight with words as he is quick of hand?
Mel. That heap of age, which I should reverence,
If it were temperate; but testy years
Are most contemptible.
Amin. Good sir, forbear.
Cal. There is just such another as yourself.
Amin. He will wrong you, or me, or any man,
And talk as if he had no life to lose,
Since this our match. The king is coming in:
I would not for more wealth than I enjoy,
He should perceive you raging. He did hear
You were at difference now, which hastened him.
Cal. Make room there! [*Hautboys play within.*

Enter KING, EVADNE, ASPATIA, *lords, and ladies.*

King. Melantius, thou art welcome, and my love
Is with thee still: But this is not a place
To brabble in. Calianax, join hands.
Cal. He shall not have my hand.
King. This is no time
To force you to it. I do love you both:
Calianax, you look well to your office;
And you, Melantius, are welcome home.
Begin the masque!
Mel. Sister, I joy to see you, and your choice.
You looked with my eyes, when you took that man:
Be happy in him! [*Recorders play.*
Evad. O, my dearest brother!
Your presence is more joyful than this day
Can be unto me.

THE MASQUE.

Night rises in mists.

Night. Our reign is come; for in the raging sea
The sun is drowned, and with him fell the day.
Bright Cinthia, hear my voice; I am the Night,
For whom thou bear'st about thy borrowed light.
Appear; no longer thy pale visage shroud,
But strike thy silver horns quite through a cloud,
And send a beam upon my swarthy face;
By which I may discover all the place
And persons, and how many longing eyes
Are come to wait on our solemnities.

Enter CINTHIA.

How dull and black am I! I could not find
This beauty without thee, I am so blind.
Methinks, they shew like to those eastern streaks,
That warn us hence, before the morning breaks.
Back, my pale servant, for these eyes know how
To shoot far more and quicker rays than thou.
Cinth. Great queen, they be a troop, for whom alone
One of my clearest moons I have put on;
A troop, that looks as if thyself and I
Had plucked our reins in, and our whips laid by,
To gaze upon these mortals, that appear
Brighter than we.
Night. Then let us keep them here;
And never more our chariots drive away,
But hold our places, and out-shine the day.
Cinth. Great queen of shadows, you are pleased to speak
Of more than may be done: We may not break
The gods' decrees; but, when our time is come,
Must drive away, and give the day our room.
Night. Then shine at full, fair queen, and by thy power
Produce a birth, to crown this happy hour,
Of nymphs and shepherds: Let their songs discover,
Easy and sweet, who is a happy lover.
Or, if thou woo't, then call thine own Endymion,
From the sweet flowery bed he lies upon,
On Latmus' top, thy pale beams drawn away;
And of this long night let him make a day.
Cinth. Thou dream'st, dark queen; that fair boy was not mine,
Nor went I down to kiss him. Ease and wine
Have bred these bold tales: Poets, when they rage,
Turn gods to men, and make an hour an age.
But I will give a greater state and glory,
And raise to time a noble memory
Of what these lovers are. Rise, rise, I say,
Thou power of deeps; thy surges lade away,
Neptune, great king of waters, and by me
Be proud to be commanded.

NEPTUNE *rises.*

Nept. Cinthia, see,
Thy word hath fetch'd me hither: Let me know,
Why I ascend?
Cinth. Doth this majestic show
Give thee no knowledge yet?
Nept. Yes, now I see
Something intended, Cinthia, worthy thee.
Go on; I'll be a helper.
Cinth. Hie thee, then,
And charge the wind fly from his rocky den.
Let loose thy subjects; only Boreas,
Too foul for our intention, as he was,
Still keep him fast chained: We must have none here
But vernal blasts, and gentle winds appear;

Such as blow flowers, and thro' the glad boughs sing
Many soft welcomes to the lusty spring:
These are our music. Next, thy watery race
Bring on in couples (we are pleased to grace
This noble night), each in their richest things
Your own deeps, or the broken vessel, brings.
Be prodigal, and I shall be as kind,
And shine at full upon you.

Nept. Ho! the wind-
Commanding Æolus!

Enter ÆOLUS, *out of a rock.*

Æol. Great Neptune?

Nept. He.

Æol. What is thy will?

Nept. We do command thee free
Favonius, and thy milder winds, to wait
Upon our Cinthia; but tie Boreas straight;
He's too rebellious.

Æol. I shall do it.

Nept. Do.———

Æol. Great master of the flood, and all below,
Thy full command has taken.——Ho! the Main!
Neptune!

Nept. Here.

Æol. Boreas has broke his chain,
And, struggling, with the rest has got away.

Nept. Let him alone, I'll take him up at sea;
He will not long be thence. Go once again,
And call out of the bottoms of the main
Blue Proteus, and the rest; charge them put on
Their greatest pearls, and the most sparkling stone
The beaten rock breeds; 'till this night is done
By me a solemn honour to the moon.
Fly, like a full sail.

Æol. I am gone.

Cinth. Dark Night,
Strike a full silence; do a thorough right
To this great chorus; that our music may
Touch high as heaven, and make the east break day
At mid-night. [*Music.*

SONG.

Cinthia, to thy power and thee,
We obey.
Joy to this great company!
And no day
Come to steal this night away,
'Till the rites of love are ended;
And the lusty bridegroom say,
Welcome, light, of all befriended.

Pace out, you watery powers below;
Let your feet,
Like the gallies when they row,
Even beat.
Let your unknown measures, set
To the still winds, tell to all,
That gods are come, immortal, great,
To honour this great nuptial.
[The measure.

SONG.

Hold back thy hours, dark Night, till we have done:
The day will come too soon;
Young maids will curse thee, if thou steal'st away,
And leav'st their losses open to the day:
Stay, stay, and hide
The blushes of the bride.
Stay, gentle Night, and with thy darkness cover
The kisses of her lover.
Stay, and confound her tears, and her shrill cryings,
Her weak denials, vows, and often dyings;
Stay, and hide all,
But help not, tho' she call.

Nept. Great queen of us and heaven, hear what I bring
To make this hour a full one,
If not o'ermeasure.

Cinth. Speak, sea's king.

Nept. The tunes my Amphitrite joys to have,
When they will dance upon the rising wave,
And court me as she sails. My tritons, play
Music to lead a storm; I'll lead the way.
[*Measure.*

SONG.

To bed, to bed; come Hymen, lead the bride,
And lay her by her husband's side:
Bring in the virgins every one,
That grieve to lie alone;
That they may kiss while they may say, a maid;
To-morrow, 'twill be other, kiss'd, and said.
Hesperus be long a shining,
Whilst these lovers are a-twining.

Æol. Ho! Neptune!

Nept. Æolus!

Æol. The seas go high,
Boreas hath rais'd a storm: Go and apply
Thy trident; else, I prophesy, ere day
Many a tall ship will be cast away.
Descend with all thy gods, and all their power,
To strike a calm.

Cinth. A thanks to every one, and to gratulate
So great a service, done at my desire,
Ye shall have many floods, fuller and higher
Than you have wished for; no ebb shall dare
To let the day see, where your dwellings are.
Now back unto your government in haste,
Lest your proud charge should swell above the waste,
And win upon the island.

Nept. We obey.
[*Neptune descends, and the sea gods.*

Cinth. Hold up thy head, dead Night; seest thou not day?
The east begins to lighten: I must down,
And give my brother place.

Night. Oh, I could frown
To see the Day; the Day, that flings his light
Upon my kingdom, and contemns old Night!

Let him go on and flame! I hope to see
Another wild-fire in his axletree;
And all fall drenched. But I forgot; speak, queen.
The day grows on; I must no more be seen.
Cinth. Heave up thy drowsy head again, and see
A greater light, a greater majesty,
Between our sect and us! Whip up thy team!
The day-break's here, and yon sun-flaring beam
Shot from the south. Say, which way wilt thou go?
Night. I'll vanish into mists.
Cinth. I into day. [*Exeunt.*

THE MASQUE ENDS.

King. Take lights there. Ladies, get the bride to bed.
We will not see you laid. Good night, Amintor;
We'll ease you of that tedious ceremony.
Were it my case, I should think time run slow.
Amin. All happiness to you.
King. Good night, Melantius. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

Enter EVADNE, ASPATIA, DULA, *and other ladies.*

Evad. DULA, 'Would, thou could'st instil
Some of thy mirth into Aspatia!
Nothing but sad thoughts in her breast do dwell:
Methinks, a mean betwixt you would do well.
Dula. She is in love: Hang me, if I were so,
But I could run my country. I love, too,
To do those things that people in love do.
Asp. It were a timeless smile should prove my cheek:
It were a fitter hour for me to laugh,
When at the altar the religious priest
Were pacifying the offended powers
With sacrifice, than now. This should have been
My night: and all your hands have been employed
In giving me a spotless offering
To young Amintor's bed, as we are now
For you. Pardon, Evadne; 'would, my worth
Were great as yours, or that the king, or he,
Or both, thought so! Perhaps, he found me worthless:
But, till he did so, in these ears of mine,
These credulous ears, he poured the sweetest words
That art or love could frame. If he were false,
Pardon it, Heaven! And if I did want
Virtue, you safely may forgive that too;
For I have lost none, that I had from you.
Evad. Nay, leave this sad talk, madam.
Asp. 'Would, I could! then should I leave the cause.
Evad. See, if you have not spoiled all Dula's mirth.
Asp. Thou thinkest thy heart hard; but if thou be'st caught,
Remember me; thou shalt perceive a fire
Shot suddenly into thee.
Dula. That's not so good; let them shoot any thing but fire, I fear them not.
Asp. Well, wench, thou may'st be taken.
Evad. Ladies, good night: I'll do the rest myself.
Dula. Nay, let your lord do some.

Asp. *Lay a garland on my hearse,*
Of the dismal yew.

Evad. That's one of your sad songs, madam.
Asp. Believe me, 'tis a very pretty one.
Evad. How is it, madam?

SONG.

Asp. *Lay a garland on my hearse,*
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
Say, I died true:
My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth.
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth!

Evad. Fie on it, madam! the words are so strange, they are able to make one dream of hobgoblins. 'I could never have the power:' Sing that, Dula.

Dula. *I could never have the pow'r*
To love one above an hour,
But my heart would prompt mine eye
On some other man to fly:
Venus, fix thou mine eyes fast,
Or, if not, give me all that I shall see at last.

Evad. So, leave me now.
Dula. Nay, we must see you laid.
Asp. Madam, good night. May all the marriage joys
That longing maids imagine in their beds,
Prove so unto you. May no discontent
Grow 'twixt your love and you! But, if there do,
Enquire of me, and I will guide your moan;
Teach you an artificial way to grieve,
To keep your sorrow waking. Love your lord
No worse than I; but, if you love so well,
Alas, you may displease him; so did I.
This is the last time you shall look on me.
Ladies, farewell. As soon as I am dead,
Come all, and watch one night about my hearse;
Bring each a mournful story, and a tear,
To offer at it, when I go to earth.
With flattering ivy clasp my coffin round;
Write on my brow my fortune; let my bier
Be borne by virgins, that shall sing, by course,
The truth of maids, and perjuries of men.
Evad. Alas, I pity thee. [*Exit Evad.*
Omnes. Madam, good night.
1 *Lady.* Come, we'll let in the bridegroom.
Dula. Where's my lord?

Enter AMINTOR.

1 *Lady.* Here, take this light.

Asp. Go, and be happy in your lady's love.
May all the wrongs, that you have done to me,
Be utterly forgotten in my death!
I'll trouble you no more; yet I will take
A parting kiss, and will not be denied.
You'll come, my lord, and see the virgins weep,
When I am laid in earth, though you yourself
Can know no pity. Thus I wind myself
Into this willow garland, and am prouder,
That I was once your love, though now refused,
Than to have had another true to me.
So with my prayers I leave you, and must try
Some yet unpractised way to grieve and die. [*Exit.*
Dula. Come, ladies, will you go?
Omnes. Good night, my lord.
Amin. Much happiness unto you all!
[*Exeunt ladies.*
I did that lady wrong: Methinks, I feel
Her grief shoot suddenly through all my veins.
Mine eyes run: This is strange at such a time.
It was the king first moved me to't; but he
Has not my will in keeping. Why do I
Perplex myself thus? Something whispers me,
'Go not to bed.' My guilt is not so great
As my own conscience, too sensible,
Would make me think: I only brake a promise,
And 'twas the king that forced me. Timorous flesh,
Why shak'st thou so? Away, my idle fears!

Enter EVADNE.

Yonder she is, the lustre of whose eye
Can blot away the sad remembrance
Of all these things. Oh, my Evadne, spare
That tender body; let it not take cold.
The vapours of the night will not fall here;
To bed, my love. Hymen will punish us
For being slack performers of his rites.
Can't thou to call me?
Evad. No.
Amin. Come, come, my love,
And let us loose ourselves to one another.
Why art thou up so long?
Evad. I am not well.
Amin. To bed then; let me wind thee in these arms,
Till I have banished sickness.
Evad. Good my lord,
I cannot sleep.
Amin. Evadne, we will watch;
I mean no sleeping.
Evad. I'll not go to bed.
Amin. I prithee, do.
Evad. I will not for the world.
Amin. Why, my dear love?
Evad. Why? I have sworn I will not.
Amin. Sworn!
Evad. Ay.
Amin. How! sworn, Evadne?
Evad. Yes, sworn, Amintor;
And will swear again, if you will wish to hear me.
Amin. To whom have you sworn this?
Evad. If I should name him, the matter were not great.
Amin. Come, this is but the coyness of a bride.
Evad. The coyness of a bride?
Amin. How prettily that frown becomes thee.
Evad. Do you like it so?
Amin. Thou canst not dress thy face in such a look,
But I shall like it.
Evad. What look likes you best?
Amin. Why do you ask?
Evad. That I may shew you one less pleasing to you.
Amin. How's that?
Evad. That I may shew you one less pleasing to you.
Amin. I prithee, put thy jests in milder looks.
It shews as thou wert angry.
Evad. So, perhaps,
I am indeed.
Amin. Why, who has done thee wrong?
Name me the man, and by thyself I swear,
Thy yet un-conquer'd self, I will revenge thee.
Evad. Now I shall try thy truth. If thou dost love me,
Thou weighest not any thing compared with me:
Life, honour, joys eternal, all delights
This world can yield, or hopeful people feign,
Or in the life to come, are light as air
To a true lover, when his lady frowns,
And bids him *do this.* Wilt thou kill this man?
Swear, my Amintor, and I'll kiss the sin
Off from thy lips.
Amin. I will not swear, sweet love,
Till I do know the cause.
Evad. I would, thou would'st.
Why, it is thou, that wrong'st me; I hate thee;
Thou should'st have killed thyself.
Amin. If I should know that, I should quickly kill
The man, you hated.
Evad. Know it then, and do it.
Amin. Oh, no; what look soe'er thou shalt put on
To try my faith, I shall not think thee false:
I cannot find one blemish in thy face,
Where falsehood should abide. Leave, and to bed.
This cannot be
Thy natural temper. Shall I call thy maids?
Either thy healthful sleep hath left thee long,
Or else some fever rages in thy blood.
Evad. Neither, Amintor: Think you I am mad,
Because I speak the truth?
Amin. Will you not lie with me to-night?
Evad. To-night! you talk as if I would hereafter.
Amin. Hereafter! yes, I do.
Evad. You are deceived.
Put off amazement, and with patience mark
What I shall utter; for the oracle
Knows nothing truer: 'tis not for a night,
Or two, that I forbear thy bed, but for ever.
Amin. I dream! Awake, Amintor!
Evad. You hear right.
I sooner will find out the beds of snakes,
And with my youthful blood warm their cold flesh,
Letting them curl themselves about my limbs,

Than sleep one night with thee. This is not feigned,
Nor sounds it like the coyness of a bride.
Amin. Is flesh so earthly to endure all this?
Are these the joys of marriage? Hymen, keep
This story (that will make succeeding youth
Neglect thy ceremonies) from all ears;
Let it not rise up, for thy shame and mine,
To after-ages: We will scorn thy laws,
If thou no better bless them. Touch the heart
Of her, that thou hast sent me, or the world
Shall know: There's not an altar, that will smoke
In praise of thee; we will adopt us sons;
Then virtue shall inherit, and not blood.
I do rage in vain;
She can but jest. O, pardon me, my love!
So dear the thoughts are that I hold of thee,
That I must break forth. Satisfy my fear;
It is a pain, beyond the hand of death,
To be in doubt: Confirm it with an oath,
If this be true.
Evad. Do you invent the form:
Let there be in it all the binding words
Devils and conjurers can put together,
And I will take it. I have sworn before,
And here, by all things holy, do again,
Never to be acquainted with thy bed.
Is your doubt over now?
Amin. I know too much. 'Would I had doubted still!
Was ever such a marriage night as this!
Ye powers above, if you did ever mean
Man should be used thus, you have thought a way
How he may bear himself, and save his honour.
Instruct me in it; for to my dull eyes
There is no mean, no moderate course to run:
I must live scorned, or be a murderer.
Is there a third? Why is this night so calm?
Why does not heaven speak in thunder to us,
And drown her voice?
Evad. This rage will do no good.
Amin. Evadne, hear me: Thou hast ta'en an oath,
But such a rash one, that, to keep it, were
Worse than to swear it: Call it back to thee;
Such vows as those never ascend to heaven;
A tear or two will wash it quite away.
Have mercy on my youth, my hopeful youth,
If thou be pitiful; for, without boast,
This land was proud of me. What lady was there,
That men called fair and virtuous in this isle,
That would have shunned my love? It is in thee
To make me hold this worth. Oh! we vain men,
That trust out all our reputation,
To rest upon the weak and yielding hand
Of feeble woman! But thou art not stone;
Thy flesh is soft, and in thine eyes doth dwell
The spirit of love; thy heart cannot be hard.
Come, lead me, from the bottom of despair,
To all the joys thou hast; I know, thou wilt;
And make me careful, lest the sudden change
O'ercome my spirits.
Evad. When I call back this oath,
The pains of hell environ me!
Amin. I sleep, and am too temperate! Come to bed!
Or by those hairs, which, if thou hadst a soul
Like to thy locks, were threads for kings to wear
About their arms——
Evad. Why, so, perhaps, they are.
Amin. I will drag thee to my bed, and make thy tongue
Undo this wicked oath, or on thy flesh
I'll print a thousand wounds to let out life!
Evad. I fear thee not. Do what thou darest to me!
Every ill-sounding word, or threatening look,
Thou shewest to me, will be revenged at full.
Amin. It will not, sure, Evadne?
Evad. Do not you hazard that.
Amin. Have you your champions?
Evad. Alas, Amintor, thinkest thou I forbear
To sleep with thee, because I have put on
A maiden's strictness? Look upon these cheeks,
And thou shalt find the hot and rising blood
Unapt for such a vow. No; in this heart
There dwells as much desire as ever yet
Was known to woman.
But it was the folly of thy youth
To think this beauty, to what land soever
It shall be called, shall stoop to any second.
I do enjoy the best, and in that height
Have sworn to stand or die: You guess the man.
Amin. No; let me know the man, that wrongs me so,
That I may cut his body into motes,
And scatter it before the northern wind.
Evad. You dare not strike him.
Amin. Do not wrong me so.
Yes, if his body were a poisonous plant,
That it were death to touch, I have a soul
Will throw me on him.
Evad. Why, it is the king.
Amin. The king!
Evad. What will you do now?
Amin. It is not the king!
Evad. What did he make this match for, dull Amintor?
Amin. Oh, thou hast named a word, that wipes away
All thoughts revengeful! In that sacred name,
'The king,' there lies a terror. What frail man
Dares lift his hand against it? Let the gods
Speak to him, when they please; till when, let us
Suffer, and wait.
Evad. Why should you fill yourself so full of heat,
And haste so to my bed? I am no virgin.
Amin. What devil put it in thy fancy, then,
To marry me?
Evad. Alas, I must have one
To father children, and to bear the name
Of husband to me, that my sin may be
More honourable.
Amin. What a strange thing am I!
Evad. A miserable one; one, that myself
Am sorry for.

Amin. Why, shew it then in this:
If thou hast pity, though thy love be none,
Kill me; and all true lovers, that shall live
In after ages, crossed in their desires,
Shall bless thy memory, and call thee good;
Because such mercy in thy heart was found,
To rid a lingering wretch.
Evad. I must have one
To fill thy room again, if thou wert dead;
Else, by this night, I would: I pity thee.
Amin. These strange and sudden injuries have fallen
So thick upon me, that I lose all sense
Of what they are. Methinks, I am not wronged;
Nor is it aught, if from the censuring world
I can but hide it. Reputation!
Thou art a word, no more.—But thou hast shewn
An impudence so high, that to the world
I fear thou wilt betray or shame thyself.
Evad. To cover shame, I took thee; never fear
That I would blaze myself.
Amin. Nor let the king
Know, I conceive he wrongs me; then mine honour
Will thrust me into action, though my flesh
Could bear with patience. And it is some ease
To me in these extremes, that I knew this,
Before I touched thee; else, had all the sins
Of mankind stood betwixt me and the king,
I had gone through them to his heart and thine.
I have lost one desire: 'Tis not his crown
Shall buy me to thy bed now, I resolve,
He has dishonoured thee. Give me thy hand;
Be careful of thy credit, and sin close;
'Tis all I wish. Upon thy chamber floor
I'll rest to-night, that morning visitors
May think we did as married people use.
And, prithee, smile upon me when they come,
And seem to toy, as if thou hadst been pleased
With what we did.
Evad. Fear not; I will do this.
Amin. Come, let us practise; and, as wantonly
As ever loving bride and bridegroom met,
Let's laugh and enter here.
Evad. I am content.
Amin. Down all the swellings of my troubled heart!
When we walk thus entwined, let all eyes see,
If ever lovers better did agree. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ASPATIA, ANTIPHILA, *and* OLYMPIAS.

Asp. Away, you are not sad; force it no further.
Good gods, how well you look! Such a full colour
Young bashful brides put on. Sure, you are new married!
Ant. Yes, madam, to your grief.
Asp. Alas, poor wenches!
Go learn to love first; learn to lose yourselves;
Learn to be flattered, and believe, and bless
The double tongue, that did it. Make a faith
Out of the miracles of ancient lovers,
Such as spake truth, and died in it; and, like me,
Believe all faithful, and be miserable.
Did you ne'er love yet, wenches? Speak, Olympias:
Thou hast an easy temper, fit for stamp.
Olym. Never.
Asp. Nor you, Antiphila?
Ant. Nor I.
Asp. Then, my good girls, be more than women, wise:
At least, be more than I was; and be sure
You credit any thing the light gives light to,
Before a man. Rather believe the sea
Weeps for the ruined merchant, when he roars;
Rather, the wind courts but the pregnant sails,
When the strong cordage cracks; rather, the sun
Comes but to kiss the fruit in wealthy autumn,
When all falls blasted. If you needs must love,
(Forced by ill fate) take to your maiden bosoms
Two dead-cold aspicks, and of them make lovers:
They cannot flatter, nor forswear; one kiss
Makes a long peace for all. But man,
Oh, that beast man! Come, let's be sad, my girls!
That down-cast of thine eye, Olympias,
Shews a fine sorrow. Mark, Antiphila;
Just such another was the nymph Œnone,
When Paris brought home Helen. Now, a tear;
And then thou art a piece expressing fully
The Carthage queen, when, from a cold sea-rock,
Full with her sorrow, she tied fast her eyes
To the fair Trojan ships; and, having lost them,
Just as thine eyes do, down stole a tear. Antiphila,
What would this wench do, if she were Aspatia?
Here she would stand, till some more pitying god
Turned her to marble! It is enough, my wench!
Shew me the piece of needlework you wrought.
Ant. Of Ariadne, madam?
Asp. Yes, that piece.
This should be Theseus; he has a cozening face:
You meant him for a man?
Ant. He was so, madam.
Asp. Why, then, 'tis well enough. Never look back;
You have a full wind, and a false heart, Theseus!
Does not the story say, his keel was split,
Or his masts spent, or some kind rock or other
Met with his vessel?
Ant. Not as I remember.
Asp. It should have been so. Could the gods know this,
And not, of all their number, raise a storm?
But they are all as ill! This false smile was
Well expressed; just such another caught me!
You shall not go on so, Antiphila:
In this place work a quicksand,
And over it a shallow smiling water,
And his ship ploughing it; and then a Fear:
Do that Fear to the life, wench.
Ant. It will wrong the story.
Asp. It will make the story, wronged by wanton poets,
Live long, and be believed. But where's the lady?
Ant. There, madam.
Asp. Fie! you have missed it here, Antiphila;
You are much mistaken, wench:
These colours are not dull and pale enough
To shew a soul so full of misery

As this sad lady's was. Do it by me;
Do it again, by me, the lost Aspatia,
And you shall find all true, but the wild island.
Suppose I stand upon the sea-beach now,
Mine arms thus, and mine hair blown with the wind,
Wild as that desart; and let all about me
Tell, that I am forsaken. Do my face
(If thou hadst ever feeling of a sorrow)
Thus, thus, Antiphila: Strive to make me look
Like sorrow's monument! And the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges; and, behind me,
Make all a desolation. Look, look, wenches!
A miserable life of this poor picture!
Olym. Dear madam!
Asp. I have done. Sit down; and let us
Upon that point fix all our eyes; that point there.
Make a dull silence, till you feel a sudden sadness
Give us new souls.

Enter CALIANAX.

Cal. The king may do this, and he may not do it:
My child is wronged, disgraced. Well, how now, huswives!
What, at your ease? Is this a time to sit still?
Up, you young lazy rogues, up, or I'll swinge you!
Olym. Nay, good my lord.
Cal. You'll lie down shortly. Get you in, and work!
What, are you grown so resty you want heats?
We shall have some of the court-boys beat you shortly.
Ant. My lord, we do no more than we are charged.
It is the lady's pleasure we be thus in grief:
She is forsaken.
Cal. There's a rogue too;
A young dissembling slave! Well, get you in!
I'll have a bout with that boy. 'Tis high time
Now to be valiant: I confess my youth
Was never prone that way. What, made an ass?
A court-stale? Well, I will be valiant,
And beat some dozen of these whelps; I will!
And there's another of them, a trim cheating soldier;
I'll maul that rascal; he has out-braved me twice;
But now, I thank the gods, I am valiant.
Go, get you in! I'll take a course with all. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

Enter CLEON, STRATO, *and* DIPHILUS.

Cle. YOUR sister is not up yet.
Diph. Knock at the door.
Stra. We shall interrupt them.
Diph. No matter. Good morrow, sister!

Enter AMINTOR.

Amin. Who's there? my brother! I'm no readier yet.
Your sister is but now up.
Diph. You look as you had lost your eyes to-night:
I think you have not slept.
Amin. I'faith I have not.
Diph. You have done better, then.
Amin. We ventured for a boy: When he is twelve,
He shall command against the foes of Rhodes.
Shall we be merry?
Stra. You cannot; you want sleep.
Amin. 'Tis true.—But she,
As if she had drank Lethe, or had made
Even with Heaven, did fetch so still a sleep,
So sweet and sound——
Diph. What's that?
Amin. Your sister frets
This morning; and does turn her eyes upon me,
As people on their headsman. She does chafe
And kiss, and chafe again, and clap my cheeks:
She's in another world.
Cleo. You do deserve her.
Amin. I laid my lips to hers, and that wild breath,
That was so rude and rough to me last night,
Was sweet as April. I'll be guilty too,
If these be the effects. [*Aside.*

Enter MELANTIUS.

Mel. Good day, Amintor! for, to me, the name
Of brother is too distant: We are friends,
And that is nearer.
Amin. Dear Melantius!
Let me behold thee. Is it possible?
Mel. What sudden gaze is this?
Amin. 'Tis wondrous strange!
Mel. Why does thine eye desire so strict a view
Of that, it knows so well? There's nothing here,
That is not thine.
Amin. I wonder much, Melantius,
To see those noble looks, that make me think
How virtuous thou art: And, on the sudden,
'Tis strange to me thou shouldst have worth and honour;
Or not be base, and false, and treacherous,
And every ill. But——
Mel. Stay, stay, my friend;
I fear this sound will not become our loves.
No more; embrace me.
Amin. Oh, mistake me not:
I know thee to be full of all those deeds,
That we frail men call good; but, by the course
Of nature, thou shouldst be as quickly changed
As are the winds; dissembling as the sea,
That now wears brows as smooth as virgins' be,
Tempting the merchant to invade his face,
And in an hour calls his billows up,
And shoots them at the sun, destroying all
He carries on him.—Oh, how near am I
To utter my sick thoughts! [*Aside.*

Mel. But why, my friend, should I be so by nature?
Amin. I've wed thy sister, who hath virtuous thoughts
Enough for one whole family; and it is strange,
That you should feel no want.
Mel. Believe me, this compliment's too cunning for me.
Diph. What should I be then, by the course of nature,
They having both robbed me of so much virtue?
Stra. Oh, call the bride, my lord Amintor,
That we may see her blush, and turn her eyes down.
Amin. Evadne!
Evad. [*within.*] My lord!
Amin. Come forth, my love!
Your brothers do attend to wish you joy.
Evad. I am not ready yet.
Amin. Enough, enough.
Evad. They will mock me.
Amin. Faith, thou shalt come in.

Enter EVADNE.

Mel. Good-morrow, sister! He that understands
Whom you have wed, need not to wish you joy;
You have enough. Take heed
You be not proud.—Amintor!
Amin. Ha!
Mel. Thou art sad.
Amin. Who, I? I thank you for that. Shall Diphilus, thou, and I, sing a catch?
Mel. How!
Amin. Prithee, let us.
Mel. Nay, that's too much the other way.
Amin. I am so lightened with my happiness!
How dost thou, love? kiss me.
Evad. I cannot love you, you tell tales of me.
Amin. Nothing but what becomes us. Gentlemen,
Would you had all such wives, and all the world,
That I might be no wonder! You are all sad:
What, do you envy me? I walk, methinks,
On water, and ne'er sink, I am so light.
Mel. 'Tis well you are so.
Amin. Well? how can I be other, when she looks thus.
Is there no music there? let's dance.
Mel. Why, this is strange, Amintor!
Amin. I do not know myself;
Yet I could wish my joy were less.
Diph. I'll marry too, if it will make one thus.
Evad. Amintor, hark. [*Aside.*
Amin. What says my love? I must obey.
Evad. You do it scurvily, it will be perceived.
Cleo. My lord, the king is here.

Enter KING *and* LYSIPPUS.

Amin. Where?
Stra. And his brother.
King. Good morrow, all!
Amintor, joy on joy fall thick upon thee!
And, madam, you are altered since I saw you;
I must salute you; you are now another's.
Amintor, wert thou truly honest, 'till
Thou wert married?
Amin. Yes, sir.
King. Tell me, then; you will trust me, Amintor,
To chuse a wife for you again?
Amin. No, never, sir.
King. Why? like you this so ill?
Amin. So well I like her,
For this I bow my knee in thanks to you,
And unto Heaven will pay my grateful tribute
Hourly; and do hope we shall draw out
A long contented life together here,
And die both, full of grey hairs, in one day:
For which the thanks are yours. But if the powers,
That rule us, please to call her first away,
Without pride spoke, this world holds not a wife,
Worthy to take her room.
King. I do not like this.
All forbear the room, but you, Amintor,
And your lady. I have some speech with you,
That may concern your after living well.
Amin. He will not tell me, that he lies with her?
If he do, something heavenly stay my heart,
For I shall be apt to thrust this arm of mine
To acts unlawful!
King. You will suffer me to talk
With her, Amintor, and not have a jealous pang?
Amin. Sir, I dare trust my wife with whom she dares
To talk, and not be jealous.
King. How do you like
Amintor?
Evad. As I did, sir.
King. How is that?
Evad. As one that, to fulfil your will and pleasure,
I have given leave to call me wife and love.
King. I see there is no lasting faith in sin;
They, that break word with Heaven, will break again
With all the world, and so dost thou with me.
Evad. How, sir?
King. This subtle woman's ignorance
Will not excuse you: thou hast taken oaths,
So great, methought, they did not well become
A woman's mouth, that thou would'st ne'er enjoy
A man but me.
Evad. I never did swear so; you do me wrong.
King. Day and night have heard it.
Evad. I swore, indeed, that I would never love
A man of lower place; but, if your fortune
Should throw you from this height, I bade you trust
I would forsake you, and would bend to him,
That won your throne: I love with my ambition,
Not with my eyes. But, if I ever yet
Touched any other, leprosy light here
Upon my face; which for your royalty
I would not stain!
King. Why, thou dissemblest, and it is in me
To punish thee.
Evad. Why, it is in me, then,
Not to love you, which will more afflict your body,
Than your punishment can mine.

King. But thou hast let Amintor lie with thee.
Evad. I have not.
King. Impudence! he says himself so.
Evad. He lies.
King. He does not.
Evad. By this light he does, strangely and basely!
And I'll prove it so. I did not shun him
For a night; but told him, I would never close
With him.
King. Speak lower; 'tis false.
Evad. I am no man
To answer with a blow; or, if I were,
You are the king! But urge me not; it is most true.
King. Do not I know the uncontrouled thoughts,
That youth brings with him, when his blood is high
With expectation, and desire of that
He long hath waited for? Is not his spirit,
Though he be temperate, of a valiant strain
As this our age hath known? What could he do,
If such a sudden speech had met his blood,
But ruin thee for ever? If he had not killed thee,
He could not bear it thus. He is as we,
Or any other wronged man.
Evad. It is dissembling.
King. Take him! farewell! henceforth I am thy foe;
And what disgraces I can blot thee, look for.
Evad. Stay, sir!—Amintor!—You shall hear.—Amintor!
Amin. What, my love?
Evad. Amintor, thou hast an ingenuous look,
And should'st be virtuous: It amazeth me,
That thou canst make such base malicious lies!
Amin. What, my dear wife?
Evad. Dear wife! I do despise thee.
Why, nothing can be baser than to sow
Dissention amongst lovers.
Amin. Lovers! who?
Evad. The king and me.
Amin. O, Heaven!
Evad. Who should live long, and love without distaste,
Were it not for such pickthanks as thyself!
Did you lie with me? Swear now, and be punished
In hell for this!
Amin. The faithless sin I made
To fair Aspatia, is not yet revenged;
It follows me. I will not lose a word
To this vile woman: But to you, my king,
The anguish of my soul thrusts out this truth,
You are a tyrant!
And not so much to wrong an honest man thus,
As to take a pride in talking with him of it.
Evad. Now, sir, see how loud this fellow lied.
Amin. You, that can know to wrong, should know how men
Must right themselves: What punishment is due
From me to him, that shall abuse my bed?
Is it not death? Nor can that satisfy,
Unless I send your lives through all the land,
To shew how nobly I have freed myself.
King. Draw not thy sword; thou know'st I cannot fear
A subject's hand; but thou shalt feel the weight
Of this, if thou dost rage.
Amin. The weight of that!
If you have any worth, for heaven's sake, think
I fear not swords; for as you are mere man,
I dare as easily kill you for this deed,
As you dare think to do it. But there is
Divinity about you, that strikes dead
My rising passions: As you are my king,
I fall before you, and present my sword
To cut mine own flesh, if it be your will.
Alas! I am nothing but a multitude
Of walking griefs! Yet, should I murder you,
I might before the world take the excuse
Of madness: For, compare my injuries,
And they will well appear too sad a weight
For reason to endure! But, fall I first
Amongst my sorrows, ere my treacherous hand
Touch holy things! But why (I know not what
I have to say) why did you chuse out me
To make thus wretched? There were thousand fools
Easy to work on, and of state enough,
Within the island.
Evad. I would not have a fool;
It were no credit for me.
Amin. Worse and worse!
Thou, that darest talk unto thy husband thus,
Profess thyself a whore, and, more than so,
Resolve to be so still——It is my fate
To bear and bow beneath a thousand griefs,
To keep that little credit with the world!
But there were wise ones too; you might have ta'en
Another.
King. No; for I believed thee honest,
As thou wert valiant.
Amin. All the happiness
Bestowed upon me, turns into disgrace.
Gods, take your honesty again, for I
Am loaden with it! Good my lord the king,
Be private in it.
King. Thou may'st live, Amintor,
Free as thy king, if thou wilt wink at this,
And be a means, that we may meet in secret.
Amin. A bawd! Hold, hold, my breast! A bitter curse
Seize me, if I forget not all respects,
That are religious, on another word
Sounded like that; and, through a sea of sins,
Will wade to my revenge, though I should call
Pains here, and after life, upon my soul!
King. Well, I am resolute you lie not with her;
And so I leave you. [*Exit King.*
Evad. You must needs be prating;
And see what follows.
Amin. Prithee, vex me not!
Leave me! I am afraid some sudden start
Will pull a murder on me.
Evad. I am gone;
I love my life well. [*Exit Evadne.*

Amin. I hate mine as much.
This 'tis to break a troth! I should be glad,
If all this tide of grief would make me mad. [*Exit.*

Enter MELANTIUS.

Mel. I'll know the cause of all Amintor's griefs,
Or friendship shall be idle.

Enter CALIANAX.

Cal. O Melantius, my daughter will die.
Mel. Trust me, I am sorry.
'Would thou hadst ta'en her room!
Cal. Thou art a slave,
A cut-throat slave, a bloody treacherous slave!
Mel. Take heed, old man! thou wilt be heard to rave,
And lose thine offices.
Cal. I am valiant grown,
At all these years, and thou art but a slave!
Mel. Leave! Some company will come, and I respect
Thy years, not thee, so much, that I could wish
To laugh at thee alone.
Cal. I'll spoil your mirth! I mean to fight with thee.
There lie, my cloak! This was my father's sword,
And he durst fight. Are you prepared?
Mel. Why wilt thou doat thyself out of thy life?
Hence, get thee to bed! have careful looking to,
And eat warm things, and trouble not me:
My head is full of thoughts, more weighty
Than thy life or death can be.
Cal. You have a name in war, where you stand safe
Amongst a multitude; but I will try
What you dare do unto a weak old man,
In single fight. You will give ground, I fear.
Come, draw.
Mel. I will not draw, unless thou pull'st thy death
Upon thee with a stroke. There's no one blow,
That thou canst give, hath strength enough to kill me.
Tempt me not so far then: The power of earth
Shall not redeem thee.
Cal. I must let him alone;
He's stout and able; and, to say the truth,
However I may set a face, and talk,
I am not valiant. When I was a youth,
I kept my credit with a testy trick I had,
Amongst cowards, but durst never fight.
Mel. I will not promise to preserve your life,
If you do stay.
Cal. I would give half my land,
That I durst fight with that proud man a little.
If I had men to hold him, I would beat him,
Till he asked me mercy.
Mel. Sir, will you be gone?
Cal. I dare not stay; but I'll go home and beat
My servants all over for this. [*Exit Calianax.*
Mel. This old fellow haunts me!
But the distracted carriage of my Amintor
Takes deeply on me! I will find the cause.
I fear his conscience cries, he wronged Aspatia.

Enter AMINTOR.

Amin. Men's eyes are not so subtle to perceive
My inward misery: I bear my grief,
Hid from the world. How art thou wretched, then?
For aught I know, all husbands are like me;
And every one, I talk with of his wife,
Is but a well dissembler of his woes,
As I am. 'Would I knew it; for the rareness
Afflicts me now.
Mel. Amintor, we have not enjoyed our friendship of late, for we were wont to change our souls in talk.
Amin. Melantius, I can tell thee a good jest of Strato and a lady the last day.
Mel. How was it?
Amin. Why, such an odd one!
Mel. I have longed to speak with you; not of an idle jest, that's forced, but of matter you are bound to utter to me.
Amin. What is that, my friend?
Mel. I have observed your words
Fall from your tongue wildly; and all your carriage
Like one, that strove to shew his merry mood,
When he were ill disposed; You were not wont
To put such scorn into your speech, or wear
Upon your face ridiculous jollity.
Some sadness sits here, which your cunning would
Cover o'er with smiles, and 'twill not be.
What is it?
Amin. A sadness here! what cause
Can fate provide for me, to make me so?
Am I not loved through all this isle? The king
Rains greatness on me. Have I not received
A lady to my bed, that in her eye
Keeps mounting fire, and on her tender cheeks
Immutable colour, in her heart
A prison for all virtue? Are not you,
Which is above all joys, my constant friend?
What sadness can I have? No; I am light,
And feel the courses of my blood more warm
And stirring than they were. Faith, marry too;
And you will feel so unexpressed a joy
In chaste embraces, that you will indeed
Appear another.
Mel. You may shape, Amintor,
Causes to cozen the whole world withal,
And yourself too; but 'tis not like a friend,
To hide your soul from me. 'Tis not your nature
To be thus idle: I have seen you stand,
As you were blasted, 'midst of all your mirth;
Call thrice aloud, and then start, feigning joy
So coldly!—World, what do I here? a friend
Is nothing! Heaven, I would have told that man
My secret sins! I'll search an unknown land,
And there plant friendship; all is withered here.
Come with a compliment! I would have fought,
Or told my friend 'he lied,' ere soothed him so.
Out of my bosom!
Amin. But there is nothing———
Mel. Worse and worse! farewell!
From this time have acquaintance, but no friend.

Amin. Melantius, stay: You shall know what it is.
Mel. See, how you played with friendship! Be advised
How you give cause unto yourself to say,
You have lost a friend.
Amin. Forgive what I have done;
For I am so o'ergone with injuries
Unheard of, that I lose consideration
Of what I ought to do. Oh, oh!
Mel. Do not weep.
What is it? May I once but know the man
Hath turned my friend thus!
Amin. I had spoke at first,
But that———
Mel. But what?
Amin. I held it most unfit
For you to know. Faith, do not know it yet.
Mel. Thou seest my love, that will keep company
With thee in tears; hide nothing then from me;
For, when I know the cause of thy distemper,
With mine old armour I'll adorn myself,
My resolution, and cut through thy foes,
Unto thy quiet; till I place thy heart
As peaceable as spotless innocence.
What is it?
Amin. Why, 'tis this———It is too big
To get out———Let my tears make way awhile.
Mel. Punish me strangely, Heaven, if he escape
Of life or fame, that brought this youth to this!
Amin. Your sister———
Mel. Well said.
Amin. You will wish it unknown,
When you have heard it.
Mel. No.
Amin. Is much to blame,
And to the king has given her honour up,
And lives in whoredom with him.
Mel. How is this?
Thou art run mad with injury, indeed;
Thou couldst not utter this else. Speak again;
For I forgive it freely; tell thy griefs.
Amin. She's wanton: I am loth to say, a whore,
Though it be true.
Mel. Speak yet again, before mine anger grow
Up, beyond throwing down: What are thy griefs?
Amin. By all our friendship, these.
Mel. What, am I tame?
After mine actions, shall the name of friend
Blot all our family, and stick the brand
Of whore upon my sister, unrevenged?
My shaking flesh, be thou a witness for me,
With what unwillingness I go to scourge
This railer, whom my folly hath called friend!
I will not take thee basely; thy sword
Hangs near thy hand; draw it, that I may whip
Thy rashness to repentance. Draw thy sword!
Amin. Not on thee, did thine anger swell as high
As the wild surges. Thou shouldst do me ease
Here, and eternally, if thy noble hand
Would cut me from my sorrows.
Mel. This is base
And fearful. They, that use to utter lies,
Provide not blows, but words, to qualify
The men they wronged. Thou hast a guilty cause.
Amin. Thou pleasest me; for so much more like this
Will raise my anger up above my griefs,
(Which is a passion easier to be borne)
And I shall then be happy.
Mel. Take then more
To raise thine anger: 'Tis mere cowardice
Makes thee not draw; and I will leave thee dead,
However. But, if thou art so much pressed
With guilt and fear, as not to dare to fight,
I'll make thy memory loathed, and fix a scandal
Upon thy name for ever.
Amin. Then I draw,
As justly as our magistrates their swords
To cut offenders off. I knew before,
'Twould grate your ears; but it was base in you
To urge a weighty secret from your friend,
And then rage at it. I shall be at ease,
If I be killed; and, if you fall by me,
I shall not long outlive you.
Mel. Stay awhile.—
The name of friend is more than family,
Or all the world besides: I was a fool!
Thou searching human nature, that didst wake
To do me wrong, thou art inquisitive,
And thrust'st me upon questions, that will take
My sleep away! 'Would I had died, ere known
This sad dishonour! Pardon me, my friend!
If thou wilt strike, here is a faithful heart;
Pierce it, for I will never heave my hand
To thine. Behold the power thou hast in me!
I do believe my sister is a whore,
A leprous one! Put up thy sword, young man.
Amin. How should I bear it then, she being so?
I fear, my friend, that you will lose me shortly;
And I shall do a foul act on myself,
Through these disgraces.
Mel. Better half the land
Were buried quick together. No, Amintor;
Thou shalt have ease. Oh, this adulterous king,
That drew her to it! Where got he the spirit
To wrong me so?
Amin. What is it then to me,
If it be wrong to you?
Mel. Why, not so much:
The credit of our house is thrown away.
But from his iron den I'll waken Death,
And hurl him on this king! My honesty
Shall steel my sword; and on its horrid point
I'll wear my cause, that shall amaze the eyes
Of this proud man, and be too glittering
For him to look on.
Amin. I have quite undone my fame.
Mel. Dry up thy watery eyes,
And cast a manly look upon my face;
For nothing is so wild as I, thy friend,
Till I have freed thee. Still this swelling breast!
I go thus from thee, and will never cease
My vengeance, till I find thy heart at peace.

Amin. It must not be so. Stay! Mine eyes would tell
How loth I am to this; but, love and tears,
Leave me awhile; for I have hazarded
All that this world calls happy. Thou hast wrought
A secret from me, under name of friend,
Which art could ne'er have found, nor torture wrung
From out my bosom: Give it me again;
For I will find it, wheresoe'er it lies,
Hid in the mortal'st part! Invent a way
To give it back.
Mel. Why would you have it back?
I will to death pursue him with revenge.
Amin. Therefore I call it back from thee; for I know
Thy blood so high, that thou wilt stir in this,
And shame me to posterity. Take to thy weapon!
Mel. Hear thy friend, that bears more years than thou.
Amin. I will not hear! but draw, or I———
Mel. Amintor!
Amin. Draw then; for I am full as resolute
As fame and honour can enforce me be!
I cannot linger. Draw!
Mel. I do. But is not
My share of credit equal with thine,
If I do stir?
Amin. No; for it will be called
Honour in thee to spill thy sister's blood,
If she her birth abuse; and, on the king,
A brave revenge: But on me, that have walked
With patience in it, it will fix the name
Of fearful cuckold, Oh, that word! Be quick.
Mel. Then join with me.
Amin. I dare not do a sin, or else I would.
Be speedy.
Mel. Then dare not fight with me; for that's a sin.
His grief distracts him: Call thy thoughts again,
And to thyself pronounce the name of friend,
And see what that will work. I will not fight.
Amin. You must.
Mel. I will be killed first. Though my passions
Offered the like to you, 'tis not this earth
Shall buy my reason to it. Think awhile,
For you are (I must weep, when I speak that)
Almost besides yourself.
Amin. Oh, my soft temper!
So many sweet words from thy sister's mouth,
I am afraid, would make me take her
To embrace, and pardon her. I am mad, indeed,
And know not what I do. Yet, have a care
Of me in what thou dost.
Mel. Why thinks my friend
I will forget his honour? or, to save
The bravery of our house, will lose his fame,
And fear to touch the throne of majesty?
Amin. A curse will follow that; but rather live,
And suffer with me.
Mel. I'll do what worth shall bid me, and no more.
Amin. 'Faith, I am sick, and desperately, I hope;
Yet, leaning thus, I feel a kind of ease.
Mel. Come, take again your mirth about you.
Amin. I shall never do't.
Mel. I warrant you; look up; we'll walk together;
Put thine arm here; all shall be well again.
Amin. Thy love (oh, wretched!) ay, thy love, Melantius!
Why, I have nothing else.
Mel. Be merry then. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MELANTIUS *again.*

Mel. This worthy young man may do violence
Upon himself; but I have cherish'd him
To my best power, and sent him smiling from me,
To counterfeit again. Sword, hold thine edge;
My heart will never fail me. Diphilus!
Thou com'st as sent.

Enter DIPHILUS.

Diph. Yonder has been such laughing.
Mel. Betwixt whom?
Diph. Why, our sister and the king; I thought their spleens would break; they laughed us all out of the room.
Mel. They must weep, Diphilus.
Diph. Must they?
Mel. They must.
Thou art my brother; and if I did believe
Thou hadst a base thought, I would rip it out,
Lie where it durst.
Diph. You should not; I would first mangle myself, and find it.
Mel. That was spoke according to our strain.
Come, join thy hands to mine,
And swear a firmness to what project I
Shall lay before thee.
Diph. You do wrong us both:
People hereafter shall not say, there passed
A bond, more than our loves, to tie our lives
And deaths together.
Mel. It is as nobly said as I would wish.
Anon I'll tell you wonders. We are wronged.
Diph. But I will tell you now, we'll right ourselves.
Mel. Stay not: Prepare the armour in my house;
And what friends you can draw unto our side,
Not knowing of the cause, make ready too.
Haste, Diphilus, the time requires it; haste!
[*Exit Diphilus.*
I hope my cause is just; I know my blood
Tells me it is; and I will credit it.
To take revenge, and lose myself withal,
Were idle; and to escape impossible,
Without I had the fort, which (misery!)
Remaining in the hands of my old enemy
Calianax———But I must have it. See,

Enter CALIANAX.

Where he comes, shaking by me. Good my lord,
Forget your spleen to me; I never wronged you,
But would have peace with every man.
Cal. 'Tis well;
If I durst fight, your tongue would lie at quiet.

To be a stale hour, and have your madam's name
Discourse for grooms and pages; and, hereafter,
When his cool majesty hath laid you by,
To be at pension with some needy sir,
For meat and coarser cloaths: Thus far you know no fear.
Come, you shall kill him.
Evad. Good sir!
Mel. An 'twere to kiss him dead, thou'dst smother him.
Be wise, and kill him. Canst thou live, and know
What noble minds shall make thee, see thyself
Found out with every finger, made the shame
Of all successions, and in this great ruin
Thy brother and thy noble husband broken?
Thou shalt not live thus. Kneel, and swear to help me,
When I shall call thee to it; or, by all
Holy in heaven and earth, thou shalt not live
To breathe a full hour longer; not a thought!
Come, 'tis a righteous oath. Give me thy hands,
And, both to heaven held up, swear, by that wealth
This lustful thief stole from thee, when I say it,
To let his foul soul out.
Evad. Here I swear it;
And, all you spirits of abused ladies,
Help me in this performance!
Mel. Enough. This must be known to none
But you and I, Evadne; not to your lord,
Though he be wise and noble, and a fellow
Dares step as far into a worthy action
As the most daring; ay, as far as justice.
Ask me not why. Farewell. [*Exit Mel.*
Evad. 'Would I could say so to my black disgrace!
Oh, where have I been all this time? how 'friended,
That I should lose myself thus desperately,
And none for pity shew me how I wandered?
There is not in the compass of the light
A more unhappy creature: Sure, I am monstrous!
For I have done those follies, those mad mischiefs,
Would dare a woman. Oh, my loaden soul,
Be not so cruel to me; choke not up

Enter AMINTOR.

The way to my repentance! Oh, my lord!
Amin. How now?
Evad. My much abused lord! [*Kneels.*
Amin. This cannot be!
Evad. I do not kneel to live; I dare not hope it;
The wrongs I did are greater. Look upon me,
Though I appear with all my faults.
Amin. Stand up.
This is a new way to beget more sorrow:
Heaven knows I have too many! Do not mock me:
Though I am tame, and bred up with my wrongs,
Which are my foster-brothers, I may leap,
Like a hand-wolf, into my natural wildness,
And do an outrage. Prithee, do not mock me.
Evad. My whole life is so leprous, it infects
All my repentance. I would buy your pardon,
Though at the highest set; even with my life.
That slight contrition, that's no sacrifice
For what I have committed.
Amin. Sure I dazzle:
There cannot be a faith in that foul woman,
That knows no god more mighty than her mischiefs.
Thou dost still worse, still number on thy faults,
To press my poor heart thus. Can I believe
There's any seed of virtue in that woman,
Left to shoot up, that dares go on in sin,
Known, and so known as thine is? Oh, Evadne!
'Would there were any safety in thy sex,
That I might put a thousand sorrows off,
And credit thy repentance! But I must not:
Thou hast brought me to that dull calamity,
To that strange misbelief of all the world,
And all things that are in it, that I fear
I shall fall like a tree, and find my grave,
Only remembering, that I grieve.
Evad. My lord,
Give me your griefs: You are an innocent,
A soul as white as heaven; let not my sins
Perish your noble youth. I do not fall here
To shadow, by dissembling with my tears,
(As, all say, women can) or to make less,
What my hot will hath done, which heaven and you
Know to be tougher than the hand of time
Can cut from man's remembrance. No, I do not:
I do appear the same, the same Evadne,
Drest in the shames I lived in; the same monster!
But these are names of honour, to what I am:
I do present myself the foulest creature,
Most pois'nous, dang'rous, and despised of men,
Lerna e're bred, or Nilus! I am hell,
'Till you, my dear lord, shoot your light into me,
The beams of your forgiveness. I am soul-sick,
And wither with the fear of one condemned,
'Till I have got your pardon.
Amin. Rise, Evadne.
Those heavenly powers, that put this good into thee,
Grant a continuance of it! I forgive thee:
Make thyself worthy of it; and take heed,
Take heed, Evadne, this be serious.
Mock not the powers above, that can and dare
Give thee a great example of their justice
To all ensuing eyes, if thou playest
With thy repentance, the best sacrifice.
Evad. I have done nothing good to win belief,
My life hath been so faithless. All the creatures,
Made for heaven's honours, have their ends, and good ones,
All but the cozening crocodiles, false women!
They reign here like those plagues, those killing sores,
Men pray against; and, when they die, like tales
Ill told and unbelieved, they pass away,
And go to dust forgotten! But, my lord,
Those short days I shall number to my rest
(As many must not see me) shall, though too late,
Though in my evening, yet perceive a will;
Since I can do no good, because a woman,
Reach constantly at something, that is near it:
I will redeem one minute of my age,

Or, like another Niobe, I'll weep
'Till I am water.
Amin. I am now dissolved:
My frozen soul melts. May each sin thou hast,
Find a new mercy! Rise; I am at peace.
Hadst thou been thus, thus excellently good,
Before that devil king tempted thy frailty,
Sure thou hadst made a star! Give me thy hand.
From this time I will know thee; and, as far
As honour gives me leave, be thy Amintor.
When we meet next, I will salute thee fairly,
And pray the gods to give thee happy days.
My charity shall go along with thee,
Though my embraces must be far from thee.
I should have killed thee, but this sweet repentance
Locks up my vengeance; for which thus I kiss thee—
The last kiss we must take! And 'would to heaven
The holy priest, that gave our hands together,
Had given us equal virtues! Go, Evadne;
The gods thus part our bodies. Have a care
My honour falls no farther: I am well then.
Evad. All the dear joys here, and, above, hereafter,
Crown thy fair soul! Thus I take leave, my lord;
And never shall you see the foul Evadne,
'Till she have tried all honoured means, that may
Set her in rest, and wash her stains away.
[*Exeunt.*

BANQUET. *Enter* KING *and* CALIANAX.

[*Hautboys play within.*
King. I cannot tell how I should credit this
From you, that are his enemy.
Cal. I'm sure
He said it to me; and I'll justify it
What way he dares oppose—but with my sword.
King. But did he break, without all circumstance,
To you, his foe, that he would have the fort,
To kill me, and then escape?
Cal. If he deny it,
I'll make him blush.
King. It sounds incredibly.
Cal. Ay, so does every thing I say of late.
King. Not so, Calianax.
Cal. Yes, I should sit
Mute, whilst a rogue with strong arms cuts your throat.
King. Well, I will try him; and, if this be true,
I'll pawn my life I'll find it. If it be false,
And that you clothe your hate in such a lie,
You shall hereafter dote in your own house,
Not in the court.
Cal. Why, if it be a lie,
Mine ears are false; for, I'll be sworn, I heard it.
Old men are good for nothing: You were best
Put me to death for hearing, and free him
For meaning it. You would have trusted me
Once, but the time is altered.
King. And will still,
Where I may do with justice to the world:
You have no witness.
Cal. Yes, myself.
King. No more,
I mean, there were that heard it.
Cal. How! no more?
Would you have more? why, am not I enough
To hang a thousand rogues?
King. But, so, you may
Hang honest men too, if you please.
Cal. I may!
'Tis like I will do so: There are a hundred
Will swear it for a need too, if I say it——
King. Such witnesses we need not.
Cal. And 'tis hard
If my word cannot hang a boisterous knave.
King. Enough. Where's Strato.

Enter STRATO.

Stra. Sir!
King. Why, where is all the company? Call Amintor in;
Evadne. Where's my brother, and Melantius?
Bid him come too; and Diphilus. Call all,
[*Exit Strato.*
That are without there.—If he should desire
The combat of you, 'tis not in the power
Of all our laws to hinder it, unless
We mean to quit them.
Cal. Why, if you do think
'Tis fit an old man, and a counsellor,
Do fight for what he says, then you may grant it.

Enter AMINTOR, EVADNE, MELANTIUS, DIPHILUS, LYSIPPUS, CLEON, STRATO.

King. Come, sirs! Amintor, thou art yet a bridegroom,
And I will use thee so: Thou shalt sit down.
Evadne, sit; and you, Amintor, too:
This banquet is for you, sir. Who has brought
A merry tale about him, to raise laughter
Amongst our wine? Why, Strato, where art thou?
Thou wilt chop out with them unseasonably,
When I desire them not.
Stra. 'Tis my ill luck, sir, so to spend them then.
King. Reach me a bowl of wine. Melantius, thou
Art sad.
Mel. I should be, sir, the merriest here,
But I have ne'er a story of my own
Worth telling at this time.
King. Give me the wine.
Melantius, I am now considering
How easy 'twere, for any man we trust,
To poison one of us in such a bowl.
Mel. I think it were not hard, sir, for a knave.
Cal. Such as you are.
King. I'faith, 'twere easy: It becomes us well
To get plain-dealing men about ourselves;

Such as you all are here. Amintor, to thee;
And to thy fair Evadne.
Mel. Have you thought of this, Calianax? [*Apart.*
Cal. Yes, marry, have I.
Mel. And what's your resolution?
Cal. You shall have it, soundly, I warrant you.
King. Reach to Amintor, Strato.
Amin. Here, my love,
This wine will do thee wrong, for it will set
Blushes upon thy cheeks; and, 'till thou dost
A fault, 'twere pity.
King. Yet, I wonder much
At the strange desperation of these men,
That dare attempt such acts here in our state:
He could not 'scape, that did it.
Mel. Were he known,
Impossible.
King. It would be known, Melantius.
Mel. It ought to be: If he got then away,
He must wear all our lives upon his sword.
He need not fly the island; he must leave
No one alive.
King. No; I should think no man
Could kill me, and 'scape clear, but that old man.
Cal. But I! heaven bless me! I! should I, my liege?
King. I do not think thou would'st; but yet thou might'st;
For thou hast in thy hands the means to escape,
By keeping of the fort. He has, Melantius,
And he has kept it well.
Mel. From cobwebs, sir,
'Tis clean swept: I can find no other art
In keeping of it now: 'Twas ne'er besieged,
Since he commanded it.
Cal. I shall be sure
Of your good word: But I have kept it safe
From such as you.
Mel. Keep your ill temper in:
I speak no malice. Had my brother kept it,
I should have said as much.
King. You are not merry.
Brother, drink wine. Sit you all still!—Calianax,
I cannot trust this: I have thrown out words,
That would have fetched warm blood upon the cheeks
Of guilty men, and he is never moved:
He knows no such thing. [*Apart.*
Cal. Impudence may 'scape,
When feeble virtue is accused.
King. He must,
If he were guilty, feel an alteration
At this our whisper, whilst we point at him:
You see he does not.
Cal. Let him hang himself:
What care I what he does? This he did say.
King. Melantius, you can easily conceive
What I have meant; for men, that are in fault,
Can subtly apprehend, when others aim
At what they do amiss: But I forgive
Freely, before this man. Heaven do so too!
I will not touch thee, so much as with shame
Of telling it. Let it be so no more.
Cal. Why, this is very fine.
Mel. I cannot tell
What 'tis you mean; but I am apt enough
Rudely to thrust into an ignorant fault.
But let me know it: Happily, 'tis nought
But misconstruction; and, where I am clear,
I will not take forgiveness of the gods,
Much less of you.
King. Nay, if you stand so stiff,
I shall call back my mercy.
Mel. I want smoothness
To thank a man for pardoning of a crime,
I never knew.
King. Not to instruct your knowledge, but to shew you
My ears are every where, you meant to kill me,
And get the fort to escape.
Mel. Pardon me, sir;
My bluntness will be pardoned: You preserve
A race of idle people here about you,
Facers and talkers, to defame the worth
Of those, that do things worthy. The man, that uttered this,
Had perished without food, be it who it will,
But for this arm, that fenced him from the foe.
And, if I thought you gave a faith to this,
The plainness of my nature would speak more.
Give me a pardon (for you ought to do it)
To kill him, that spake this.
Cal. Ay, that will be
The end of all: Then I am fairly paid
For all my care and service.
Mel. That old man,
Who calls me enemy, and of whom I
(Though I will never match my hate so low)
Have no good thought, would yet, I think, excuse me,
And swear he thought me wronged in this.
Cal. Who, I?
Thou shameless fellow! Didst thou not speak to me
Of it thyself.
Mel. Oh, then it came from him?
Cal. From me! who should it come from, but from me?
Mel. Nay, I believe your malice is enough:
But I have lost my anger. Sir, I hope
You are well satisfied.
King. Lysippus, chear
Amintor and his lady; there's no sound
Comes from you; I will come and do it myself.
Amin. You have done already, sir, for me, I thank you.
King. Melantius, I do credit this from him,
How slight soe'er you make it.
Mel. 'Tis strange you should.
Cal. 'Tis strange he should believe an old man's word,
That never lied in his life?
Mel. I talk not to thee!
Shall the wild words of this distempered man,

Frantic with age and sorrow, make a breach
Betwixt your majesty and me? 'Twas wrong
To hearken to him; but to credit him,
As much, at least, as I have power to bear.
But pardon me—whilst I speak only truth,
I may commend myself—I have bestowed
My careless blood with you, and should be loth
To think an action, that would make me lose
That, and my thanks too. When I was a boy,
I thrust myself into my country's cause,
And did a deed, that plucked five years from time,
And styled me man then. And for you, my king,
Your subjects all have fed by virtue of
My arm. This sword of mine hath plowed the ground,
And reaped the fruit in peace;
And you yourself have lived at home in ease.
So terrible I grew, that, without swords,
My name hath fetched you conquest: And my heart
And limbs are still the same; my will as great
To do you service. Let me not be paid
With such a strange distrust.

King. Melantius,
I held it great injustice to believe
Thine enemy, and did not; if I did,
I do not; let that satisfy. What, struck
With sadness all? More wine!

Cal. A few fine words
Have overthrown my truth. Ah, thou art a villain!

Mel. Why, thou wert better let me have the fort;
Dotard! I will disgrace thee thus for ever:
There shall no credit lie upon thy words.
Think better, and deliver it. [*Apart.*

Cal. My liege,
He's at me now again to do it. Speak;
Deny it, if thou canst. Examine him,
While he is hot; for, if he cool again,
He will forswear it.

King. This is lunacy,
I hope, Melantius.

Mel. He hath lost himself
Much, since his daughter missed the happiness,
My sister gained; and, though he call me foe,
I pity him.

Cal. Pity? a pox upon you!

Mel. Mark his disordered words! And, at the masque,
Diagoras knows, he raged, and railed at me,
And called a lady whore, so innocent,
She understood him not. But it becomes
Both you and me too to forgive distraction:
Pardon him, as I do.

Cal. I'll not speak for thee,
For all thy cunning. If you will be safe,
Chop off his head; for there was never known
So impudent a rascal.

King. Some, that love him,
Get him to bed. Why, pity should not let
Age make itself contemptible; we must be
All old; have him away.

Mel. Calianax,
The king believes you; come, you shall go home,
And rest; you have done well.—You'll give it up,
When I have used you thus a month, I hope.
[*Apart.*

Cal. Now, now, 'tis plain, sir; he does move me still.
He says, he knows I'll give him up the fort,
When he has used me thus a month. I am mad,
Am I not, still?

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Cal. I shall be mad indeed, if you do thus!
Why should you trust a sturdy fellow there
(That has no virtue in him; all's in his sword)
Before me? Do but take his weapons from him,
And he's an ass; and I'm a very fool,
Both with him, and without him, as you use me.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

King. 'Tis well, Calianax. But if you use
This once again, I shall entreat some other
To see your offices be well discharged.
Be merry, gentlemen; it grows somewhat late.
Amintor, thou wouldst be a-bed again,

Amin. Yes, sir.

King. And you, Evadne. Let me take
Thee in my arms, Melantius, and believe
Thou art, as thou deservest to be, my friend
Still, and for ever. Good Calianax,
Sleep soundly; it will bring thee to thyself.
[*Exeunt.*

Manent MELANTIUS *and* CALIANAX.

Cal. Sleep soundly! I sleep soundly now, I hope;
I could not be thus else. How dar'st thou stay
Alone with me, knowing how thou hast used me?

Mel. You cannot blast me with your tongue, and that's
The strongest part you have about you.

Cal. Ay,
Do look for some great punishment for this:
For I begin to forget all my hate,
And take it unkindly, that mine enemy
Should use me so extraordinarily scurvily.

Mel. I shall melt too, if you begin to take
Unkindnesses: I never meant you hurt.

Cal. Thou'lt anger me again. Thou wretched rogue,
Meant me no hurt! Disgrace me with the king;
Lose all my offices! This is no hurt,
Is it? I prithee, what dost thou call hurt?

Mel. To poison men, because they love me not;
To call the credit of men's wives in question;
To murder children betwixt me and land;
This is all hurt.

Cal. All this thou think'st, is sport;
For mine is worse: But use thy will with me;
For, betwixt grief and anger, I could cry.

Mel. Be wise then, and be safe; thou may'st revenge.

Cal. Ay, o' the king? I would revenge o' thee.

Mel. That you must plot yourself.

Cal. I'm a fine plotter.

Mel. The short is, I will hold thee with the king
In this perplexity, till peevishness
And thy disgrace have laid thee in thy grave.
But, if thou wilt deliver up the fort,
I'll take thy trembling body in my arms,
And bear thee over dangers: Thou shalt hold
Thy wonted state.
Cal. If I should tell the king,
Canst thou deny it again?
Mel. Try, and believe.
Cal. Nay, then thou canst bring any thing about.
Thou shalt have the fort.
Mel. Why, well:
Here let our hate be buried; and this hand
Shall right us both. Give me thy aged breast
To compass.
Cal. Nay, I do not love thee yet;
I cannot well endure to look on thee:
And, if I thought it were a courtesy,
Thou should'st not have it. But I am disgraced;
My offices are to be ta'en away;
And, if I did but hold this fort a day,
I do believe, the king would take it from me,
And give it thee, things are so strangely carried.
Ne'er thank me for it; but yet the king shall know
There was some such thing in it I told him of;
And that I was an honest man.
Mel. He'll buy
That knowledge very dearly. Diphilus,

Enter DIPHILUS.

What news with thee?
Diph. This were a night indeed
To do it in: The king hath sent for her.
Mel. She shall perform it then. Go, Diphilus,
And take from this good man, my worthy friend,
The fort; he'll give it thee.
Diph. Have you got that?
Cal. Art thou of the same breed? Canst thou deny
This to the king too?
Diph. With a confidence
As great as his.
Cal. Faith, like enough.
Mel. Away, and use him kindly.
Col. Touch not me;
I hate the whole strain. If thou follow me,
A great way off, I'll give thee up the fort;
And hang yourselves.
Mel. Be gone.
Diph. He's finely wrought.
[*Exeunt Cal. and Diph.*
Mel. This is a night, 'spite of astronomers,
To do the deed in. I will wash the stain,
That rests upon our house, off with his blood.

Enter AMINTOR.

Amin. Melantius, now assist me: If thou be'st
That, which thou sayest, assist me. I have lost
All my distempers, and have found a rage
So pleasing! Help me.
Mel. Who can see him thus,
And not swear vengeance? What's the matter, friend?
Amin. Out with thy sword! and, hand in hand with me,
Rush to the chamber of this hated king,
And sink him, with the weight of all his sins,
To hell for ever.
Mel. 'Twere a rash attempt,
Not to be done with safety. Let your reason
Plot your revenge, and not your passion.
Amin. If thou refusest me in these extremes,
Thou art no friend: He sent for her to me;
By Heaven, to me, myself! And, I must tell you,
I love her, as a stranger; there is worth
In that vile woman, worthy things, Melantius;
And she repents. I'll do it myself alone,
Though I be slain. Farewell.
Mel. He'll overthrow
My whole design with madness. Amintor,
Think what thou dost: I dare as much as Valour;
But 'tis the king, the king, the king, Amintor,
With whom thou fightest!—I know he's honest,
And this will work with him. [*Aside.*
Amin. I cannot tell
What thou hast said; but thou hast charmed my sword
Out of my hand, and left me shaking here,
Defenceless.
Mel. I will take it up for thee.
Amin. What a wild beast is uncollected man!
The thing, that we call honour, bears us all
Headlong to sin, and yet itself is nothing.
Mel. Alas, how variable are thy thoughts!
Amin. Just like my fortunes: I was run to that
I purposed to have chid thee for. Some plot,
I did distrust, thou hadst against the king,
By that old fellow's carriage. But take heed;
There's not the least limb growing to a king,
But carries thunder in it.
Mel. I have none
Against him.
Amin. Why, come then; and still remember,
We may not think revenge.
Mel. I will remember. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

Enter EVADNE, *and a Gentleman.*

Evad. SIR, is the king a-bed?
Gent. Madam, an hour ago.
Evad. Give me the key then, and let none be near;
'Tis the king's pleasure.
Gent. I understand you, madam; 'would 'twere mine.
I must not wish good rest unto your ladyship.
Evad. You talk, you talk.
Gent. 'Tis all I dare do, madam; but the king
Will wake, and then——

Evad. Saving your imagination, pray, good night, sir.

Gent. A good night be it then, and a long one, madam. I am gone. [*Exit.*

[*King a-bed.*

Evad. The night grows horrible; and all about me
Like my black purpose. Oh, the conscience
Of a lost virgin! whither wilt thou pull me?
To what things, dismal as the depth of hell,
Wilt thou provoke me? Let no woman dare
From this hour be disloyal, if her heart be flesh,
If she have blood, and can fear: 'Tis a daring
Above that desperate fool's, that left his peace,
And went to sea to fight. 'Tis so many sins,
An age cannot repent them; and so great,
The gods want mercy for! Yet, I must thro' them.
I have begun a slaughter on my honour,
And I must end it there. He sleeps. Good Heavens!
Why give you peace to this untemperate beast,
That hath so long transgressed you? I must kill him,
And I will do it bravely: The mere joy
Tells me, I merit in it. Yet I must not
Thus tamely do it, as he sleeps; that were
To rock him to another world: My vengeance
Shall take him waking, and then lay before him
The number of his wrongs and punishments.
I'll shake his sins like furies, till I waken
His evil angel, his sick conscience,
And then I'll strike him dead. King, by your leave, [*Ties his arm to the bed.*
I dare not trust your strength. Your grace and I
Must grapple upon even terms no more.
So. If he rail me not from my resolution,
I shall be strong enough. My lord the king!
My lord! He sleeps, as if he meant to wake
No more. My lord! Is he not dead already?
Sir! My lord!

King. Who's that?

Evad. Oh, you sleep soundly, sir!

King. My dear Evadne,
I have been dreaming of thee. Come to bed.

Evad. I am come at length, sir; but how welcome?

King. What pretty new device is this, Evadne?
What, do you tie me to you? By my love,
This is a quaint one. Come, my dear, and kiss me;
I'll be thy Mars; to bed, my queen of love:
Let us be caught together, that the gods
May see, and envy our embraces.

Evad. Stay, sir, stay;
You are too hot, and I have brought you physic
To temper your high veins.

King. Prithee, to bed then; let me take it warm;
There thou shalt know the state of my body better.

Evad. I know you have a surfeited foul body;
And you must bleed.

King. Bleed!

Evad. Ay, you shall bleed! Lie still; and, it the devil,
Your lust, will give you leave, repent. This steel
Comes to redeem the honour, that you stole,
King, my fair name; which nothing but thy death
Can answer to the world.

King. How is this, Evadne?

Evad. I am not she; nor bear I in this breast
So much cold spirit to be called a woman.
I am a tyger; I am any thing
That knows not pity. Stir not! If thou dost,
I'll take thee unprepared; thy fears upon thee,
That make thy sins look double; and so send thee
(By my revenge, I will) to look those torments,
Prepared for such black souls.

King. Thou dost not mean this; 'tis impossible
Thou art too sweet and gentle.

Evad. No, I am not.
I am as foul as thou art, and can number
As many such hells here. I was once fair,
Once I was lovely; not a blowing rose
More chastely sweet, till thou, thou, thou foul canker,
(Stir not) didst poison me. I was a world of virtue,
Till your curst court and you (hell bless you for it!)
With your temptations on temptations,
Made me give up mine honour; for which, king,
I'm come to kill thee.

King. No!

Evad. I am.

King. Thou art not!
I prithee speak not these things: Thou art gentle,
And wert not meant thus rugged.

Evad. Peace, and hear me.
Stir nothing but your tongue, and that for mercy
To those above us; by whose lights I vow,
Those blessed fires, that shot to see our sin,
If thy hot soul had substance with thy blood,
I would kill that too; which, being past my steel,
My tongue shall reach. Thou art a shameless villain!
A thing out of the overcharge of nature;
Sent, like a thick cloud, to disperse a plague
Upon weak catching women! such a tyrant,
That for his lust would sell away his subjects;
Ay, all his heaven hereafter!

King. Hear, Evadne,
Thou soul of sweetness, hear! I am thy king.

Evad. Thou art my shame! Lie still, there's none about you,
Within your cries: All promises of safety
Are but deluding dreams. Thus, thus, thou foul man,
Thus I begin my vengeance! [*Stabs him.*

King. Hold, Evadne!
I do command thee hold.

Evad. I do not mean, sir,
To part so fairly with you; we must change
More of these love-tricks yet.

King. What bloody villain
Provoked thee to this murder?

Evad. Thou, thou monster.

King. Oh! Evadne, pity me.
Evad. Hell take me then! This for my lord Amintor!
This for my noble brother! and this stroke
For the most wronged of women! [*Kills him.*
King. Oh! I die.
Evad. Die all our faults together! I forgive thee. *Exit.*

Enter two of the bedchamber,

1. Come, now she's gone, let's enter; the king
Expects it, and will be angry.
2. How fast he is! I cannot hear him breathe.
1. Either the tapers give a feeble light,
Or he looks very pale.
2. And so he does:
Pray heaven he be well; let's look. Alas!
He's stiff, wounded and dead! Treason, treason!
1. Run forth and call.
2. Treason, treason! [*Exit.*
1. This will be laid on us:
Who can believe a woman could do this!

Enter CLEON *and* LYSIPPUS.

Cleon. How now! Where's the traitor?
1. Fled, fled away; but there her woeful act lies still.
Cleon. Her act! a woman!
Lys. Where's the body?
1. There.
Lys. Farewell, thou worthy man! There were two bonds,
That tied our loves, a brother and a king;
The least of which might fetch a flood of tears:
But such the misery of greatness is,
They have no time to mourn; then pardon me:
Sirs, which way went she?

Enter STRATO.

Stra. Never follow her;
For she, alas! was but the instrument.
News is now brought in that Melantius
Has got the fort, and stands upon the wall;
And with a loud voice calls those few, that pass
At this dead time of night, delivering
The innocence of this act.
Lys. Gentlemen, I am your king.
Stra. We do acknowledge it.
Lys. I would I were not! Follow, all; for this
Must have a sudden stop. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MELANTIUS, DIPHILUS, *and* CALIANAX, *on the wall.*

Mel. If the dull people can believe I am armed,
(Be constant, Diphilus!) now we have time,
Either to bring our banished honours home,
Or create new ones in our ends.
Diph. I fear not.
My spirit lies not that way. Courage, Calianax.
Cal. Would I had any! you should quickly know it.
Mel. Speak to the people: Thou art eloquent.
Cal. 'Tis a fine eloquence to come to the gallows!
You were born to be my end. The devil take you!
Now must I hang for company. 'Tis strange,
I should be old, and neither wise nor valiant.

Enter LYSIPPUS, DIAGORAS, CLEON, STRATO, *and guard.*

Lys. See where he stands, as boldly confident,
As if he had his full command about him.
Stra. He looks as if he had the better cause, Sir;
Under your gracious pardon, let me speak it!
Though he be mighty spirited, and forward
To all great things; to all things of that danger
Worse men shake at the telling of; yet, certainly,
I do believe him noble; and this action
Rather pulled on, than sought: His mind was ever
As worthy as his hand.
Lys. 'Tis my fear, too.
Heaven forgive all! Summon him, lord Cleon.
Cleon. Ho, from the walls there.
Mel. Worthy Cleon, welcome.
We could have wished you here, lord: You are honest.
Cal. Well, thou art as flattering a knave, though I dare not tell thee so——— [*Aside.*
Lys. Melantius!
Mel. Sir.
Lys. I am sorry, that we meet thus; our old love
Never required such distance. Pray Heaven,
You have not left yourself, and sought this safety
More out of fear than honour! You have lost
A noble master; which your faith, Melantius,
Some think, might have preserved: Yet you know best.
Cal. When time was, I was mad; some, that dares fight,
I hope will pay this rascal.
Mel. Royal young man, whose tears look lovely on thee,
Had they been shed for a deserving one,
They had been lasting monuments! Thy brother,
While he was good, I call'd him king; and serv'd him
With that strong faith, that most unwearied valour,
Pulled people from the farthest sun to seek him,
And beg his friendship. I was then his soldier.
But since his hot pride drew him to disgrace me,
And brand my noble actions with his lust
(That never cured dishonour of my sister,
Base stain of whore! and, which is worse,
The joy to make it still so), like myself,
Thus I have flung him off with my allegiance;
And stand here mine own justice, to revenge
What I have suffered in him; and this old man,
Wronged almost to lunacy.
Cal. Who I?
You would draw me in. I have had no wrong,
I do disclaim ye all.
Mel. The short is this:
Tis no ambition to lift up myself
Urgeth me thus; I do desire again
To be a subject, so I may be free.
If not, I know my strength, and will unbuild
This goodly town. Be speedy, and be wise,
In a reply.
Stra. Be sudden, sir, to tie
All up again: What's done is past recall,
And past you to revenge; and there are thousands,

That wait for such a troubled hour as this.
Throw him the blank.
Lys. Melantius, write in that
Thy choice: My seal is at it.
Mel. It was our honours drew us to this act,
Not gain; and we will only work our pardons.
Cal. Put my name in too.
Dipk. You disclaim'd us all
But now, Calianax.
Cal. That is all one;
I'll not be hanged hereafter by a trick:
I'll have it in.
Mel. You shall, you shall.
Come to the back gate, and we'll call you king,
And give you up the fort.
Lys. Away, away. [*Exeunt omnes.*

Enter ASPATIA, *in man's apparel.*

Asp. This is my fatal hour. Heaven may forgive
My rash attempt, that causelessly hath laid
Griefs on me, that will never let me rest;
And put a woman's heart into my breast.
It is more honour for you, that I die;
For she, that can endure the misery,
That I have on me, and be patient too,
May live and laugh at all that you can do.
God save you, sir!

Enter Servant.

Ser. And you, sir. What's your business?
Asp. With you, sir, now; to do me the fair office
To help me to your lord.
Ser. What, would you serve him?
Asp. I'll do him any service; but, to haste,
For my affairs are earnest, I desire
To speak with him.
Ser. Sir, because you're in such haste, I would be loth delay you any longer: You cannot.
Asp. It shall become you, though, to tell your lord.
Ser. Sir, he will speak with nobody; but, in particular, I have in charge, about no weighty matters.
Asp. This is most strange. Art thou gold proof?
There's for thee; help me to him.
Ser. Pray be not angry, sir. I'll do my best. [*Exit.*
Asp. How stubbornly this fellow answered me!
There is a vile dishonest trick in man,
More than in women: All the men I meet
Appear thus to me, are all harsh and rude;
And have a subtilty in every thing,
Which love could never know. But we fond women
Harbour the easiest and the smoothest thoughts,
And think, all shall go so! It is unjust,
That men and women should be matched together.

Enter AMINTOR *and his man.*

Amin. Where is he?
Ser. There, my lord.
Amin. What would you, sir?
Asp. Please it your lordship to command your man
Out of the room, I shall deliver things,
Worthy your hearing.
Amin. Leave us. [*Exit servant.*
Asp. Oh, that that shape
Should bury falsehood in it! [*Aside.*
Amin. Now your will, sir.
Asp. When you know me, my lord, you needs must guess
My business; and I am not hard to know;
For till the chance of war marked this smooth face
With these few blemishes, people would call me
My sister's picture, and her mine. In short,
I am the brother to the wronged Aspatia.
Amin. The wronged Aspatia! 'Would thou wert so too
Unto the wronged Amintor! Let me kiss
That hand of thine, in honour that I bear
Unto the wronged Aspatia. Here I stand,
That did it: 'Would he could not! Gentle youth,
Leave me; for there is something in thy looks,
That calls my sins, in a most hideous form,
Into my mind; and I have grief enough
Without thy help.
Asp. I would I could with credit.
Since I was twelve years old, I had not seen
My sister, till this hour; I now arrived:
She sent for me to see her marriage;
A woeful one! But they, that are above,
Have ends in every thing. She used few words;
But yet enough to make me understand
The baseness of the injuries you did her.
That little training, I have had, is war:
I may behave myself rudely in peace;
I would not, though. I shall not need to tell you,
I am but young, and would be loth to lose
Honour, that is not easily gained again.
Fairly I mean to deal: The age is strict
For single combats; and we shall be stopped,
If it be published. If you like your sword,
Use it; if mine appear a better to you,
Change; for the ground is this, and this the time,
To end our difference.
Amin. Charitable youth,
(If thou be'st such) think not I will maintain
So strange a wrong: And, for thy sister's sake,
Know, that I could not think that desperate thing,
I durst not do; yet, to enjoy this world,
I would not see her; for, beholding thee,
I am I know not what. If I have aught,
That may content thee, take it, and be gone;
For death is not so terrible as thou.
Thine eyes shoot guilt into me.
Asp. Thus, she swore,
Thou wouldst behave thyself; and give me words,
That would fetch tears into my eyes; and so
Thou dost, indeed. But yet she bade me watch,
Lest I were cozened; and be sure to fight,
Ere I returned.

Amin. That must not be with me.
For her I'll die directly; but against her
Will never hazard it.
Asp. You must be urged.
I do not deal uncivilly with those,
That dare to fight; but such a one as you
Must be used thus. [*She strikes him.*
Amin. I prithee, youth, take heed.
Thy sister is a thing to me so much
Above mine honour, that I can endure
All this. Good gods! a blow I can endure!
But stay not, lest thou draw a timeless death
Upon thyself.
Asp. Thou art some prating fellow;
One, that hath studied out a trick to talk,
And move soft-hearted people; to be kick'd
[*She kicks him.*
Thus, to be kick'd!—Why should he be so slow
In giving me my death? [*Aside.*
Amin. A man can bear
No more, and keep his flesh. Forgive me, then!
I would endure yet, if I could. Now shew
The spirit thou pretend'st, and understand,
Thou hast no hour to live.—— [*They fight.*
What dost thou mean?
Thou canst not fight: The blows thou mak'st at me
Are quite besides; and those, I offer at thee,
Thou spread'st thine arms, and tak'st upon thy breast,
Alas, defenceless!
Asp. I have got enough,
And my desire. There is no place so fit
For me to die as here.

Enter EVADNE, *her hands bloody, with a knife.*

Evad. Amintor, I am loaden with events,
That fly to make thee happy. I have joys,
That in a moment can call back thy wrongs,
And settle thee in thy free state again.
It is Evadne still, that follows thee,
But not her mischiefs.
Amin. Thou canst not fool me to believe again;
But thou hast looks and things so full of news,
That I am stayed.
Evad. Noble Amintor, put off thy amaze,
Let thine eyes loose, and speak: Am I not fair?
Looks not Evadne beauteous, with these rites now?
Were those hours half so lovely in thine eyes,
When our hands met before the holy man?
I was too foul within to look fair then:
Since I knew ill, I was not free till now.
Amin. There is presage of some important thing
About thee, which, it seems, thy tongue hath lost.
Thy hands are bloody, and thou hast a knife!
Evad. In this consists thy happiness and mine.
Joy to Amintor! for the king is dead.
Amin. Those have most power to hurt us, that we love;
We lay our sleeping lives within their arms!
Why, thou hast raised up Mischief to his height,
And found one, to out-name thy other faults.
Thou hast no intermission of thy sins,
But all thy life is a continued ill.
Black is thy colour now, disease thy nature.
Joy to Amintor! Thou hast touched a life,
The very name of which had power to chain
Up all my rage, and calm my wildest wrongs.
Evad. 'Tis done; and since I could not find a way
To meet thy love so clear as through his life,
I cannot now repent it.
Amin. Couldst thou procure the gods to speak to me,
To bid me love this woman, and forgive,
I think I should fall out with them. Behold,
Here lies a youth, whose wounds bleed in my breast,
Sent by his violent fate, to fetch his death
From my slow hand: And, to augment my woe,
You now are present, stained with a king's blood,
Violently shed. This keeps night here,
And throws an unknown wilderness about me.
Asp. Oh, oh, oh!
Amin. No more; pursue me not.
Evad. Forgive me then, and take me to thy bed.
We may not part.
Amin. Forbear! Be wise, and let my rage
Go this way.
Evad. 'Tis you, that I would stay, not it.
Amin. Take heed; it will return with me.
Evad. If it must be, I shall not fear to meet it:
Take me home.
Amin. Thou monster of cruelty, forbear!
Evad. For heaven's sake, look more calm:
Thine eyes are sharper than thou canst make thy sword.
Amin. Away, away!
Thy knees are more to me than violence,
I'm worse than sick to see knees follow me,
For that I must not grant. For heaven's sake, stand.
Evad. Receive me, then.
Amin. I dare not stay thy language:
In midst of all my anger and my grief,
Thou dost awake something, that troubles me,
And says, 'I loved thee once.' I dare not stay;
There is no end of woman's reasoning.
[*Leaves her.*
Evad. Amintor, thou shalt love me now again:
Go; I am calm. Farewell, and peace for ever!
Evadne, whom thou hat'st, will die for thee.
[*Kills herself.*
Amin. I have a little human nature yet,
That's left for thee, that bids me stay thy hand.
[*Returns.*
Evad. Thy hand was welcome, but it came too late.
Oh, I am lost! the heavy sleep makes haste.
[*She dies.*
Asp. Oh, oh, oh!
Amin. This earth of mine doth tremble, and I feel
A stark affrighted motion in my blood:
My soul grows weary of her house, and I
All over am a trouble to myself.
There is some hidden power in these dead things,

That calls my flesh unto them: I am cold:
Be resolute, and bear them company.
There's something, yet, which I am loth to leave.
There's man enough in me to meet the fears,
That death can bring; and yet, 'would it were done!
I can find nothing in the whole discourse
Of death, I durst not meet the boldest way;
Yet still, betwixt the reason and the act,
The wrong I to Aspatia did stands up:
I have not such another fault to answer.
Though she may justly arm herself with scorn
And hate of me, my soul will part less troubled,
When I have paid to her in tears my sorrow.
I will not leave this act unsatisfied,
If all that's left in me can answer it.

Asp. Was it a dream? There stands Amintor still;
Or I dream still.

Amin. How dost thou? Speak; receive my love and help.
Thy blood climbs up to his old place again:
There's hope of thy recovery.

Asp. Did you not name Aspatia?

Amin. I did.

Asp. And talked of tears and sorrow unto her?

Amin. 'Tis true; and 'till these happy signs in thee
Did stay my course, 'twas thither I was going.

Asp. Thou'rt there already, and these wounds are hers:
Those threats, I brought with me, sought not revenge;
But came to fetch this blessing from thy hand.
I am Aspatia yet.

Amin. Dare my soul ever look abroad again?

Asp. I shall surely live, Amintor; I am well:
A kind of healthful joy wanders within me.

Amin. The world wants lives to excuse thy loss!
Come, let me bear thee to some place of help.

Asp. Amintor, thou must stay; I must rest here;
My strength begins to disobey my will.
How dost thou, my best soul? I would fain live
Now, if I could: Wouldst thou have loved me, then?

Amin. Alas!
All that I am's not worth a hair from thee.

Asp. Give me thy hand; my hands grope up and down,
And cannot find thee: I am wondrous sick:
Have I thy hand, Amintor?

Amin. Thou greatest blessing of the world, thou hast.

Asp. I do believe thee better than my sense.
Oh! I must go. Farewell! [*Dies.*

Amin. She swoons! Aspatia! Help! for heaven's sake, water!
Such as may chain life ever to this frame.
Aspatia, speak! What, no help yet? I fool!
I'll chafe her temples: Yet there's nothing stirs:
Some hidden power tell her, Amintor calls,
And let her answer me! Aspatia, speak!
I've heard, if there be any life, but bow
The body thus, and it will shew itself.
Oh, she is gone! I will not leave her yet.
Since out of justice we must challenge nothing,
I'll call it mercy, if you'll pity me,
Ye heavenly powers! and lend, for some few years,
The blessed soul to this fair seat again.
No comfort comes; the gods deny me too!
I'll bow the body once again. Aspatia!
The soul is fled for ever; and I wrong
Myself, so long to lose her company.
Must I talk now? Here's to be with thee, love!
[*Kills himself.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. This is a great grace to my lord, to have the new king come to him: I must tell him he is entering. Oh, heaven! Help, help!

Enter LYSIPPUS, MELANTIUS, CALIANAX, CLEON, DIPHILUS, *and* STRATO.

Lys. Where's Amintor?

Serv. Oh, there, there.

Lys. How strange is this!

Cal. What should we do here?

Mel. These deaths are such acquainted things with me,
That yet my heart dissolves not. May I stand
Stiff here for ever! Eyes, call up your tears!
This is Amintor: Heart! he was my friend;
Melt; now it flows. Amintor, give a word
To call me to thee.

Amin. Oh!

Mel. Melantius calls his friend Amintor. Oh, thy arms
Are kinder to me than thy tongue! Speak, speak!

Amin. What?

Mel. That little word was worth all the sounds,
That ever I shall hear again.

Diph. Oh, brother!
Here lies your sister slain; you lose yourself
In sorrow there.

Mel. Why, Diphilus, it is
A thing to laugh at, in respect of this:
Here was my sister, father, brother, son:
All that I had! Speak once again: What youth
Lies slain there by thee?

Amin. 'Tis Aspatia.
My last is said. Let me give up my soul
Into thy bosom. [*Dies.*

Cal. What's that? what's that? Aspatia!

Mel. I never did
Repent the greatness of my heart till now:
It will not burst at need.

Cal. My daughter dead here too! And you have all fine new tricks to grieve; but I never knew any but direct crying.

Mel. I am a prattler; but no more.
[*Offers to kill himself.*

Diph. Hold, brother.

Lys. Stop him.

Diph. Fie! how unmanly was this offer in you; Does this become our strain?

Cal. I know not what the matter is, but I am grown very kind, and am friends with you. You have given me that among you, will kill me quickly; but I'll go home, and live as long as I can.

Mel. His spirit is but poor, that can be kept
From death for want of weapons.
Is not my hand a weapon sharp enough
To stop my breath? or, if you tie down those,
I vow, Amintor, I will never eat,
Or drink, or sleep, or have to do with that,
That may preserve life! This I swear to keep.

Lys. Look to him tho', and bear those bodies in.
May this a fair example be to me,
To rule with temper: For, on lustful kings,
Unlooked-for, sudden deaths from heaven are sent;
But curst is he, that is their instrument.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

PHILASTER;

OR

LOVE LIES A-BLEEDING.

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

KING.
PHILASTER, *heir to the crown.*
PHARAMOND, *prince of Spain.*
DION, *a lord.*
CLEREMONT, } *noble gentlemen, his associates.*
THRASILINE, }
An old captain.
Five citizens.
A country fellow.
Two woodmen.
The king's guard and train.

WOMEN.

ARETHUSA, *the king's daughter.*
GALATEA, *a wise modest lady, attending the princess.*
MEGRA, *a lascivious lady.*
An old wanton lady, or crone, attending the princess.
Another lady attending the princess.
EUPHRASIA, *daughter of Dion, but disguised like a page, and called Bellario.*

Scene,—Sicily.

ACT I.

Enter DION, CLEREMONT, *and* THRASILINE.

Cle. HERE'S nor lords nor ladies!

Dion. Credit me, gentlemen, I wonder at it They received strict charge from the king to attend here. Besides, it was boldly published, that no officer should forbid any gentlemen, that desire to attend and hear.

Cle. Can you guess the cause?

Dion. Sir, it is plain, about the Spanish prince, that's come to marry our kingdom's heir, and be our sovereign.

Thra. Many, that will seem to know much, say, she looks not on him like a maid in love.

Dion. Oh, sir, the multitude (that seldom know any thing but their own opinions) speak that, they would have; but the prince, before his own approach, received so many confident messages from the state, that I think she's resolved to be ruled.

Cle. Sir, it is thought, with her he shall enjoy both these kingdoms of Sicily and Calabria.

Dion. Sir, it is, without controversy, so meant. But 'twill be a troublesome labour for him to enjoy both these kingdoms with safety, the right heir to one of them living, and living so virtuously; especially, the people admiring the bravery of his mind, and lamenting his injuries.

Cle. Who? Philaster?

Dion. Yes; Whose father, we all know, was by our late king of Calabria unrighteously deposed from his fruitful Sicily. Myself drew some blood in those wars, which I would give my hand to be washed from.

Cle. Sir, my ignorance in state policy will not let me know, why, Philaster being heir to one of these kingdoms, the king should suffer him to walk abroad with such free liberty.

Dion. Sir, it seems your nature is more constant than to enquire after state news. But the king, of late, made a hazard of both the kingdoms, of Sicily and his own, with offering but to imprison Philaster. At which the city was in arms, not to

be charmed down by any state order or proclamation, till they saw Philaster ride through the streets pleased, and without a guard; at which they threw their hats, and their arms from them; some to make bonfires, some to drink, all for his deliverance. Which, wise men say, is the cause, the king labours to bring in the power of a foreign nation, to awe his own with.

Enter KING, PHARAMOND, ARETHUSA, *and train.*

King. To give a stronger testimony of love
Than sickly promises (which commonly
In princes find both birth and burial
In one breath), we have drawn you, worthy sir,
To make your fair endearments to our daughter,
And worthy services known to our subjects,
Now loved and wondered at. Next, our intent,
To plant you deeply, our immediate heir,
Both to our blood and kingdoms. For this lady
(The best part of your life, as you confirm me,
And I believe) though her few years and sex
Yet teach her nothing but her fears and blushes,
Desires without desire, discourse and knowledge
Only of what herself is to herself,
Make her feel moderate health; and when she sleeps,
In making no ill day, knows no ill dreams.
Think not, dear sir, these undivided parts,
That must mould up a virgin, are put on
To shew her so, as borrowed ornaments,
To speak her perfect love to you, or add
An artificial shadow to her nature:
No, Sir; I boldly dare proclaim her, yet
No woman. But woo her still, and think her modesty
A sweeter mistress than the offered language
Of any dame, were she a queen, whose eye
Speaks common loves and comforts to her servants.
Last, noble son (for so I now must call you),
What I have done thus public, is not only
To add a comfort in particular
To you or me, but all; and to confirm
The nobles, and the gentry of these kingdoms,
By oath to your succession, which shall be
Within this month at most.

Thra. This will be hardly done. } *Aside.*
Cle. It must be ill done, if it be done. } *Aside.*
Dion. When 'tis at best, 'twill be but half done, whilst
So brave a gentleman's wronged, and flung off. } *Aside.*
Thra. I fear. } *Aside.*
Cle. Who does not? } *Aside.*
Dion. I fear not for myself, and yet I fear too. } *Aside.*
Well, we shall see, we shall see. No more. } *Aside.*

Pha. Kissing your white hand, mistress, I take leave
To thank your royal father; and thus far
To be my own free trumpet. Understand,
Great king, and these your subjects, mine that must be,
(For so deserving you have spoke me, sir,
And so deserving I dare speak myself)
To what a person, of what eminence,
Ripe expectation, of what faculties,
Manners and virtues, you would wed your kingdoms:
You in me have your wishes. Oh, this country!
By more than all my hopes I hold it happy;
Happy, in their dear memories, that have been
Kings great and good; happy in yours, that is;
And from you (as a chronicle to keep
Your noble name from eating age) do I
Open myself, most happy. Gentlemen,
Believe me in a word, a prince's word,
There shall be nothing to make up a kingdom
Mighty, and flourishing, defenced, feared,
Equal to be commanded and obeyed,
But through the travels of my life I'll find it,
And tie it to this country. And I vow
My reign shall be so easy to the subject,
That every man shall be his prince himself,
And his own law (yet I his prince and law).
And, dearest lady, to your dearest self
(Dear, in the choice of him whose name and lustre
Must make you more and mightier) let me say,
You are the blessedest living; for, sweet princess,
You shall make him yours, for whom
Great queens must die.

Thra. Miraculous! } *Aside.*
Cle. This speech calls him Spaniard, being nothing but a large inventory of his own commendations. } *Aside.*

Enter PHILASTER.

Dion. I wonder what's his price? For certainly
He'll sell himself, he has so praised his shape.
But here comes one, more worthy those large speeches,
Than the large speaker of them.
Let me be swallowed quick, if I can find,
In all the anatomy of yon man's virtues,
One sinew sound enough to promise for him,
He shall be constable.
By this sun, he'll never make a king
Unless it be for trifles, in my poor judgment.

Phi. Right noble sir, as low as my obedience,
And with a heart as loyal as my knee,
I beg your favour.

King. Rise; you have it, sir.

Dion. Mark but the king, how pale he looks with fear!
Oh! this same whorson conscience, how it jades us!

King. Speak your intents, sir.

Phi. Shall I speak them freely?
Be still my royal sovereign.—

King. As a subject,
We give you freedom.

Dion. Now it heats.

Phi. Then thus I turn
My language to you, prince; you, foreign man!
Ne'er stare, nor put on wonder, for you must
Endure me, and you shall. This earth you tread upon

(A dowry, as you hope, with this fair princess)
By my dead father (oh, I had a father,
Whose memory I bow to!) was not left
To your inheritance, and I up and living;
Having myself about me, and my sword,
The souls of all my name, and memories,
These arms, and some few friends, besides the gods;
To part so calmly with it, and sit still,
And say, 'I might have been.' I tell thee, Pharamond,
When thou art king, look I be dead and rotten,
And my name ashes: For, hear me, Pharamond!
This very ground, thou goest on, this fat earth,
My father's friends made fertile with their faiths,
Before that day of shame, shall gape and swallow
Thee and thy nation, like a hungry grave,
Into her hidden bowels. Prince, it shall;
By Nemesis, it shall!

Pha. He's mad; beyond cure, mad.

Dion. Here is a fellow has some fire in his veins: The outlandish prince looks like a tooth-drawer.

Phi. Sir, prince of poppingjays, I'll make it well appear
To you, I am not mad.

King. You displease us:
You are too bold.

Phi. No, sir, I am too tame,
Too much a turtle, a thing, born without passion,
A faint shadow, that every drunken cloud sails over,
And makes nothing.

King. I do not fancy this.
Call our physicians: Sure he is somewhat tainted.

Thra. I do not think 'twill prove so.

Dion. He has given him a general purge already, for all the right he has; and now he means to let him blood. Be constant, gentlemen: By these hairs, I'll run his hazard, although I run my name out of the kingdom.

Cle. Peace, we are all one soul.

Pha. What you have seen in me, to stir offence,
I cannot find; unless it be this lady,
Offered into mine arms, with the succession;
Which I must keep, though it hath pleased your fury
To mutiny within you; without disputing
Your genealogies, or taking knowledge
Whose branch you are. The king will leave it me;
And I dare make it mine. You have your answer.

Phi. If thou wert sole inheritor to him,
That made the world his, and couldst see no sun
Shine upon any thing but thine; were Pharamond
As truly valiant as I feel him cold,
And ringed among the choicest of his friends
(Such as would blush to talk such serious follies,
Or back such bellied commendations),
And from this presence, spite of all these bugs,
You should hear further from me.

King. Sir, you wrong the prince:
I gave you not this freedom to brave our best friends.
You deserve our frown. Go to; be better tempered.

Phi. It must be, sir, when I am nobler used.

King. Philaster, tell me
The injuries you aim at, in your riddles.

Phi. If you had my eyes, sir, and sufferance,
My griefs upon you, and my broken fortunes,
My wants great, and now nought but hopes and fears,
My wrongs would make ill riddles to be laughed at.
Dare you be still my king, and right me not?

King. Give me your wrongs in private.

[*They whisper.*

Phi. Take them,
And ease me of a load would bow strong Atlas.

Cle. He dares not stand the shock.

Dion. I cannot blame him: there's danger in't. Every man in this age has not a soul of crystal, for all men to read their actions through: Men's hearts and faces are so far asunder, that they hold no intelligence. Do but view yon stranger well, and you shall see a fever through all his bravery, and feel him shake like a true recreant. If he give not back his crown again, upon the report of an elder gun, I have no augury.

King. Go to!
Be more yourself, as you respect our favour;
You'll stir us else. Sir, I must have you know,
That you are, and shall be, at our pleasure, what fashion we
Will put upon you. Smooth your brow, or by the gods——

Phi. I am dead, sir; you are my fate. It was not I
Said, I was wronged: I carry all about me,
My weak stars lead me to, all my weak fortunes.
Who dares in all this presence speak (that is
But man of flesh, and may be mortal) tell me,
I do not most entirely love this prince,
And honour his full virtues!

King. Sure, he's possessed.

Phi. Yes, with my father's spirit: It is here, O king!
A dangerous spirit. Now he tells me, king,
I was a king's heir, bids me be a king;
And whispers to me, these are all my subjects.
'Tis strange he will not let me sleep, but dives
Into my fancy, and there gives me shapes,
That kneel, and do me service, cry me "king:"
But I'll suppress him; he's a factious spirit,
And will undo me. Noble sir, your hand:
I am your servant.

King. Away, I do not like this:
I'll make you tamer, or I'll dispossess you
Both of life and spirit: For this time
I pardon your wild speech, without so much
As your imprisonment. [*Ex. King, Pha. and Are.*

Dion. See, how his fancy labours! Has he not
Spoke home, and bravely? What a dangerous train,
Did he give fire to! How he shook the king,
Made his soul melt within him, and his blood

Run into whey! It stood upon his brow,
Like a cold winter dew.
Phi. Gentlemen,
You have no suit to me? I am no minion:
You stand, methinks, like men, that would be courtiers,
If you could well be flattered at a price
Not to undo your children. You are all honest:
Go, get you home again, and make your country
A virtuous court; to which your great ones may,
In their diseased age, retire, and live recluse.
Cle. How do you, worthy sir?
Phi. Well, very well;
And so well, that, if the king please, I find
I may live many years.
Dion. The king must please,
Whilst we know what you are, and who you are,
Your wrongs and injuries. Shrink not, worthy sir,
But add your father to you: In whose name,
We'll waken all the gods, and conjure up
The rods of vengeance, the abused people;
Who, like to raging torrents, shall swell high,
And so begirt the dens of these male-dragons,
That, through the strongest safety, they shall beg
For mercy at your sword's point.
Phi. Friends, no more;
Our ears may be corrupted: 'Tis an age
We dare not trust our wills to. Do you love me?
Thra. Do we love Heaven and honour?
Phi. My lord Dion,
You had a virtuous gentlewoman called you father;
Is she yet alive?
Dion. Most honoured sir, she is:
And, for the penance but of an idle dream,
Has undertook a tedious pilgrimage.

Enter a Lady.

Phi. Is it to me, or any of these gentlemen, you come?
Lady. To you, brave lord: The princess would entreat your present company.
Phi. The princess send for me! You are mistaken.
Lady. If you be called Philaster, 'tis to you.
Phi. Kiss her fair hand, and say I will attend her.
Dion. Do you know what you do?
Phi. Yes; go to see a woman.
Cle. But do you weigh the danger you are in?
Phi. Danger in a sweet face!
By Jupiter, I must not fear a woman.
Thra. But are you sure it was the princess sent?
It may be some foul train to catch your life.
Phi. I do not think it, gentlemen; she's noble;
Her eye may shoot me dead, or those true red
And white friends in her face may steal my soul out:
There's all the danger in it. But, be what may,
Her single name hath armed me. [*Exit Phi.*
Dion. Go on:
And be as truly happy as thou art fearless.
Come, gentlemen, let's make our friends acquainted,
Lest the king prove false. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ARETHUSA *and a Lady.*

Are. Comes he not?
Lady. Madam?
Are. Will Philaster come?
Lady. Dear madam, you were wont
To credit me at first.
Are. But didst thou tell me so?
I am forgetful, and my woman's strength
Is so o'ercharged with dangers like to grow
About my marriage, that these under things
Dare not abide in such a troubled sea.
How looked he, when he told thee he would come?
Lady. Why, well.
Are. And not a little fearful?
Lady. Fear, madam? sure, he knows not what it is.
Are. Ye are all of his faction; the whole court
Is bold in praise of him; whilst I
May live neglected, and do noble things,
As fools in strife throw gold into the sea,
Drowned in the doing. But, I know he fears.
Lady. Fear? Madam, methought, his looks hid more
Of love than fear.
Are. Of love? to whom? to you!
Did you deliver those plain words, I sent,
With such a winning gesture, and quick look,
That you have caught him?
Lady. Madam, I mean to you.
Are. Of love to me? alas! thy ignorance
Lets thee not see the crosses of our births.
Nature, that loves not to be questioned
Why she did this, or that, but has her ends,
And knows she does well, never gave the world
Two things so opposite, so contrary,
As he and I am: If a bowl of blood,
Drawn from this arm of mine, would poison thee,
A draught of his would cure thee. Of love to me?
Lady. Madam, I think I hear him.
Are. Bring him in.
Ye gods, that would not have your dooms withstood,
Whose holy wisdoms at this time it is,
To make the passion of a feeble maid
The way unto your justice, I obey.

Enter PHILASTER.

Lady. Here is my lord Philaster.
Are. Oh! 'tis well.
Withdraw yourself. [*Exit Lady*
Phi. Madam, your messenger
Made me believe you wished to speak with me.
Are. 'Tis true, Philaster; but the words are such
I have to say, and do so ill beseem
The mouth of woman, that I wish them said,
And yet am loth to speak them. Have you known,
That I have ought detracted from your worth?
Have I in person wronged you? or have set

My base instruments, to throw disgrace
Upon your virtues?
Phi. Never, madam, you.
Are. Why, then, should you, in such a public place,
Injure a princess, and a scandal lay
Upon my fortunes, famed to be so great;
Calling a great part of my dowry in question?
Phi. Madam, this truth, which I shall speak, will be
Foolish: But, for your fair and virtuous self,
I could afford myself to have no right
To any thing, you wished.
Are. Philaster, know,
I must enjoy these kingdoms.
Phi. Madam! Both?
Are. Both, or I die: By fate, I die, Philaster,
If I not calmly may enjoy them both.
Phi. I would do much to save that noble life:
Yet would be loth to have posterity
Find in our stories, that Philaster gave
His right unto a sceptre, and a crown,
To save a lady's longing.
Are. Nay then, hear!
I must and will have them, and more——
Phi. What more?
Are. Or lose that little life the gods prepared,
To trouble this poor piece of earth withal.
Phi. Madam, what more?
Are. Turn, then, away thy face.
Phi. No.
Are. Do.
Phi. I can't endure it. Turn away my face?
I never yet saw enemy, that looked
So dreadfully, but that I thought myself
As great a basilisk as he; or spake
So horribly, but that I thought my tongue
Bore thunder underneath, as much as his;
Nor beast, that I could turn from: Shall I then
Begin to fear sweet sounds? a lady's voice,
Whom I do love? Say, you would have my life;
Why, I will give it you; for it is to me
A thing so loathed, and unto you, that ask,
Of so poor use, that I will make no price:
If you entreat, I will unmovedly hear.
Are. Yet, for my sake, a little bend thy looks.
Phi. I do.
Are. Then know, I must have them, and thee.
Phi. And me?
Are. Thy love; without which, all the land,
Discovered yet, will serve me for no use,
But to be buried in.
Phi. Is't possible?
Are. With it, it were too little to bestow
On thee. Now, though thy breath do strike me dead,
(Which, know, it may) I have unript my breast.
Phi. Madam, you are too full of noble thoughts,
To lay a train for this contemned life,
Which you may have for asking: To suspect
Were base, where I deserve no ill. Love you,
By all my hopes, I do above my life:

But how this passion should proceed from you
So violently, would amaze a man,
That would be jealous.
Are. Another soul, into my body shot,
Could not have filled me with more strength and spirit,
Than this thy breath. But spend not hasty time
In seeking how I came thus: 'Tis the gods,
The gods, that make me so; and, sure, our love
Will be the nobler, and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods
Is mingled with it. Let us leave,
Lest some unwelcome guest should fall betwixt us.
Phi. 'Twill be ill
I should abide here long.
Are. 'Tis true; and worse
You should come often. How shall we devise
To hold intelligence, that our true loves,
On any new occasion, may agree
What path is best to tread?
Phi. I have a boy,
Sent by the gods, I hope, to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck,
I found him sitting by a fountain side,
Of which he borrowed some to quench his thirst,
And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
A garland lay him by, made by himself,
Of many several flowers, bred in the bay,
Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness
Delighted me: But ever when he turned
His tender eyes upon them, he would weep,
As if he meant to make them grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I asked him all his story.
He told me, that his parents gentle died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,
Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,
Which still, he thanked him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did shew
What every flower, as country people hold,
Did signify; and how all, ordered thus,
Expressed his grief: And, to my thoughts, did read
The prettiest lecture of his country art,
That could be wished; so that, methought, I could
Have studied it. I gladly entertained him,
Who was as glad to follow; and have got
The trustiest, lovingest, and gentlest boy,
That ever master kept. Him will I send
To wait on you, and bear our hidden love.

Enter Lady.

Are. 'Tis well; no more.
Lady. Madam, the prince is come to do his service.
Are. What will you do, Philaster, with yourself?
Phi. Why, that, which all the gods have appointed out for me.
Are. Dear, hide thyself. Bring in the prince.
Phi. Hide me from Pharamond!
When thunder speaks, which is the voice of Jove

Though I do reverence, yet I hide me not;
And shall a stranger prince have leave to brag
Unto a foreign nation, that he made
Philaster hide himself?

Are. He cannot know it.

Phi. Though it should sleep for ever to the world,
It is a simple sin to hide myself,
Which will for ever on my conscience lie.

Are. Then, good Philaster, give him scope and way
In what he says; for he is apt to speak
What you are loth to hear: For my sake, do.

Phi. I will.

Enter PHARAMOND.

Pha. My princely mistress, as true lovers ought,
I come to kiss these fair hands; and to shew,
In outward ceremonies, the dear love,
Writ in my heart.

Phi. If I shall have an answer no directlier,
I am gone.

Pha. To what would he have answer?

Are. To his claim unto the kingdom.

Pha. Sirrah, I forbare you before the king.

Phi. Good sir, do so still: I would not talk with you.

Pha. But now the time is fitter: Do but offer
To make mention of your right to any kingdom,
Though it be scarce habitable——

Phi. Good sir, let me go.

Pha. And by my sword——

Phi. Peace, Pharamond! If thou——

Are. Leave us, Philaster.

Phi. I have done.

Pha. You are gone: By Heaven, I'll fetch you back.

Phi. You shall not need.

Pha. What now?

Phi. Know, Pharamond,
I loath to brawl with such a blast as thou,
Who art nought but a valiant voice: But, if
Thou shalt provoke me further, men shall say
"Thou wert," and not lament it.

Pha. Do you slight
My greatness so, and in the chamber of the princess?

Phi. It is a place, to which, I must confess,
I owe a reverence: But were it the church,
Ay, at the altar, there's no place so safe,
Where thou dar'st injure me, but I dare kill thee.
And for your greatness, know, sir, I can grasp
You and your greatness thus, thus into nothing.
Give not a word, not a word back! Farewell.

Exit Philaster.

Pha. 'Tis an odd fellow, madam: We must stop
His mouth with some office, when we are married.

Are. You were best make him your controller.

Pha. I think he would discharge it well. But, madam,
I hope our hearts are knit; and yet, so slow
The ceremonies of state are, that 'twill be long
Before our hands be so. If then you please,
Being agreed in heart, let us not wait
For dreaming form, but take a little stolen
Delights, and so foretaste our joys to come.

Are. If you dare speak such thoughts,
I must withdraw in honour.

[*Exeunt at different sides.*

ACT II.

Enter PHILASTER *and* BELLARIO.

Phi. AND thou shalt find her honourable, boy,
Full of regard unto thy tender youth,
For thine own modesty; and, for my sake,
Apter to give than thou wilt be to ask,
Ay, or deserve.

Bel. Sir, you did take me up, when I was nothing;
And only yet am something, by being yours.
You trusted me unknown; and that, which you were apt
To construe a simple innocence in me,
Perhaps, might have been craft; the cunning of a boy
Hardened in lies and theft: Yet ventured you
To part my miseries and me; for which
I never can expect to serve a lady
That bears more honour in her breast than you.

Phi. But, boy, it will prefer thee. Thou art young,
And bear'st a childish overflowing love
To them, that clap thy cheeks, and speak thee fair.
But, when thy judgment comes to rule those passions,
Thou wilt remember best those careful friends,
That placed thee in the noblest way of life.
She is a princess I prefer thee to.

Bel. In that small time that I have seen the world,
I never knew a man hasty to part
With a servant, he thought trusty: I remember,
My father would prefer the boys he kept
To greater men than he; but did it not,
Till they were grown too saucy for himself.

Phi. Why, gentle boy, I find no fault at all
In thy behaviour.

Bel. Sir, if I have made
A fault of ignorance, instruct my youth:
I shall be willing, if not apt, to learn;
Age and experience will adorn my mind
With larger knowledge: And, if I have done
A wilful fault, think me not past all hope
For once. What master holds so strict a hand
Over his boy, that he will part with him
Without one warning? Let me be corrected,
To break my stubbornness, if it be so,
Rather than turn me off; and I shall mend.

Phi. Thy love doth plead so prettily to stay,

That, trust me, I could weep to part with thee.
Alas! I do not turn thee off; thou knowest
It is my business, that doth call thee hence;
And, when thou art with her, thou dwell'st with me.
Think so, and 'tis so. And, when time is full,
That thou hast well discharged this heavy trust,
Laid on so weak a one, I will again
With joy receive thee; as I live, I will.
Nay, weep not, gentle boy! 'Tis more than time
Thou didst attend the princess.

Bel. I am gone.
But since I am to part with you, my lord,
And none knows, whether I shall live to do
More service for you, take this little prayer;
Heaven bless your loves, your fights, all your designs!
May sick men, if they have your wish, be well;
And Heaven hate those, you curse, though I be one! [*Exit.*

Phi. The love of boys unto their lords is strange;
I have read wonders of it: Yet this boy,
For my sake (if a man may judge by looks
And speech) would out-do story. I may see
A day to pay him for his loyalty. [*Exit Phi.*

Enter PHARAMOND.

Pha. Why should these ladies stay so long? They must come this way: I know the queen employs them not; for the reverend mother sent me word, they would be all for the garden. If they should all prove honest now, I were in a fair taking. Here's one bolted.

Enter GALATEA.

Gal. Your grace!

Pha. Shall I not be a trouble?

Gal. Not to me, sir.

Pha. Nay, nay, you are too quick. By this sweet hand——

Gal. You'll be forsworn, sir; 'tis but an old love. If you will talk at distance, I am for you: And then, I think, I shall have sense enough to answer all the weighty apothegms your royal blood shall manage.

Pha. Dear lady, can you love?

Gal. Dear, prince! how dear? I ne'er cost you a coach yet, nor put you to the dear repentance of a banquet. Here's no scarlet, sir, to flash the sin out it was given for. This wire came own hair covers; and this face has been so far from being dear to any, that it ne'er cost pennyworth painting: And, for the rest of my poor wardrobe, such as you see, it leaves no hand behind it, to make the jealous mercer's wife curse our good doings.

Pha. You mistake me, lady.

Gal. Lord, I do so: 'Would you, or I, could help it!

Pha. Do ladies of this country use to give no more respect to men of my full being?

Gal. Full being! I understand you not, unless your grace means growing to fatness; and then your only remedy (upon my knowledge, prince) is, in a morning, a cup of neat white-wine, brewed with carduus; then fast till supper; about eight you may eat; use exercise, and keep a sparrow-hawk; you can shoot in a tiller: But, of all, your grace must fly phlebotomy, fresh pork, conger, and clarified whey: They are all dullers of the vital spirits.

Pha. Lady, you talk of nothing all this while.

Gal. 'Tis very true, sir; I talk of you.

Pha. This is a crafty wench; I like her wit well; 'twill be rare to stir up a leaden appetite. She's a Danäe, and must be courted in a shower of gold. Madam, look here: All these, and more than——

Gal. What have you there, my lord? Gold! Now, as I live, 'tis fair gold! You would have silver for it, to play with the pages: You could not have taken me in a worse time; but, if you have present use, my lord, I'll send my man with silver, and keep your gold for you.

Pha. Lady, lady!

Gal. She's coming, sir, behind, will take white money. Yet, for all this I'll match you.
[*Exit Gal. behind the hangings.*

Pha. If there be but two such more in this kingdom, and near the court, we may even hang up our harps.

Enter MEGRA.

Here's another: If she be of the same last, the devil shall pluck her on. Many fair mornings, lady.

Meg. As many mornings bring as many days,
Fair, sweet, and hopeful to your grace.

Pha. She gives good words yet;
If your more serious business do not call you,
Let me hold quarter with you; we'll talk an hour
Out quickly.

Meg. What would your grace talk of?

Pha. Of some such pretty subject as yourself.
I'll go no further than your eye, or lip;
There's theme enough for one man for an age.

Meg. Sir, they stand right, and my lips are yet even,
Smooth, young enough, ripe enough, red enough,
Or my glass wrongs me.

Pha. Oh, they are two twinned cherries dyed in blushes,
Which those fair suns above, with their bright beams,
Reflect upon and ripen. Sweetest beauty,
Bow down those branches, that the longing taste
Of the faint looker-on may meet those blessings,
And taste and live.

Meg. Oh, delicate sweet prince!
She that hath snow enough about her heart,
To take the wanton spring of ten such lines off,
May be a nun without probation. Sir,
You have, in such neat poetry, gathered a kiss,
That if I had but five lines of that number,

Such pretty begging blanks, I should commend
Your forehead, or your cheeks, and kiss you too.
Pha. Do it in prose; you cannot miss it, madam.
Meg. I shall, I shall.
Pha. By my life, you shall not.
But we lose time. Can you love?
Meg. Love you, my lord? How would you have me love you? Has your grace seen the court-star, Galatea?
Pha. Out upon her! She's as cold of her favour as an apoplex: She sailed by but now.
Meg. And how do you hold her wit, sir?
Pha. I hold her wit? The strength of all the guard cannot hold it, if they were tied to it; she would blow them out of the kingdom. They talk of Jupiter; he is but a squib-cracker to her: Look well about you, and you may find a tongue-bolt. But speak, sweet lady, shall I be freely welcome?
Meg. Whither?
Pha. Make your own conditions, my purse shall seal them; and what you dare imagine you can want, I'll furnish you withal: Give two hours to your thoughts every morning about it. Come, I know you are bashful; speak in my ear, will you be mine? Keep this, and with it me: Soon I will visit you.
Meg. My lord, my chamber's most unsafe; but when 'tis night, I'll find some means to slip into your lodging; till when——
Pha. Till when, this, and my heart go with thee!
[*Exeunt several ways.*

Enter GALATEA *from behind the hangings.*

Gal. Oh, thou pernicious petticoat-prince! are these your virtues? Well, if I do not lay a train to blow your sport up, I am no woman: And, lady Dowsabel, I'll fit you for't. [*Exit.*

Enter ARETHUSA *and a Lady.*

Are. Where's the boy?
Lady. Within, madam.
Are. Gave you him gold to buy him cloaths?
Lady. I did.
Are. And has he done it?
Lady. Yes, madam.
Are. 'Tis a pretty sad talking boy, is it not? Asked you his name?
Lady. No, madam.

Enter GALATEA.

Are. Oh, you are welcome. What, good news?
Gal. As good as any one can tell your grace,
That says, she has done that, you would have wished.
Are. Hast thou discovered?
Gal. I have. Your prince, brave Pharamond, is disloyal.
Are. With whom?
Gal. Why, with the lady I suspected:
Are. Run thyself into the presence; mingle there again
With other ladies; leave the rest to me.
If destiny (to whom we dare not say,
'Why, thou did'st this!') have not decreed it so
In lasting leaves (whose smallest characters
Were never altered) yet, this match shall break.
Where's the boy?
Lady. Here, madam.

Enter BELLARIO.

Are. Sir, you are sad to change your service; is't not so?
Bel. Madam, I have not changed; I wait on you,
To do him service.
Are. Thou disclaimest in me.
Tell me thy name.
Bel. Bellario.
Are. Thou canst sing, and play?
Bel. If grief will give me leave, madam, I can.
Are. Alas! what kind of grief can thy years know?
Hadst thou a curst master, when thou went'st to school?
Thou art not capable of other grief.
Thy brows and cheeks are smooth as waters be,
When no breath troubles them: Believe me, boy,
Care seeks out wrinkled brows and hollow eyes,
And builds himself caves, to abide in them.
Come, sir, tell me truly, does your lord love me?
Bel. Love, madam? I know not what it is.
Are. Canst thou know grief, and never yet knew'st love?
Thou art deceived, boy. Does he speak of me,
As if he wished me well?
Bel. If it be love,
To forget all respect of his own friends,
In thinking of your face; if it be love,
To sit cross armed, and sigh away the day,
Mingled with starts, crying your name as loud
And hastily as men in the streets do fire;
If it be love, to weep himself away,
When he but hears of any lady dead,
Or killed, because it might have been your chance;
If, when he goes to rest (which will not be)
'Twixt every prayer he says, to name you once,
As others drop a bead; be to be in love,
Then, madam, I dare swear he loves you.
Are. Oh, you're a cunning boy, and taught to lie,
For your lord's credit; but thou know'st a lie,
That bears this sound, is welcomer to me
Than any truth, that says, he loves me not.
Lead the way, boy. Do you attend me too.
'Tis thy lord's business hastes me thus. Away.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE, MEGRA, *and* GALATEA.

Dion. Come, ladies, shall we talk a round? As men
Do walk a mile, women should talk an hour,
After supper: 'Tis their exercise.
Gal. 'Tis late.
Meg. 'Tis all
My eyes will do to lead me to my bed.

Gal. I fear, they are so heavy, you'll scarce find
The way to your lodging with them to night.

Enter PHARAMOND.

Thra. The prince!

Pha. Not a-bed, ladies? You're good sitters up.
What think you of a pleasant dream, to last
Till morning?

Enter ARETHUSA *and* BELLARIO.

Are. 'Tis well, my lord; you're courting of ladies.
Is't not late, gentlemen?

Cle. Yes, madam.

Are. Wait you there. [*Exit.*

Meg. She's jealous, as I live. Look you, my lord,
The princess has a Hilas, an Adonis.

Pha. His form is angel-like.

Dion. Serves he the princess?

Thra. Yes.

Dion. 'Tis a sweet boy; how brave she keeps him.

Pha. Ladies all, good rest; I mean to kill a buck
To-morrow morning, ere you've done your dreams.
[*Exit.*

Meg. All happiness attend your grace! Gentlemen, good rest.
Come, shall we to-bed?

Gal. Yes; all good night. [*Ex. Gal. and Meg.*

Dion. May your dreams be true to you.
What shall we do, gallants? 'tis late. The king
Is up still; see, he comes; a guard along
With him.

Enter KING, ARETHUSA, *and guard.*

King. Look your intelligence be true.

Are. Upon my life, it is: And I do hope,
Your highness will not tie me to a man,
That, in the heat of wooing, throws me off,
And takes another.

Dion. What should this mean?

King. If it be true,
That lady had much better have embraced
Cureless diseases: Get you to your rest.
Exeunt Are. and Bel.
You shall be righted. Gentlemen, draw near;
We shall employ you. Is young Pharamond
Come to his lodging?

Dion. I saw him enter there.

King. Haste, some of you, and cunningly discover
If Megra be in her lodging.

Cle. Sir,
She parted hence but now, with other ladies.

King. If she be there, we shall not need to make
A vain discovery of our suspicion.
Ye gods, I see, that who unrighteously
Holds wealth, or state, from others, shall be curst
In that, which meaner men are blest withal.
Ages to come shall know no male of him
Left to inherit; and his name shall be
Blotted from earth. If he have any child,
It shall be crosly matched; the gods themselves
Shall sow wild strife betwixt her lord and her.
Yet, if it be your wills, forgive the sin
I have committed. But how can I
Look to be heard of gods, that must be just,
Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong?

Enter DION.

Dion. Sir, I have asked, and her women swear she is within; I told them, I must speak with her; they laughed, and said, their lady lay speechless. I said, my business was important; they said, their lady was about it: I grew hot, and cried, my business was a matter, that concerned life and death; they answered, so was sleeping, at which their lady was. I urged again, she had scarce time to be so, since last I saw her; they smiled again, and seemed to instruct me, that sleeping was nothing but lying down and winking. Answers more direct I could not get: In short, sir, I think she is not there.

King. 'Tis then no time to dally. You of the guard,
Wait at the back door of the prince's lodging,
And see, that none pass thence, upon your lives.
Knock, gentlemen! Knock loud! Louder yet!
What, has their pleasure taken off their hearing?
I'll break your meditations. Knock again!
Nor yet? I do not think he sleeps, having this
Larum by him. Once more. Pharamond! prince!

PHARAMOND *above.*

Pha. What saucy groom knocks at this dead of night?
Where be our waiters? By my vexed soul,
He meets his death, that meets me, for this boldness.

King. Prince, you wrong your thoughts; we are your friends.
Come down.

Pha. The king?

King. The same, sir; come down.
We have cause of present counsel with you.

Pha. If your grace please to use me, I'll attend you
To your chamber. [*Pha. below.*

King. No, 'tis too late, prince; I'll make bold with yours.

Pha. I have some private reasons to myself,
Make me unmannerly, and say, 'you cannot.'
Nay, press not forward, gentlemen; he must
Come through my life, that comes here. [*Enters.*

King. Sir, be resolved.
I must and will come.

Pha. I'll not be dishonoured.
He, that enters, enters upon his death.
Sir, 'tis a sign you make no stranger of me,
To bring these renegadoes to my chamber,
At these unseasoned hours.

King. Why do you
Chafe yourself so? You are not wronged, nor shall be;
Only I'll search your lodging, for some cause
To ourself known: Enter, I say.

Pha. I say, no.

[*Meg. above.*

Meg. Let them enter, prince; let them enter;
I am up, and ready; I know their business:
'Tis the poor breaking of a lady's honour,
They hunt so hotly after; let them enjoy it.
Oh, my lord the king, this is not noble in you
To make public the weakness of a woman.

Enter MEGRA.

King. Now, lady of honour, where's your honour now? now?
No man can fit your palate, but the prince.
Had you none to pull on with your courtesies,
But he, that must be mine, and wrong my daughter?
By all the gods, all these, and all the pages,
And all the court, shall hoot thee through the court;

Meg. If you do this, oh, king! nay, if you dare do it,
By all those gods you swore by, and as many
More of mine own, I will have fellows, and
Such fellows in it, as shall make noble mirth.
The princess, your dear daughter, shall stand by me
On walls, and sing in ballads, any thing.
Urge me no more; I know her, know the boy
She keeps; a handsome boy, about eighteen;
Come, sir, you put me to a woman's madness,
The glory of a fury; and, if I do not,
Do it to the height——

King. What boy is this she raves at?

Meg. Alas! good-minded prince, you know not these things;
I am loth to reveal them. Keep this fault,
As you would keep your health, from the hot air
Of the corrupted people, or, by heaven,
I will not fall alone. What I have known,
Shall be as public as a print; all tongues
Shall speak it, as they do the language, they
Are born in, as free and commonly; I'll set it,
Like a prodigious star, for all to gaze at;
And so high and glowing, that other kingdoms,
Far and foreign,
Shall read it there, nay travel with it, 'till they find
No tongue to make it more, nor no more people;
And then behold the fall of your fair princess.

King. Has she a boy?

Cle. So please your grace, I have seen a boy wait On her; a fair boy.

King. Go, get you to your quarter:
For this time I'll study to forget you.

Meg. Do you study to forget me, and I'll study To forget you. [*Ex. King, Meg. and guard.*

Cle. Why, here's a male spirit for Hercules.

Dion. Sure she has a garrison of devils in her tongue, she uttereth such balls of wild-fire. She has so nettled the king, that all the doctors in the country will scarce cure him. That boy was a strange-found out antidote to cure her infection: That boy; that princess' boy; that brave, chaste, virtuous lady's boy; and a fair boy, a well-spoken boy! All these considered, can make nothing else. But there I leave you, gentlemen.

Thra. Nay, we'll go wander with you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

Enter CLEREMONT, DION, *and* THRASILINE.

Cle. NAY, doubtless, 'tis true.

Dion. Ay; and 'tis the gods,
That raised this punishment, to scourge the king
With his own issue. Is it not a shame
For us, that should write noble in the land,
For us, that should be freemen, to behold
A man, that is the bravery of his age,
Philaster, pressed down from his royal right,
By this regardless king? and only look
And see the sceptre ready to be cast
Into the hands of that lascivious lady,
That lives in lust with a smooth boy, now to be
Married to yon strange prince, who, but that people
Please to let him be a prince, is born a slave
In that, which should be his most noble part,
His mind?

Thra. That man, that would not stir with you
To aid Philaster, let the gods forget,
That such a creature walks upon the earth.

Cle. Philaster is too backward in it himself.
The gentry do await it, and the people,
Against their nature, are all bent for him,
And like a field of standing corn, that's moved
With a stiff gale, their heads bow all one way.

Dion. The only cause, that draws Philaster back
From this attempt, is the fair princess' love,
Which he admires, and we can now confute.

Thra. Perhaps, he'll not believe it.

Dion. Why, gentlemen,
'Tis without question so.

Cle. Ay, 'tis past speech,
She lives dishonestly: But how shall we,
If he be curious, work upon his faith?

Thra. We are all satisfied within ourselves.

Dion. Since it is true, and tends to his own good,
I'll make this new report to be my knowledge:
I'll say I know it; nay, I'll swear I saw it.

Cle. It will be best.

Thra. 'Twill move him.

Enter PHILASTER.

Dion. Here he comes.
Good-morrow to your honour! We have spent
Some time in seeking you.

Phil. My worthy friends,
You that can keep your memories to know
Your friend in miseries, and cannot frown
On men disgraced for virtue, a good day
Attend you all! What service may I do
Worthy your acceptation?

Dion. My good lord,
We come to urge that virtue, which we know
Lives in your breast, forth! Rise, and make a head.
The nobles and the people are all dulled
With this usurping king; and not a man,
That ever heard the word, or knew such a thing
As virtue, but will second your attempts.
Phi. How honourable is this love in you
To me, that have deserved none? Know, my friends,
(You, that were born to shame your poor Philaster
With too much courtesy) I could afford
To melt myself in thanks: But my designs
Are not yet ripe; suffice it, that ere long
I shall employ your loves; but yet the time
Is short of what I would.
Dion. The time is fuller, sir, than you expect:
That, which hereafter will not, perhaps, be reached
By violence, may now be caught. As for the king,
You know the people have long hated him;
But now the princess, whom they loved———
Phi. Why, what of her?
Dion. Is loathed as much as he.
Phi. By what strange means?
Dion. She's known a whore.
Phi. Thou liest.
Dion. My lord———
Phi. Thou liest, [*Offers to draw and is held.*
And thou shalt feel it. I had thought, thy mind
Had been of honour. Thus to rob a lady
Of her good name, is an infectious sin,
Not to be pardoned: Be it false as hell,
Twill never be redeemed, if it be sown
Amongst the people, fruitful to increase
All evil they shall hear. Let me alone,
That I may cut off falsehood, whilst it springs!
Set hills on hills betwixt me and the man
That utters this, and I will scale them all,
And from the utmost top fall on his neck,
Like thunder from a cloud.
Dion. This is most strange:
Sure he does love her.
Phi. I do love fair truth:
She is my mistress, and who injures her,
Draws vengeance from me. Sirs, let go my arms.
Thra. Nay, good my lord, be patient.
Cle. Sir, remember this is your honoured friend,
That comes to do his service, and will shew
You why he uttered this.
Phi. I ask you pardon, sir;
My zeal to truth made me unmannerly:
Should I have heard dishonour spoke of you,
Behind your back untruly, I had been
As much distempered and enraged as now.
Dion. But this, my lord, is truth.
Phi. Oh, say not so! good sir, forbear to say so!
'Tis then truth, that all womankind is false!
Urge it no more; it is impossible.
Why should you think the princess light?
Dion. Why, she was taken at it.
Phi. 'Tis false! Oh, Heaven! 'tis false! it cannot be!
Can it? Speak, gentlemen; for love of truth, speak!
Is't possible? Can women all be damned?
Dion. Why, no, my lord.
Phi. Why, then, it cannot be.
Dion. And she was taken with her boy.
Phi. What boy?
Dion. A page, a boy, that serves her.
Phi. Oh, good gods!
A little boy?
Dion. Ay; know you him, my lord?
Phi. Hell and sin know him!—Sir, you are deceived;
You are abused, and so is she, and I.
Dion. How you my lord?
Phi. Why, all the world's abused
In an unjust report.
Dion. Oh, noble sir, your virtues
Cannot look into the subtle thoughts of woman.
In short, my lord, I took them; I myself.
Phi. Now all the devils, thou didst! Fly from my rage!
'Would thou hadst taken devils engendering plagues,
When thou didst take them! Hide thee from my eyes!
Would thou hadst taken thunder on thy breast,
'When thou didst take them; or been strucken dumb
For ever; that this foul deed might have slept
In silence!
Thra. Have you known him so ill tempered?
Cle. Never before.
Phi. The winds, that are let loose
From the four several corners of the earth,
And spread themselves all over sea and land,
Kiss not a chaste one. What friend bears a sword
To run me through?
Dion. Why, my lord, are you so moved at this?
Phi. When any falls from virtue, I'm distract;
I have an interest in't.
Dion. But, good my lord, recall yourself,
And think what's best to be done.
Phi. I thank you; I will do it.
Please you to leave me: I'll consider of it.
To-morrow I will find your lodging forth,
And give you answer.
Dion. All the gods direct you
The readiest way!
Thra. He was extreme impatient.
Cle. It was his virtue, and his noble mind.
[*Exeunt Dion, Cle. and Thra.*
Phi. Oh, that I had a sea
Within my breast, to quench the fire I feel!
More circumstances will but fan this fire.
It more afflicts me now, to know by whom
This deed is done, than simply that 'tis done:
And he, that tells me this, is honourable,
As far from lies as she is far from truth.
Oh, that, like beasts, we could not grieve ourselves,
With that we see not! Bulls and rams will fight
To keep their females, standing in their sight;

Run into rivers. Sweetest fair, the cause?
And, as I am your slave, tied to your goodness,
Your creature, made again from what I was,
And newly spirited, I'll right your honour.
Are. Oh, my best love, that boy!
Phi. What boy?
Are. The pretty boy you give me———
Phi. What of him?
Are. Must be no more mine.
Phi. Why?
Are. They are jealous of him.
Phi. Jealous! who?
Are. The king.
Phi. Oh, my fortune!
Then 'tis no idle jealousy. Let him go.
Are. Oh, cruel! are you hard-hearted too?
Who shall now tell you, how much I loved you?
Who shall swear it to you, and weep the tears I send?
Who shall now bring you letters, rings, bracelets?
Lose his health in service? Wake tedious nights
In stories of your praise? Who shall sing
Your crying elegies? And strike a sad soul
Into senseless pictures, and make them mourn?
Who shall take up his lute, and touch it, till
He crown a silent sleep upon my eye-lid,
Making me dream, and cry, 'Oh, my dear, dear 'Philaster!'
Phi. Oh, my heart!
Would he had broken thee, that made thee know
This lady was not loyal. Mistress, forget
The boy: I'll get thee a far better.
Are. Oh, never, never such a boy again, as my Bellario!
Phi. 'Tis but your fond affection.
Are. With thee, my boy, farewell for ever
All secrecy in servants! Farewell faith!
And all desire to do well for itself!
Let all, that shall succeed thee for thy wrongs,
Sell and betray chaste love!
Phi. And all this passion for a boy?
Are. He was your boy, and you put him to me,
And the loss of such must have a mourning for.
Phi. Oh, thou forgetful woman!
Are. How, my lord?
Phi. False Arethusa!
Hast thou a medicine to restore my wits,
When I have lost them? If not, leave to talk,
And do thus.
Are. Do what, sir? Would you sleep?
Phi. For ever, Arethusa. Oh, ye gods,
Give me a worthy patience! Have I stood
Naked, alone, the shock of many fortunes?
Have I seen mischiefs numberless, and mighty,
Grow like a sea upon me? Have I taken
Danger as stern as death into my bosom,
And laughed upon it, made it but a mirth,
And flung it by? Do I live now like him,
Under this tyrant king, that languishing
Hears his sad bell, and sees his mourners? Do I
Bear all this bravely, and must sink at length
Under a woman's falsehood? Oh, that boy,
That cursed boy!
Are. Nay, then I am betrayed:
I feel the plot cast for my overthrow.
Oh, I am wretched!
Phi. Now you may take that little right I have
To this poor kingdom: Give it to your joy;
For I have no joy in it. Some far place,
Where never womankind durst set her foot,
For bursting with her poisons must I seek,
And live to curse you:
There dig a cave, and preach to birds and beasts,
What woman is, and help to save them from you:
How Heaven is in your eyes, but, in your hearts,
More hell than hell has: How your tongues, like scorpions,
Both heal and poison: How your thoughts are woven
With thousand changes in one subtle web,
And sworn so by you: How that foolish man,
That reads the story of a woman's face,
And dies believing it, is lost for ever:
How all the good you have is but a shadow,
In the morning with you, and at night behind you,
Past and forgotten: How your vows are frosts,
Fast for a night, and with the next sun gone:
How you are, being taken altogether,
A mere confusion, and so dead a chaos,
That love cannot distinguish. These sad texts,
Till my last hour, I am bound to utter of you.
So, farewell all my woe, all my delight!
[*Exit Phi.*
Are. Be merciful, ye gods, and strike me dead!
What way have I deserved this? Make my breast
Transparent as pure crystal, that the world,
Jealous of me, may see the foulest thought
My heart holds. Where shall a woman turn her eyes,
To find out constancy? Save me! how black

Enter BELLARIO.

And guiltily, methinks, that boy looks now!
Oh, thou dissembler, that before thou spak'st,
Wert in thy cradle false, sent to make lies,
And betray innocents! Thy lord and thou
May glory in the ashes of a maid
Fooled by her passion; but the conquest is
Nothing so great as wicked. Fly away!
Let my command force thee to that, which shame
Would do without it. If thou understood'st
The loathed office thou hast undergone,
Why, thou wouldst hide thee under heaps of hills,
Lest men should dig and find thee.
Bel. Oh, what god,
Angry with men, hath sent this strange disease
Into the noblest minds? Madam, this grief
You add unto me is no more than drops
To seas, for which they are not seen to swell:
My lord hath struck his anger through my heart,
And led out all the hope of future joys.
You need not bid me fly; I came to part,
To take my latest leave. Farewell for ever!

I durst not run away, in honesty,
From such a lady, like a boy, that stole,
Or made some grievous fault. The power of god
Assist you in your sufferings! Hasty time
Reveal the truth to your abused lord
And mine, that he may know your worth; whilst I
Go seek out some forgotten place to die!
[*Exit Bel.*

Are. Peace guide thee! Thou hast overthrown me once;
Yet, if I had another Troy to lose,
Thou, or another villain, with thy looks,
Might talk me out of it, and send me naked,
My hair dishevel'd, through the fiery streets.

Enter a Lady.

Lady. Madam, the king would hunt, and calls for you
With earnestness.

Are. I am in tune to hunt!
Diana, if thou canst rage with a maid
As with a man, let me discover thee
Bathing, and turn me to a fearful hind,
That I may die pursued by cruel hounds,
And have my story written in my wounds. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Enter KING, PHARAMOND, ARETHUSA, GALATEA, MEGRA, DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE, *and attendants.*

King. WHAT, are the hounds before, and all the woodmen;
Our horses ready, and our bows bent?

Dion. All, sir.

King. You're cloudy, sir: Come, we have forgotten
Your venial trespass; let not that sit heavy
Upon your spirit; none dare utter it.
Is your boy turned away?

Are. You did command, sir, and I obeyed you.

King. 'Tis well done. To horse, to horse! we lose the morning, gentlemen. *Exeunt.*

Enter two Woodmen.

1 *Wood.* What, have you lodged the deer?

2 *Wood.* Yes, they are ready for the bow.

1 *Wood.* Who shoots?

2 *Wood.* The princess.

1 *Wood.* No, she'll hunt.

2 *Wood.* She'll take a stand, I say.

1 *Wood.* Who else?

2 *Wood.* Why, the young stranger prince.

1 *Wood.* He shall shoot in a stone bow for me. I never loved his beyond-sea-ship, since he forsook the say, for paying ten shillings: He was there at the fall of a deer, and would needs (out of his mightiness) give ten groats for the dowcets; marry, the steward would have the velvet-head into the bargain, to tuft his hat withal. Who shoots else?

2 *Wood.* The lady Galatea.

1 *Wood.* She's liberal, and, by my bow, they say, she's honest; and whether that be a fault, I have nothing to do. There's all?

2 *Wood.* No, one more; Megra.

1 *Wood.* That's a firker, i'faith, boy. She rides well, and she pays well. Hark! let's go. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PHILASTER.

Phi. Oh, that I had been nourished in these woods,
With milk of goats, and acorns, and not known
The right of crowns, nor the dissembling trains
Of women's looks; but digged myself a cave,
Where I, my fire, my cattle, and my bed,
Might have been shut together in one shed;
And then had taken me some mountain girl,
Beaten with winds, chaste as the hardened rocks,
Whereon she dwells; that might have strewed my bed
With leaves, and reeds, and with the skins of beasts,
Our neighbours. This had been a life
Free from vexation.

Enter BELLARIO.

Bel. Oh, wicked men!
An innocent may walk safe among beasts;
Nothing assaults me here. See, my grieved lord
Sits as his soul were searching out a way
To leave his body. Pardon me, that must
Break thy last commandment; for I must speak.
You, that are grieved, can pity: Hear, my lord!

Phi. Is there a creature yet so miserable,
That I can pity!

Bel. Oh, my noble lord!
View my strange fortune; and bestow on me,
According to your bounty (if my service
Can merit nothing) so much as may serve
To keep that little piece I hold of life
From cold and hunger.

Phi. Is it thou? Begone!
Go, sell those misbeseeming cloaths thou wearest,
And feed thyself with them.

Bel. Alas! my lord, I can get nothing for them:
The silly country people think 'tis treason
To touch such gay things.

Phi. Now, by my life, this is
Unkindly done, to vex me with thy sight.
Thou'rt fallen again to thy dissembling trade:
How shouldst thou think to cozen me again?
Remains there yet a plague untried for me?
Even so thou wept'st, and look'd'st, and spok'st, when first
I took thee up: Curse on the time! If thy
Commanding tears can work on any other,
Use thy art; I'll not betray it. Which way
Wilt thou take, that I may shun thee?

For thine eyes are poison to mine; and I
Am loth to grow in rage. This way, or that way?
Bel. Any will serve. But I will chuse to have
That path in chace, that leads unto my grave.
[*Exeunt Phi. and Bel. severally.*

Enter DION *and the Woodmen.*

Dion. This is the strangest sudden chance! You, Woodman!
1 *Wood.* My lord Dion!
Dion. Saw you a lady come this way, on a sable horse studded with stars of white?
2 *Wood.* Was she not young and tall?
Dion. Yes. Rode she to the wood or to the plain?
2 *Wood.* Faith, my lord, we saw none.
[*Exeunt Wood.*

Enter CLEREMONT.

Dion. Pox of your questions then! What, is she found?
Cle. Nor will be, I think.
Dion. Let him seek his daughter himself.
Cle. There's already a thousand fatherless tales amongst us: Some say, her horse run away with her: some, a wolf pursued her; others, it was a plot to kill her, and that armed men were seen in the wood: But, questionless, she rode away willingly.

Enter KING *and* THRASILINE.

King. Where is she?
Cle. Sir, I cannot tell.
King. How is that? Answer me so again?
Cle. Sir, shall I lie?
King. Yes, lie and damn, rather than tell me that.
I say again, where is she? Mutter not!
Sir, speak you; where is she?
Dion. Sir, I do not know.
King. Speak that again so boldly, and by Heaven,
It is thy last. You, fellows, answer me;
Where is she? Mark me, all; I am your king;
I wish to see my daughter; shew her me;
I do command you all, as you are subjects,
To shew her me! What, am I not your king?
If 'ay,' then am I not to be obeyed?
Dion. Yes, if you command things possible and honest.
King. Things possible and honest? Hear me, thou,
Thou traitor! that dar'st confine thy king to things
Possible and honest; shew her me,
Or, let me perish, if I cover not
All Sicily with blood!
Dion. Indeed I cannot, unless you tell me where she is.
King. You have betrayed me; have let me lose
The jewel of my life: Go, bring her me,
And set her here, before me: 'Tis the king
Will have it so; whose breath can still the winds,
Uncloud the sun, charm down the swelling sea,
And stop the floods of Heaven. Speak, can it not?
Dion. No.
King. No! cannot the breath of kings do this?
Dion. No; nor smell sweet itself, if once the lungs
Be but corrupted.
King. Is it so? Take heed!
Dion. Sir, take you heed, how you dare the powers,
That must be just.
King. Alas! what are we kings?
Why do you, gods, place us above the rest,
To be served, flattered, and adored, till we
Believe we hold within our hands your thunder;
And, when we come to try the power we have,
There's not a leaf shakes at our threatenings.
I have sinned, 'tis true, and here stand to be punished;
Yet would not thus be punished. Let me chuse
My way, and lay it on.
Dion. He articles with the gods: 'Would somebody would draw bonds, for the performance of covenants betwixt them!

Enter PHARAMOND, GALATEA, *and* MEGRA.

King. What, is she found?
Pha. No; we have ta'en her horse:
He galloped empty by. There's some treason.
You, Galatea, rode with her into the wood!
Why left you her?
Gal. She did command me.
King. Command! you should not.
Gal. 'Twould ill become my fortunes and my birth,
To disobey the daughter of my king.
King. You're all cunning to obey us, for our hurt;
But I will have her.
Pha. If I have her not,
By this hand, there shall be no more Sicily.
Dion. What, will he carry it to Spain in his pocket?
Pha. I will not leave one man alive, but the king,
A cook, and a tailor.
Dion. Yet you may do well
To spare your lady-bedfellow.
King. I see the injuries I have done must be revenged.
Dion. Sir, this is not the way to find her out.
King. Run all; disperse yourselves! The man, that finds her,
Or (if she be killed), the traitor, I'll make him great.
Dion. I know some would give five thousand pounds to find her.
Pha. Come, let us seek.
King. Each man a several way; here I myself.
Dion. Come, gentlemen, we here. [*Ex. omnes.*

Enter ARETHUSA.

Are. Where am I now? Feet, find me out a way,
Without the counsel of my troubled head:

I'll follow you, boldly, about these woods,
O'er mountains, thorough brambles, pits, and floods.
Heaven, I hope, will ease me. I am sick.

Enter BELLARIO.

Bel. Yonder's my lady: Heaven knows I want nothing,
Because I do not wish to live; yet I
Will try her charity. Oh, hear, you that have plenty!
From that flowing store, drop some on dry ground. See,
The lively red is gone to guard her heart!
I fear she faints. Madam, look up! She breathes not.
Open once more those rosy twins, and send
Unto my lord your latest farewell. Oh, she stirs:
How is it, madam? Speak comfort.
Are. 'Tis not gently done,
To put me in a miserable life,
And hold me there: I prithee, let me go;
I shall do best without thee; I am well.

Enter PHILASTER.

Phi. I am to blame to be so much in rage:
I'll tell her coolly, when and where I heard
This killing truth. I will be temperate
In speaking, and as just in hearing.
Oh, monstrous! Tempt me not, ye gods! good gods,
Tempt not a frail man! What's he, that has a heart,
But he must ease it here?
Bel. My lord, help the princess.
Are. I am well: Forbear.
Phi. Let me love lightning, let me be embraced
And kissed by scorpions, or adore the eyes
Of basilisks, rather than trust the tongues
Of hell-bred women! Some good gods look down,
And shrink these veins up; stick me here a stone,
Lasting to ages, in the memory
Of this damned act! Hear me, you wicked ones!
You have put hills of fire into this breast,
Not to be quenched with tears; for which may guilt
Sit on your bosoms! at your meals, and beds,
Despair await you! What, before my face?
Poison of asps between your lips! Diseases
Be your best issues! Nature make a curse,
And throw it on you!
Are. Dear Philaster, leave
To be enraged, and hear me.
Phi. I have done;
Forgive my passion. Not the calmed sea,
When Æolus locks up his windy brood,
Is less disturbed than I: I'll make you know it.
Dear Arethusa, do but take this sword,
And search how temperate a heart I have;
Then you, and this your boy, may live and reign
In sin, without controul. Wilt thou, Bellario?
I prithee, kill me: Thou art poor, and may'st
Nourish ambitious thoughts, when I am dead:
This way were freer. Am I raging now?
If I were mad, I should desire to live.
Sirs, feel my pulse: Whether have you known
A man in a more equal tune to die?
Bel. Alas, my lord, your pulse keeps madman's time,
So does your tongue.
Phi. You will not kill me, then?
Are. Kill you?
Bel. Not for a world.
Phi. I blame not thee,
Bellario: Thou hast done but that, which gods
Would have transformed themselves to do. Be gone;
Leave me without reply; this is the last
Of all our meeting. Kill me with this sword;
Be wise, or worse will follow: We are two
Earth cannot bear at once. Resolve to do, or suffer.
Are. If my fortune be so good to let me fall
Upon thy hand, I shall have peace in death.
Yet tell me this, will there be no slanders,
No jealousy, in the other world; no ill there?
Phi. No.
Are. Shew me then the way.
Phi. Then guide
My feeble hand, you, that have power to do it,
For I must perform a piece of justice. If your youth
Have any way offended heaven, let prayers
Short and effectual reconcile you to it.
Are. I am prepared.

Enter a country fellow.

Coun. I'll see the king, if he be in the forest; I have hunted him these two hours; if I should come home and not see him, my sisters would laugh at me. I can see nothing but people better horsed than myself, that out-ride me; I can hear nothing but shouting. These kings had need of good brains; this whooping is able to put a mean man out of his wits. There's a courtier with his sword drawn; by this hand, upon a woman, I think.
Phi. Are you at peace?
Are. With heaven and earth.
Phi. May they divide thy soul and body!
Coun. Hold, dastard, strike a woman! Thou'rt a craven, I warrant thee: Thou would'st be loth to play half a dozen of venies at wasters with a good fellow for a broken head.
Phi. Leave us, good friend.
Are. What ill-bred man art thou, to intrude thyself
Upon our private sports, our recreations?
Coun. God uds, I understand you not; but, I know, the rogue has hurt you.
Phi. Pursue thy own affairs: It will be ill
To multiply blood upon my head;
Which thou wilt force me to.
Coun. I know not your rhetorick; but I can lay it on, if you touch the woman. [*They fight.*

Phi. Slave, take what thou deservest.
Are. Heavens guard my lord!
Coun. Oh, do you breathe?
Phi. I hear the tread of people. I am hurt:
The gods take part against me: Could this boor
Have held me thus else? I must shift for life,
Though I do loath it. I would find a course
To lose it rather by my will, than force. [*Exit Phi.*
Coun. I cannot follow the rogue.

Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE, *and Woodmen.*

Pha. What art thou?
Coun. Almost killed I am for a foolish woman; a knave has hurt her.
Pha. The princess, gentlemen! Where's the wound, madam?
Is it dangerous?
Are. He has not hurt me.
Coun. I'faith, she lies; he has hurt her in the breast; look else.
Pha. Oh, sacred spring of innocent blood!
Dion. 'Tis above wonder! Who should dare this?
Are. I felt it not.
Pha. Speak, villain, who has hurt the princess?
Coun. Is it the princess?
Dion. Ay.
Coun. Then I have seen something yet.
Pha. But who has hurt her?
Coun. I told you, a rogue; I ne'er saw him before, I.
Pha. Madam, who did it?
Are. Some dishonest wretch;
Alas! I know him not, and do forgive him.
Coun. He's hurt too; he cannot go far; I made my father's old fox fly about his ears.
Pha. How will you have me kill him?
Are. Not at all;
'Tis some distracted fellow.
Pha. By this hand,
I'll leave ne'er a piece of him bigger than a nut,
And bring him all in my hat.
Are. Nay, good sir,
If you do take him, bring him quick to me,
And I will study for a punishment,
Great as his fault.
Pha. I will.
Are. But swear.
Pha. By all my love, I will. Woodmen, conduct the princess to the king, and bear that wounded fellow to dressing. Come, gentlemen, we'll follow the chase close.
[*Exeunt Are. Pha. Dion, Cle. Thra. and* 1 *Woodman.*
Coun. I pray you, friend, let me see the king.
2 *Wood.* That you shall, and receive thanks.
Coun. If I get clear with this, I'll go to see no more gay sights. [*Exeunt.*

Enter BELLARIO.

Bel. A heaviness near death sits on my brow,
And I must sleep. Bear me, thou gentle bank,
For ever, if thou wilt. You sweet ones all,
Let me unworthy press you: I could wish,
I rather were a corse strewed o'er with you,
Than quick above you. Dulness shuts mine eyes,
And I am giddy. Oh, that I could take
So sound a sleep, that I might never wake!

Enter PHILASTER.

Phi. I have done ill; my conscience calls me false,
To strike at her, that would not strike at me.
When I did fight, methought I heard her pray
The gods to guard me. She may be abused,
And I a loathed villain: If she be,
She will conceal, who hurt her. He has wounds,
And cannot follow; neither knows he me.
Who's this? Bellario sleeping? If thou be'st
Guilty, there is no justice that thy sleep
Should be so sound; and mine, whom thou hast wronged, [*Cry within.*
So broken. Hark! I am pursued. Ye gods,
I'll take this offered means of my escape:
They have no mark to know me, but my wounds,
If she be true; if false, let mischief light
On all the world at once! Sword, print my wounds
Upon this sleeping boy! I have none, I think,
Are mortal, nor would I lay greater on thee. [*Wounds him.*
Bel. Oh! Death, I hope, is come: Blest be that hand!
It meant me well. Again, for pity's sake!
Phi. I have caught myself: [*Phi. falls.*
The loss of blood hath stayed my flight. Here, here,
Is he that struck thee: Take thy full revenge;
Use me, as I did mean thee, worse than death:
I'll teach thee to revenge. This luckless hand
Wounded the princess; tell my followers,
Thou didst receive these hurts in staying me,
And I will second thee: Get a reward.
Bel. Fly, fly, my lord, and save yourself.
Phi. How's this?
'Wouldst thou I should be safe?
Bel. Else were it vain
For me to live. These little wounds I have
Have not bled much; reach me that noble hand;
I'll help to cover you.
Phi. Art thou true to me?
Bel. Or let me perish loathed! Come, my good lord,
Creep in among those bushes: Who does know,
But that the gods may save your much-loved breath?
Phi. Then I shall die for grief, if not for this,
That I have wounded thee. What wilt thou do?
Bel. Shift for myself well. Peace! I hear them come.
Within. Follow, follow, follow! that way they went.
Bel. With my own wounds I'll bloody my own sword.

I need not counterfeit to fall; Heaven knows
That I can stand no longer.

Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, *and* THRASILINE.

Pha. To this place we have tracked him by his blood.
Cle. Yonder, my lord, creeps one away.
Dion. Stay, sir! what are you?
Bel. A wretched creature, wounded in these woods
By beasts: Relieve me, if your names be men,
Or I shall perish.
Dion. This is he, my lord,
Upon my soul, that hurt her: 'Tis the boy,
That wicked boy, that served her.
Pha. Oh, thou damned in thy creation!
What cause could'st thou shape to hurt the princess?
Bel. Then I am betrayed.
Dion. Betrayed! no, apprehended.
Bel. I confess,
Urge it no more, that, big with evil thoughts,
I set upon her, and did take my aim,
Her death. For charity, let fall at once
The punishment you mean, and do not load
This weary flesh with tortures.
Pha. I will know
Who hired thee to this deed.
Bel. Mine own revenge.
Pha. Revenge! for what?
Bel. It pleased her to receive
Me as her page, and, when my fortunes ebbed,
That men strid o'er them careless, she did shower
Her welcome graces on me, and did swell
My fortunes, 'till they overflowed their banks,
Threatening the men that crossed them; when, as swift
As storms arise at sea, she turned her eyes
To burning suns upon me, and did dry
The streams she had bestowed; leaving me worse,
And more contemned, than other little brooks,
Because I had been great. In short, I knew
I could not live, and therefore did desire
To die revenged.
Pha. If tortures can be found,
Long as thy natural life, resolve to feel
The utmost rigour. [*Philaster creeps out of a bush.*
Cle. Help to lead him hence.
Phi. Turn back, ye ravishers of innocence!
Know ye the price of that you bear away
So rudely?
Pha. Who's that?
Dion. 'Tis the lord Philaster.
Phi. 'Tis not the treasure of all kings in one,
The wealth of Tagus, nor the rocks of pearl,
That pave the court of Neptune, can weigh down
That virtue! It was I, that hurt the princess.
Place me, some god, upon a pyramid!
Higher than hills of earth, and lend a voice
Loud as your thunder to me, that from thence
I may discourse to all the under-world
The worth, that dwells in him!
Pha. How's this?
Bel. My lord, some man
Weary of life, that would be glad to die.
Phi. Leave these untimely courtesies, Bellario.
Bel. Alas, he's mad! Come, will you lead me on?
Phi. By all the oaths, that men ought most to keep,
And gods to punish most, when men do break,
He touched her not. Take heed, Bellario,
How thou dost drown the virtues thou hast shown,
With perjury. By all that's good, 'twas I!
You know, she stood betwixt me and my right.
Pha. Thy own tongue be thy judge.
Cle. It was Philaster.
Dion. Is't not a brave boy?
Well, sirs, I fear me, we were all deceived.
Phi. Have I no friend here?
Dion. Yes.
Phi. Then shew it:
Some good body lend a hand to draw us nearer.
Would you have tears shed for you, when you die?
Then lay me gently on his neck, that there
I may weep floods, and breathe out my spirit.
'Tis not the wealth of Plutus, nor the gold
Locked in the heart of earth, can buy away
This armful from me: This had been a ransom
To have redeemed the great Augustus Cæsar,
Had he been taken. You hard-hearted men,
More stony than these mountains, can you see
Such clear pure blood drop, and not cut your flesh
To stop his life? To bind whose bitter wounds,
Queens ought to tear their hair, and with their tears
Bathe them. Forgive me, thou, that art the wealth
Of poor Philaster.

Enter KING, ARETHUSA, *and a Guard.*

King. Is the villain taken?
Pha. Sir, here be two confess the deed; but, say it was Philaster?
Phi. Question it no more; it was.
King. The fellow, that did fight with him, will tell us that.
Are. Ah me! I know he will.
King. Did not you know him?
Are. Sir, if it was he, he was disguised.
Phi. I was so. Oh, my stars! that I should live still.
King. Thou ambitious fool!
Thou, that hast laid a train for thy own life!
Now I do mean to do, I'll leave to talk.
Bear him to prison.
Are. Sir, they did plot together to take hence
This harmless life; should it pass unrevenged,
I should to earth go weeping: Grant me, then,
(By all the love a father bears his child)
Their custodies, and that I may appoint
Their tortures, and their death.

Dion. Death? Soft! our law
Will not reach that, for this fault.
King. 'Tis granted; take them to you, with a guard.
Come, princely Pharamond, this business past,
We may with more security go on
To your intended match.
Cle. I pray, that this action lose not Philaster the hearts of the people.
Dion. Fear it not; their over-wise heads will think it but a trick.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

Enter DION, CLEREMONT, *and* THRASILINE.

Thra. HAS the king sent for him to death?
Dion. Yes; but the king must know, 'tis not in his power to war with Heaven.
Cle. We linger time; the king sent for Philaster and the headsman an hour ago.
Thra. Are all his wounds well?
Dion. All; they were but scratches; but the loss of blood made him faint.
Cle. We dally, gentlemen.
Thra. Away!
Dion. We'll scuffle hard, before he perish.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter PHILASTER, ARETHUSA, *and* BELLARIO.

Are. Nay, dear Philaster, grieve not; we are well.
Bel. Nay, good my lord, forbear; we are wondrous well.
Phi. Oh, Arethusa! oh, Bellario! leave to be kind:
I shall be shot from Heaven, as now from earth,
If you continue so. I am a man,
False to a pair of the most trusty ones,
That ever earth bore: Can it bear us all?
Forgive, and leave me! But the king hath sent
To call me to my death: Oh, shew it me,
And then forget me! And for thee, my boy,
I shall deliver words will mollify
The hearts of beasts, to spare thy innocence.
Bel. Alas, my lord, my life is not a thing,
Worthy your noble thoughts: 'Tis not a life;
'Tis but a piece of childhood thrown away.
Should I out-live you, I should then out-live
Virtue and honour; and, when that day comes,
If ever I shall close these eyes but once,
May I live spotted for my perjury,
And waste my limbs to nothing!
Are. And I (the woful'st maid that ever was,
Forced with my hands to bring my lord to death)
Do, by the honour of a virgin, swear
To tell no hours beyond it.
Phi. Make me not hated so.
Are. Come from this prison, all joyful to our deaths.
Phi. People will tear me, when they find ye true
To such a wretch as I; I shall die loathed.
Enjoy your kingdoms peaceably, whilst I
For ever sleep, forgotten with my faults!
Every just servant, every maid in love,
Will have a piece of me, if ye be true.
Are. My dear lord, say not so.
Bel. A piece of you?
He was not born of woman, that can cut
It, and look on.
Phi. Take me in tears betwixt you,
For else my heart will break with shame and sorrow.
Are. Why, 'tis well.
Bel. Lament no more.
Phi. What would you have done,
If you had wronged me basely, and had found
My life no price, compared to yours? For love, sirs,
Deal with me truly.
Bel. 'Twas mistaken, sir.
Phi. Why, if it were?
Bel. Then, sir, we would have asked you pardon.
Phi. And have hope to enjoy it?
Are. Enjoy it? ay.
Phi. Would you, indeed? Be plain.
Bel. We would, my lord.
Phi. Forgive me, then.
Are. So, so.
Bel. 'Tis as it should be now.
Phi. Lead to my death.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter KING, DION, CLEREMONT, *and* THRASILINE.

King. Gentlemen, who saw the prince?
Cle. So please you, sir, he's gone to see the city,
And the new platform, with some gentlemen
Attending on him.
King. Is the princess ready
To bring her prisoner out?
Thra. She waits your grace.
King. Tell her we stay.
Dion. King, you may be deceived yet:
The head, you aim at, cost more setting on
Than to be lost so lightly. If it must off,
Like a wild overflow, that swoops before him
A golden stack, and with it shakes down bridges,
Cracks the strong hearts of pines, whose cable roots
Held out a thousand storms, a thousand thunders,
And, so made mightier, takes whole villages
Upon his back, and, in that heat of pride,
Charges strong towns, towers, castles, palaces,
And lays them desolate; so shall thy head,
Thy noble head, bury the lives of thousands,
That must bleed with thee, like a sacrifice,
In thy red ruins.

Enter PHILASTER, ARETHUSA, *and* BELLARIO *in a robe and garland.*

King. How now! what masque is this?
Bel. Right royal sir, I should
Sing you an epithalamium of these lovers,
But, having lost my best airs with my fortunes,
And wanting a celestial harp to strike
This blessed union on, thus in glad story
I give you all. These two fair cedar-branches,
The noblest of the mountain, where they grew
Straitest and tallest, under whose still shades
The worthier beasts have made their layers, and slept,
Free from the Sirian star, and the fell thunder-stroke,
Free from the clouds, when they were big with humour,
And delivered, in thousand spouts, their issues to the earth:
Oh, there was none but silent quiet there!
'Till never-pleased Fortune shot up shrubs,
Base under-brambles, to divorce these branches;
And for a while they did so; and did reign
Over the mountain, and choak up his beauty
With brakes, rude thorns and thistles, till the sun
Scorched them even to the roots, and dried them there:
And now a gentle gale hath blown again,
That made these branches meet, and twine together,
Never to be divided. The god, that sings
His holy numbers over marriage-beds,
Hath knit their noble hearts, and here they stand
Your children, mighty king; and I have done.
King. How, how?
Are. Sir, if you love it in plain truth,
(For there's no masquing in't) this gentleman,
The prisoner that you gave me, is become
My keeper, and through all the bitter throes
Your jealousies and his ill fate have wrought him,
Thus nobly hath he struggled, and at length
Arrived here, my dear husband.
King. Your dear husband! Call in
The captain of the citadel; there you shall keep
Your wedding. I'll provide a masque shall make
Your Hymen turn his saffron into a sullen coat,
And sing sad requiems to your departing souls:
Blood shall put out your torches; and, instead
Of gaudy flowers about your wanton necks,
An axe shall hang like a prodigious meteor,
Ready to crop your loves' sweets. Hear, ye gods!
From this time do I shake all title off
Of father to this woman, this base woman;
And what there is of vengeance, in a lion
Cast among dogs, or robbed of his dear young,
The same, enforced more terrible, more mighty,
Expect from me!
Are. Sir, by that little life I have left to swear by,
There's nothing that can stir me from myself.
What I have done, I've done without repentance;
For death can be no bugbear unto me,
So long as Pharamond is not my headsman.
Dion. Sweet peace upon thy soul, thou worthy maid,
Whene'er thou diest! For this time I'll excuse thee,
Or be thy prologue.
Phi. Sir, let me speak next;
And let my dying words be better with you
Than my dull living actions. If you aim
At the dear life of this sweet innocent,
You are a tyrant and a savage monster;
Your memory shall be as foul behind you,
As you are, living; all your better deeds
Shall be in water writ, but this in marble;
No chronicle shall speak you, though your own,
But for the shame of men. No monument
(Though high and big as Pelion) shall be able
To cover this base murder: Make it rich
With brass, with purest gold, and shining jasper,
Like the Pyramids; lay on epitaphs,
Such as make great men gods; my little marble
(That only clothes my ashes, not my faults)
Shall far out-shine it. And, for after issues,
Think not so madly of the heavenly wisdoms,
That they will give you more for your mad rage
To cut off, unless it be some snake, or something
Like yourself, that in his birth shall strangle you.
Remember my father, king! There was a fault,
But I forgive it. Let that sin persuade you
To love this lady: If you have a soul,
Think, save her, and be saved. For myself,
I have so long expected this glad hour,
So languished under you, and daily withered,
That, heaven knows, it is my joy to die:
I find a recreation in it.

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Where's the king?
King. Here.
Mes. Get you to your strength,
And rescue the prince Pharamond from danger:
He's taken prisoner by the citizens,
Fearing the lord Philaster.
Dion. Oh, brave followers!
Mutiny, my fine dear countrymen, mutiny!
Now, my brave valiant foremen, shew your weapons
In honour of your mistresses.

Enter another Messenger.

Mes. Arm, arm, arm!
King. A thousand devils take them!
Dion. A thousand blessings on them!
Mes. Arm, oh, king! The city is in mutiny,
Led by an old grey ruffian, who comes on
In rescue of the lord Philaster.
[*Exit with Are. Phi. Bel.*
King. Away to the citadel: I'll see them safe,
And then cope with these burghers. Let the guard,

And all the gentlemen, give strong attendance. [*Exit.*

Manent DION, CLERMONT, THRASILINE.

Cle. The city up! this was above our wishes.

Dion. Ay, and the marriage too. By my life,
This noble lady has deceived us all.
A plague upon myself, a thousand plagues,
For having such unworthy thoughts of her dear honour!
Oh, I could beat myself! or, do you beat me,
And I'll beat you; for we had all one thought.

Cle. No, no, 'twill but lose time.

Dion. You say true. Are your swords sharp? Well, my dear countrymen What-ye-lack, if you continue, and fall not back upon the first broken shin, I'll have you chronicled and chronicled, and cut and chronicled, and sung in all-to-be-praised sonnets, and graved in new brave ballads, that all tongues shall troule you *in sæcula sæculorum*, my kind can-carriers.

Thra. What if a toy take them in the heels now, and they run all away, and cry, 'the devil take the hindmost?'

Dion. Then the same devil take the foremost too, and souse him for his breakfast! If they all prove cowards, my curses fly amongst them, and be speeding! May they have murrains rain to keep the gentlemen at home, unbound in easy frieze! May the moths branch their velvets, and their silks only be worn before sore eyes! May their false lights undo them, and discover presses, holes, stains, and oldness in their stuffs, and make them shop-rid! May they keep whores and horses, and break; and live mewed up with necks of beef and turnips! May they have many children, and none like the father! May they know no language but that gibberish they prattle to their parcels; unless it be the Gothick Latin they write in their bonds; and may they write that false, and lose their debts!

Enter the KING.

King. Now the vengeance of all the gods confound them, how they swarm together! What a hum they raise! Devils choke your wild throats! If a man had need to use their valours, he must pay a brokage for it, and then bring them on, and they will fight like sheep. 'Tis Philaster, none but Philaster, must allay this heat: They will not hear me speak, but fling dirt at me, and call me tyrant. Oh, run, dear friend, and bring the lord Philaster: Speak him fair; call him prince; do him all the courtesy you can; commend me to him! Oh, my wits, my wits! [*Exit Cle.*

Dion. Oh, my brave countrymen! as I live, I will not buy a pin out of your walls for this: Nay, you shall cozen me, and I'll thank you; and send you brawn and bacon, and soil you every long vacation a brace of foremen, that at Michaelmas shall come up fat and kicking.

King. What they will do with this poor prince, the gods know, and I fear.

Dion. Why, sir, they'll flea him, and make church-buckets of his skin, to quench rebellion; then clap a rivet in his sconce, and hang him up for a sign.

Enter CLERMONT *with* PHILASTER.

King. Oh, worthy sir, forgive me! Do not make
Your miseries and my faults meet together,
To bring a greater danger. Be yourself,
Still sound amongst diseases. I have wronged you,
And though I find it last, and beaten to it,
Let first your goodness know it. Calm the people,
And be what you were born: Take your love,
And with her my repentance, and my wishes,
And all my prayers. By the gods, my heart speaks this;
And if the least fall from me not performed,
May I be struck with thunder!

Phi. Mighty sir,
I will not do your greatness so much wrong,
As not to make your word truth. Free the princess,
And the poor boy, and let me stand the shock
Of this mad sea-breach; which I'll either turn,
Or perish with it.

King. Let your own word free them.

Phi. Then thus I take my leave, kissing your hand,
And hanging on your royal word. Be kingly,
And be not moved, sir: I shall bring you peace,
Or never bring myself back.

King. All the gods go with thee! [*Exeunt.*

Enter an old captain and citizens, with PHARAMOND.

Cap. Come, my brave myrmidons, let's fall on! let our caps swarm, my boys, and your nimble tongues forget your mother's gibberish, of what do you lack, and set your mouths up, children, till your palates fall frighted, half a fathom past the cure of bay-salt and gross pepper. And then cry Philaster, brave Philaster! Let Philaster be deeper in request, my ding-dongs, my pairs of dear indentures, kings of clubs, than your cold water camlets, or your paintings spotted with copper. Let not your hasty silks, or your branched cloth of bodkin, or your tissues, dearly beloved of spiced cake and custard, your Robinhoods, Scarlets and Johns tie your affections in darkness to your shops No, dainty duckers, up with your three-pile spirits, your wrought valours; and let your uncut choler make the king feel the measure of your mightiness. Philaster! cry, my rose nobles, cry.

All. Philaster! Philaster!

Cap. How do you like this, my lord prince? These are mad boys, I tell you; these are things, that will not strike their top sails to a foist; and let a man of war, an argosy, hull and cry cockles.

Pha. Why, you rude slave, do you know what you do?

Cap. My pretty prince of puppets, we do know; and give your greatness warning, that you talk no more such bug-words, or that soldered crown shall be scratched with a musquet. Dear prince Pippen, down with your noble blood; or, as I live, I'll have you coddled. Let him loose, my spirits! Make us a round ring with your bills, my Hectors, and let us see what this trim man dares do. Now, sir, have at you! Here I lie, and with this swashing blow (do you sweat, prince?) I could bulk your grace, and hang you up cross-legged, like a hare at a poulterer's, and do this with this wiper.

Pha. You will not see me murdered, wicked villains?

1 *Cit.* Yes, indeed, will we, sir: We have not seen one foe a great while.

Cap. He would have weapons, would he? Give him a broadside, my brave boys, with your pikes; branch me his skin in flowers like a sattin, and between every flower a mortal cut. Your royalty shall ravel! Jag him, gentlemen: I'll have him cut to the kell, then down the seams. Oh, for a whip to make him galloon-laces! I'll have a coach-whip.

Pha. Oh, spare me, gentlemen!

Cap. Hold, hold; the man begins to fear, and know himself; he shall for this time only be seeled up, with a feather through his nose, that he may only see heaven, and think whither he is going. Nay, my beyond-sea sir, we will proclaim you: You would be king! Thou tender heir apparent to a church-ale, thou slight prince of single sarcenet; thou royal ring-tail, fit to fly at nothing but poor mens' poultry, and have every boy beat thee from that too with his bread and butter!

Pha. Gods keep me from these hell hounds!

1 *Cit.* I'll have a leg, that's certain,

2 *Cit.* I'll have an arm.

3 *Cit.* I'll have his nose, and at mine own charge build a college, and clap it upon the gate.

4 *Cit.* I'll have his little gut to string a kit with; for, certainly, a royal gut will sound like silver.

Pha. 'Would they were in thy belly, and I past my pain at once!

5 *Cit.* Good captain, let me have his liver to feed ferrets.

Cap. Who will have parcels else? speak.

Pha. Good gods, consider me! I shall be tortured.

1 *Cit.* Captain, I'll give you the trimming of your two-hand sword, and let me have his skin to make false scabbards.

2 *Cit.* He has no horns, sir, has he?

Cap. No, sir, he's a pollard. What would'st thou do with horns.

2 *Cit.* Oh, if he had, I would have made rare hafts and whistles of them; but his shin-bones, if they be sound, shall serve me.

Enter PHILASTER.

All. Long live Philaster, the brave prince Philaster!

Phi. I thank you, gentlemen. But why are these
Rude weapons brought abroad, to teach your hands
Uncivil trades?

Cap. My royal Rosiclear,
We are thy myrmidons, thy guard, thy rearers!
And when thy noble body is in durance,
Thus do we clap our musty murrions on,
And trace the streets in terror. Is it peace,
Thou Mars of men? Is the king sociable,
And bids thee live? Art thou above thy foemen,
And free as Phœbus? Speak. If not, this stand
Of royal blood shall be abroach, a-tilt,
And run even to the lees of honour.

Phi. Hold, and be satisfied: I am myself;
Free as my thoughts are: by the gods, I am.

Cap. Art thou the dainty darling of the king?
Art thou the Hylas to our Hercules?
Do the lords bow, and the regarded scarlets
Kiss their gummed golls, and cry, 'we are your servants?'
Is the court navigable, and the presence stuck
With flags of friendship? If not, we are thy castle,
And this man sleeps.

Phi. I am what I do desire to be, your friend;
I am what I was born to be, your prince.

Pha. Sir, there is some humanity in you;
You have a noble soul; forget my name,
And know my misery: set me safe aboard
From these wild cannibals, and, as I live,
I'll quit this land for ever. There is nothing,
Perpetual imprisonment, cold, hunger, sickness
Of all sorts, of all dangers, and all together,
The worst company of the worst men, madness, age,
To be as many creatures as a woman,
And do as all they do; nay, to despair;
But I would rather make it a new nature,
And live with all those, than endure one hour
Amongst these wild dogs.

Phi. I do pity you. Friends, discharge your fears;
Deliver me the prince: I'll warrant you,
I shall be old enough to find my safety.

3 *Cit.* Good sir, take heed he does not hurt you:
He's a fierce man, I can tell you, sir.

Cap. Prince, by your leave, I'll have a surcingle,
And mail you like a hawk. [*He stirs.*

Phi. Away, away; there is no danger in him;

And I will pay thy dowry; and thyself
Wilt well deserve him.
Bel. Never, sir, will I
Marry; it is a thing within my vow:
But, if I may have leave to serve the princess,
To see the virtues of her lord and her,
I shall have hope to live.
Arc. I, Philaster,
Cannot be jealous, though you had a lady
Dressed like a page to serve you; nor will I
Suspect her living here. Come, live with me;
Live free, as I do. She, that loves my lord,
Curst be the wife that hates her!
Phi. I grieve such virtues should be laid in earth,
Without an heir. Hear me, my royal father:
Wrong not the freedom of our souls so much,
To think to take revenge of that base woman;
Her malice cannot hurt us. Set her free
As she was born, saving from shame and sin.
King. Set her at liberty; but leave the court;
This is no place for such! You, Pharamond,
Shall have free passage, and a conduct home,
Worthy so great a prince. When you come there,
Remember, 'twas your faults, that lost you her,
And not my purposed will.
Pha. I do confess,
Renowned sir.
King. Last, join your hands in one. Enjoy,
Philaster,
This kingdom, which is yours, and after me
Whatever I call mine. My blessing on you!
All happy hours be at your marriage joys,
That you may grow yourselves over all lands,
And live to see your plenteous branches spring
Wherever there is sun! let princes learn
By this, to rule the passions of their blood,
For what heaven wills can never be withstood.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE
BONDMAN.

BY

MASSINGER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

TIMOLEON, *the general of Corinth.*
ARCHIDAMUS, *the Prætor of Syracusa.*
DIPHILUS, *a senator of Syracusa.*
CLEON, *a fat impotent lord.*
PISANDER *(disguised) a gentleman of Thebes.*
POLIPHRON *(disguised) friend to Pisander.*
LEOSTHENES, *a gentleman of Syracusa, enamoured of Cleora.*
ASOTUS, *a foolish lover, and the son of Cleon.*
TIMAGORAS, *the son of Archidamus.*
GRACCULO, CIMBRIO, } *bondmen.*
A Jailor.

WOMEN.

CLEORA, *Daughter of Archidamus.*
CORISCA, *a proud wanton lady, wife to Cleon.*
OLYMPIA, *a rich widow.*
STATILIA, *sister to Pisander, slave to Cleora.*
ZANTHIA, *slave to Corisca.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter TIMAGORAS *and* LEOSTHENES.

Timag. WHY should you droop, Leosthenes, or despair
My sister's favour? What, before, you purchased
By courtship, and fair language, in these wars
(For, from her soul, you know, she loves a soldier)
You may deserve by action.

Leost. Good Timagoras,
When I have said my friend, think all is spoken
That may assure me yours; and pray you, believe,
The dreadful voice of war, that shakes the city,
The thundering threats of Carthage, nor their army,
Raised to make good those threats, affright not me.
If fair Cleora were confirmed his prize,
That has the strongest arm and sharpest sword,
I'd court Bellona in her horrid trim,
As if she were a mistress, and bless fortune
That offers my young valour to the proof,
How much I dare do for your sister's love.
But, when that I consider how averse
Your noble father, great Archidamus,
Is and hath ever been, to my desires,
Reason may warrant me to doubt and fear,
What seeds soever I sow in these wars
Of noble courage, his determinate will
May blast, and give my harvest to another,
That ne'er toiled for it.

Timag. Prithee, do not nourish
These jealous thoughts; I'm thine, and, pardon me,
Though I repeat it, my Leosthenes,
That, for thy sake, when the bold Theban sued,
Far-famed Pisander, for my sister's love,
Sent him disgraced and discontented home;
I wrought my father then; and I, that stopped not
In the career of my affection to thee,
When that renowned worthy brought with him
High birth, wealth, courage, as fee'd advocates
To mediate for him, never will consent,
A fool, that only has the shape of man,
Asotus, though he be rich Cleon's heir,
Shall bear her from thee.

Leost. In that trust I live.

Timag. Which never shall deceive you.

Enter PISANDER.

Pis. Sir, the general,
Timoleon, by his trumpets hath given warning
For a remove.

Timag. 'Tis well; provide my horse.

Pis. I shall, sir. [*Exit Pisander.*

Leost. This slave has a strange aspect?

Timag. Fit for his fortune; 'tis a strong limbed knave;
My father bought him for my sister's litter.
O pride of women! Coaches are too common;
They surfeit in the happiness of peace,
And ladies think they keep not state enough,
If, for their pomp and ease, they are not borne
In triumph on mens' shoulders.

Leost. Who commands
The Carthaginian fleet?
Timag. Gisco's their admiral,
And, 'tis our happiness, a raw young fellow,
One never trained in arms, but rather fashioned
To tilt with ladies lips than crack a lance,
Ravish a feather from a mistress' fan,
And wear it as a favour. A steel helmet,
Made horrid with a glorious plume, will crack
His woman's neck.
Leo. No more of him.—The motives
That Corinth gives us aid?
Timag. The common danger:
For Sicily being on fire, she is not safe;
It being apparent that ambitious Carthage,
(That to enlarge her empire strives to fasten
An unjust gripe on us, that live free lords
Of Syracusa) will not end, till Greece
Acknowledge her their sovereign.
Leost. I'm satisfied.
What think you of our general?
Timag. He is a man
Of strange and reserved parts; but a great soldier.
[*A trumpet sounds.*
His trumpets call us; I'll forbear his character:
To-morrow, in the senate-house, at large
He will express himself.
Leost. I'll follow you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Senate House.*

Enter ARCHIDAMUS, CLEON, DIPHILUS, OLYMPIA, CORISCA, CLEORA, *and* ZANTHIA.

Arch. So careless we have been, my noble lords,
In the disposing of our own affairs,
And ignorant in the art of government,
That now we need a stranger to instruct us.
Yet we are happy that our neighbour Corinth
(Pitying the unjust gripe Carthage would lay
On Syracusa) hath vouchsafed to lend us
Her man of men, Timoleon, to defend
Our country and our liberties.
Diph. 'Tis a favour
We are unworthy of, and we may blush
Necessity compells us to receive it.
Arch. O shame! that we, that are a populous nation,
Engaged to liberal nature for all blessings
An island can bring forth; we that have limbs,
And able bodies, shipping, arms and treasure,
The sinews of the war, now we are called
To stand upon our guard, cannot produce
One, fit to be our general!
Cleon. I'm old and fat;
I could say something else.
Arch. We must obey
The time and our occasions; ruinous buildings,
Whose bases and foundations are infirm,
Must use supporters: We are circled round
With danger; o'er our heads with sail-stretched wings
Destruction hovers, and a cloud of mischief
Ready to break upon us; no hope left us,
That may divert it, but our sleeping virtue,
Roused up by brave Timoleon.
Cleon. When arrives he?
Diph. He is expected every hour.
Arch. The braveries
Of Syracusa, among whom my son
Timagoras, Leosthenes, and Asotus,
(Your hopeful heir, lord Cleon) two days since
Rode forth to meet him, and attend him to
The city; every minute we expect
To be blessed with his presence.
Cleon. What shout's this? [*Shout at a distance.*
Diph. 'Tis seconded with loud music.
[*Trumpets flourish within.*
Arch. Which confirms
His wished-for entrance. Let us entertain him
With all respect, solemnity, and pomp,
A man may merit, that comes to redeem us
From slavery and oppression.
Cleon. I'll lock up
My doors, and guard my gold; these lads of Corinth
Have nimble fingers, and I fear them more,
Being within our walls, than those of Carthage;
They are far off.
Arch. And, ladies, be it your care
To welcome him and his followers with all duty.
For rest resolved, their hands and swords must keep you
In that full height of happiness you live in:
A dreadful change else follows.
[*Exeunt* ARCH. CLEON. *and* DIPH.

Enter TIMAGORAS, LEOSTHENES, ASOTUS, TIMOLEON *in black, led in by* ARCHIDAMUS, DIPHILUS, *and* CLEON; *followed by* PISANDER, GRACCULO, CIMBRIO, *and other Slaves.*

Arch. It is your seat,
Which with a general suffrage,
As to the supreme magistrate, Sicily tenders,
And prays Timoleon to accept.
Timol. Such honours,
To one ambitious of rules or title,
Whose heaven or earth is placed in his command,
And absolute power o'er others, would with joy,
And veins swoln high, with pride be entertained.
They take not me; for I have ever loved
An equal freedom, and proclaim all such
As would usurp another's liberties,
Rebels to nature, to whose bounteous blessings
All men lay claim as true legitimate sons.
But such as have made forfeit of themselves
By vicious courses, and their birthright lost,
'Tis not injustice they are marked for slaves
To serve the virtuous. For myself, I know
Honours and great employments are great burdens,
And must require an Atlas to support them.
He that would govern others, first should be
The master of himself, richly endued
With depth of understanding, height of courage,
And those remarkable graces which I dare not
Ascribe unto myself.
Arch. Sir, empty men
Are trumpets of their own deserts; but you

That are not in opinion, but in proof,
Really good, and full of glorious parts,
Leave the report of what you are to fame,
Which, from the ready tongues of all good men,
Aloud proclaims you.
Diph. Besides, you stand bound,
Having so large a field to exercise
Your active virtues offered you, to impart
Your strength to such as need it.
Timol. 'Tis confessed:
And, since you'll have it so, such as I am,
For you, and for the liberty of Greece,
I am most ready to lay down my life:
But yet consider, men of Syracusa,
Before that you deliver up the power
(Which yet is yours) to me, to whom 'tis given;
To an impartial man, with whom nor threats
Nor prayers shall e'er prevail; for I must steer
An even course.
Arch. Which is desired of all.
Timol. Timophanes, my brother, for whose death
I'm tainted in the world, and foully tainted;
In whose remembrance I have ever worn,
In peace and war, this livery of sorrow,
Can witness for me, how much I detest
Tyrannous usurpation; with grief
I must remember it: For, when no persuasion
Could win him to desist from his bad practice,
To change the aristocracy of Corinth
Into an absolute monarchy, I chose rather
To prove a pious and obedient son
To my country, my best mother, than to lend
Assistance to Timophanes, tho' my brother,
That, like a tyrant, strove to set his foot
Upon the city's freedom.
Timag. 'Twas a deed
Deserving rather trophies than reproof.
Leost. And will be still remembered to your honour,
If you forsake us not.
Diph. If you free Sicily
From barbarous Carthage' yoke, it will be said
In him you slew a tyrant.
Arch. But, giving way
To her invasion, not vouchsafing us
(That fly to your protection) aid and comfort,
'Twill be believed, that for your private ends
You killed a brother.
Timol. As I then proceed,
To all posterity may that act be crowned
With a deserved applause, or branded with
The mark of infamy—Stay yet; ere I take
This seat of justice, or engage myself
To fight for you abroad, or to reform
Your state at home, swear all upon my sword,
And call the gods of Sicily to witness
The oath you take; that whatso'er I shall
Propound for safety of your commonwealth,
Not circumscribed or bound in, shall by you
Be willingly obeyed.
Arch. Diph. Cleon. So may we prosper,
As we obey in all things!
Timag. Leos. Aso. And observe
All your commands as oracles!
Timol. Do not repent it. [*Takes the State.*
First then, a word or two, but without bitterness,
(And yet mistake me not, I am no flatterer)
Concerning your government of the state.
In which the greatest, noblest, and most rich,
Stand, in the first file, guilty.
Cleon. Ha! how's this?
Timol. You have not, as good patriots should do, studied
The public good, but your particular ends;
Factious among yourselves, preferring such
To offices and honours, as ne'er read
The elements of saving policy;
But deeply skilled in all the principles,
That usher to destruction.
Leost. Sharp.
Timag. The better.
Timol. Your senate-house, which used not to admit
A man, however popular, to stand
At the helm of government, whose youth was not
Made glorious by action; whose experience
Crowned with grey heirs, gave warrant to his counsels,
Heard and received with reverence; is now filled
With green heads, that determine of the state
Over their cups, or when their sated lusts
Afford them leisure; or supplied by those
Who, rising from base arts and sordid thrift,
Are eminent for wealth, not for their wisdom:
Which is the reason that to hold a place
In council, which was once esteemed an honour,
And a reward for virtue, hath quite lost
Lustre and reputation, and is made
A mercenary purchase.
Timag. He speaks home.
Leost. And to the purpose.
Timol. From whence it proceeds
That the treasure of the city is ingrossed
By a few private men, the public coffers
Hollow with want; and they, that will not spare
One talent for the common good, to feed
The pride and bravery of their wives, consume
In plate, in jewels, and superfluous slaves,
What would maintain an army.
Cor. Have at us!
Olym. We thought we were forgot.
Cleora. But it appears
You will be treated of.
Timol. Yet in this plenty,
And fat of peace, your young men ne'er were trained
In martial discipline, and your ships unrigged
Rot in the harbour: no defence prepared,
But thought unuseful; as if the gods,
Indulgent to your sloth, had granted you
A perpetuity of pride and pleasure,
Nor change feared or expected. Now you find
That Carthage, looking on your stupid sleeps,

And dull security, was invited to
Invade your territories.
Arch. You've made us see, sir,
To our shame, the country's sickness: Now from you,
As from a careful and a wise physician,
We do expect the cure.
Timol. Old festered sores
Must be lanced to the quick and cauterized:
Which, borne with patience, after I'll apply
Soft unguents: For the maintenance of the war,
It is decreed all monies in the hands
Of private men, shall instantly be brought
To the public treasury.
Timag. This bites sore.
Cleon. The cure
Is worse than the disease; I'll never yield to it:
What could the enemy, though victorious,
Inflict more on us? All that my youth had toiled for,
Purchased with industry, and preserved with care,
Forced from me in a moment!
Diph. This rough course
Will never be allowed of.
Timol. O blind men!
If you refuse the first means that is offered
To give you health, no hope's left to recover
Your desperate sickness. Do you prize your muck
Above your liberties; and rather choose
To be made bondmen, than to part with that
To which already you are slaves? Or can it
Be probable in your flattering apprehensions,
You can capitulate with the conqueror,
And keep that yours which they come to possess,
And, while you kneel in vain, will ravish from you?
But take your own ways; brood upon your gold,
Sacrifice to your idol, and preserve
The prey entire, and merit the report
Of careful stewards: Yield a just account
To your proud masters, who with whips of iron
Will force you to give up what you conceal,
Or tear it from your throats: Adorn your walls
With Persian hangings wrought of gold and pearl:
Cover the floors on which they are to tread,
With costly Median silks; perfume the rooms
With cassia and amber, where they are
To feast and revel; while, like servile grooms,
You wait upon their trenchers; feed their eyes
With massy plate, until your cupboards crack
With the weight that they sustain; set forth your wives
And daughters in as varied shapes
As there are nations, to provoke their lusts,
And let them be embraced before your eyes,
The object may content you; and, to perfect
Their entertainment, offer up your sons,
And able men, for slaves; while you, that are
Unfit for labour, are spurned out to starve,
Unpitied, in some desert, no friend by,
Whose sorrow may spare one compassionate tear,
In the remembrance of what once you were.
Leost. The blood turns.
Timag. Observe how old Cleon shakes,
As if in picture he had shown him what
He was to suffer.
Cor. I am sick; the man
Speaks poignards and diseases.
Olymp. Oh! my doctor!
I never shall recover.
Cleora. If a virgin,
Whose speech was ever yet ushered with ear;
One knowing modesty and humble silence
To be the choicest ornaments of our sex,
In the presence of so many reverend men,
Struck dumb with terror and astonishment,
Presume to clothe her thought in vocal sounds,
Let her find pardon. First, to you, great sir!
A bashful maid's thanks, and her zealous prayers
Winged with pure innocence bearing them to heaven,
For all prosperity that the gods can give
To one whose piety must exact their care;
Thus low I offer.
Timol. 'Tis a happy omen.
Rise, blest one, and speak boldly: On my virtue
I am thy warrant, from so clear a spring
Sweet rivers ever flow.
Cleora. Then thus to you,
My noble father, and these lords, to whom
I next owe duty; no respect forgotten
To you, my brother, and these bold young men
(Such I would have them) that are, or should be,
The city's sword and target of defence;
To all of you I speak; and, if a blush
Steal on my cheeks, it is shown to reprove
Your paleness (willingly I would not say
Your cowardice or fear). Think you all treasure
Hid in the bowels of the earth, or shipwrecked
In Neptune's watry kingdom, can hold weight,
When liberty and honour fill one scale,
Triumphant justice sitting on the beam?
Or dare you but imagine that your gold is
Too dear a salary for such as hazard
Their blood and lives in your defence? For me
An ignorant girl, bear witness, heaven! So far
I prize a soldier, that, to give him pay,
With such devotion as our Flamens offer
Their sacrifices at the holy altar,
I do lay down these jewels, will make sale
Of my superfluous wardrobe, to supply
The meanest of their wants.
Timol. Brave masculine spirit!
Diph. We are shown, to our shame, what we in honour
Should have taught others.
Arch. Such a fair example
Must needs be followed.
Timag. Ever my dear sister,
But now our family's glory.
Leost. Were she deformed,
The virtues of her mind would force a stoic
To sue to be her servant.
Cleon. I must yield;

And, though my heart-blood part with it, I will
Deliver in my wealth.
Asot. I would say something;
But, the truth is, I know not what.
Timol. We have money;
And men must now be thought on.
Arch. We can press
Of labourers in the country (men inured
To cold and heat) ten thousand,
Diph. Or, if need be,
Inrol of slaves, lusty and able varlets,
And fit for service.
Cleon. They shall go for me;
I will not pay and fight too.
Cleora. How! your slaves?
O stain of honour! Once more, sir, your pardon;
And to their shames let me deliver what
I know in justice you may speak.
Timol. Most gladly:
I could not wish my thoughts a better organ
Than your tongue to express them.
Cleora. Are you men?
(For age may qualify, though not excuse,
The backwardness of these) able young men?
Yet, now your country's liberty's at stake;
Honour and glorious triumph made a garland
For such as dare deserve them; a rich feast
Prepared by Victory, of immortal viands,
Not for base men, but such as with their swords
Dare force admittance, and will be her guests;
And can you coldly suffer such rewards
To be proposed to labourers and slaves?
While you, that are born noble (to whom these,
Valued at their best rate, are next to horses,
Or other beasts of carriage) cry, Ay me!
Like idle lookers on, till their proud worth
Make them become your masters?
Timol. By my hopes,
There's fire and spirit enough in this to make
Thersites valiant.
Cleora. No; far, far be it from you:
Let those of meaner quality contend,
Who can endure most labour; plow the earth,
And think they are rewarded when their sweat
Brings home a fruitful harvest to their lords;
Let them prove good artificers, and serve you
For use and ornament; but not presume
To touch at what is noble: if you think them
Unworthy to taste of those cates you feed on,
Or wear such costly garments, will you grant them
The privilege and prerogative of great minds,
Which you were born to? Honour won in war,
And to be styled preservers of their country,
Are titles fit for free and generous spirits,
And not for bondmen. Had I been born a man,
And such ne'er-dying glories made the prize
To bold heroic courage, by Diana,
I would not to my brother, nay, my father,
Be bribed to part with the piece of honour
I should gain in this action.

Timol. She's inspired,
Or in her speaks the genius of your country,
To fire your blood in her defence: I am rapped
With the imagination.—Noble maid,
Timoleon is your soldier, and will sweat
Drops of his best blood, but he will bring home
Triumphant conquest to you. Let me wear
Your colours, lady; and, though youthful heats,
That look no farther than your outward form,
Are long since buried in me, while I live,
I am a constant lover of your mind,
That does transcend all other precedents.
Cleora. 'Tis an honour, [*Gives her scarf.*
And so I do receive it.
Cor. Plague upon it!
She has got the start of us: I could even burst
With envy at her fortune,
Olym. A raw young thing!
We've too much tongue sometimes, our husbands say;
And she outstrip us!
Leost. I am for the journey.
Timag. May all diseases sloth and letchery bring,
Fall upon him that stays at home.
Arch. Though old,
I will be there in person.
Diph. So will I.
Methinks I am not what I was: Her words
Have made me younger by a score of years,
Than I was when I came hither.
Cleon. I am still
Old Cleon, fat and unwieldy; I shall never
Make a good soldier, and therefore desire
To be excused at home.
Aso. 'Tis my suit too:
I am a gristle, and these spider fingers
Will never hold a sword.—Let us alone
To rule the slaves at home, I can so yerk them;
But in my conscience I shall never prove
Good justice in the war.
Timol. Have your desires;
You would be burdens to us, no way aids.
Lead, fairest, to the temple; first we'll pay
A sacrifice to the gods for good success:
For all great actions the wished course do run,
That are, with their allowance, well begun.
[*Exeunt all but the slaves.*
Pis. Stay, Cimbrio and Gracculo.
Cimb. The business?
Pis. Meet me to-morrow night near to the grove,
Neighbouring the east part of the city.
Grac. Well.
Pis. And bring the rest of our condition with you.
I've something to impart may break our fetters,
If you dare second me.
Cimb. We'll not fail.
Grac. A cart-rope
Shall not bind me at home.
Pis. Think on't and prosper. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter ARCHIDAMUS, TIMAGORAS, LEOSTHENES, *with gorgets, and* PISANDER.

Arch. So, so, 'tis well: How do I look?
Pis. Most sprightfully.
Arch. I shrink not in the shoulders; though I'm old
I'm tough; steel to the back: I have not wasted
My stock of strength in feather beds. Here's an arm too;
There's stuff in't, and I hope will use a sword
As well as any beardless boy of you all.
Timag. I'm glad to see you, sir, so well prepared
To endure the travail of the war.
Arch. Go to, sirrah!
I shall endure, when some of you keep your cabins,
For all your flaunting feathers. Nay, Leosthenes,
You're welcome too, all friends and fellows now.
Leost. Your servant, sir.
Arch. Pish! leave these compliments,
They stink in a soldier's mouth; I could be merry,
(For, now my gown's off, farewel gravity),
And must be bold to put a question to you,
Without offence, I hope.
Leost. Sir, what you please.
Arch. And you will answer truly?
Timag. On our words, sir.
Arch. Go to, then! I presume you will confess
That you are two notorious whoremasters.
Nay, spare your blushing, I've been wild myself.
Leost. Say we grant this,
(For if we should deny it you'll not believe us)
What will you infer upon it?
Arch. What you'll groan for,
I fear, when you come to the test. Old stories tell us,
There's a month called October, which brings in
Cold weather; there are trenches too, 'tis rumoured,
In which to stand all night to the knees in water,
In gallants breeds the toothach; there's a sport too,
Named, *lying perdue*, do you mark me? ('tis a game,
Which you must learn to play at, now in these seasons)
And choice variety of exercises,
(Nay I come to you) and fasts, not for devotion;

Enter DIPHILUS *and* CLEORA.

O welcome, welcome!
You've cut off my discourse, but I will perfect
My lecture in the camp.
Diph. Come, we are stayed for;
The general's afire for a remove,
And longs to be in action.
Arch. 'Tis my wish too.
We must part. Nay, no tears, my best Cleora;
I shall melt too, and that were ominous.
Millions of blessings on thee! All that's mine
I give up to thy charge; and, sirrah, look
You with that care and reverence observe her,
As you would pay to me. A kiss, farewell, girl!
Diph. Peace wait upon you, fair one!
[*Exeunt Arch. Diph. and Pis.*
Timag. 'Twere impertinence
To wish you to be careful of your honour,
That ever keep in pay a guard about you
Of faithful virtues. Farewell: friend, I leave you
To wipe our kisses off; I know that lovers
Part with more circumstance and ceremony;
Which I give way to. [*Exit Timag.*
Leost. 'Tis a noble favour,
For which I ever owe you. We're alone:
But how I should begin, or in what language
Speak the unwilling word of parting from you,
I'm yet to learn.
Cleora. And still continue ignorant;
For I must be most cruel to myself,
If I should teach you.
Leost. Yet it must be spoken,
Or you will chide my slackness: You have fired me
With the heat of noble action to deserve you;
And the least spark of honour that took life
From your sweet breath, still fanned by it and cherished,
Must mount up in a glorious flame, or I
Am much unworthy.
Cleora. May it yet burn here,
And, as a sea-mark, serve to guide true lovers
(Tossed on the ocean of luxurious wishes)
Safe from the rocks of lust, into the harbour
Of pure affection, rising up an example
Which after-times shall witness to our glory,
First took from us beginning!
Leost. 'Tis a happiness
My duty to my country, and mine honour,
Cannot consent to; besides, add to these,
It was your pleasure, fortified by persuasion
And strength of reason, for the general good,
That I should go.
Cleora. Alas! I then was witty
To plead against myself; and mine eye, fixed
Upon the hill of honour, ne'er descended
To look into the vale of certain dangers,
Through which you were to cut your passage to it.
Leost. I'll stay at home, then.
Cleora. No, that must not be;
For so, to serve my own ends, and to gain
A petty wreath myself, I rob you of
A certain triumph, which must fall upon you,
Or Virtue's turned a hand-maid to blind Fortune:
How is my soul divided! to confirm you
In the opinion of the world most worthy

To be beloved (with me you're at the height,
And can advance no farther), I must send you
To court the goddess of stern war, who, if
She see you with my eyes, will ne'er return you,
But grow enamoured of you.
Leost. Sweet, take comfort!
And what I offer you, you must vouchsafe me,
Or I am wretched: All the dangers that
I can encounter in the war are trifles;
My enemies abroad to be contemned;
The dreadful foes, that have the power to hurt me,
I leave at home with you.
Cleora. With me?
Leost. Nay, in you,
In every part about you; they are armed
To fight against me.
Cleora. Where?
Leost. There's no perfection
That you are mistress of, but musters up
A legion against me, and all sworn
To my destruction.
Cleora. This is strange!
Leost. But true, sweet:
Excess of love can work such miracles.
Upon this ivory forehead are intrenched
Ten thousand rivals, and these suns command
Supplies from all the world, on pain to forfeit
Their comfortable beams; these ruby lips,
A rich exchequer to assure their pay;
This hand, Sibylla's golden bough to guard them
Through hell and horror to the Elysian springs;
Which who'll not venture for? and, should I name
Such as the virtues of your mind invite,
Their numbers would be infinite.
Cleora. Can you think
I may be tempted?
Leost. You were never proved.
For me, I have conversed with you no farther
Than would become a brother. I ne'er tuned
Loose notes to your chaste ears; or brought rich presents
For my artillery, to batter down
The fortress of your honour; nor endeavoured
To make your blood run high at solemn feasts,
With viands that provoke (the speeding philtres):
I worked no bawds to tempt you; never practised
The cunning and corrupting arts they study,
That wander in the wild maze of desire;
Honest simplicity and truth were all
The agents I employed; and when I came
To see you, it was with that reverence
As I beheld the altars of the gods;
And Love, that came along with me, was taught
To leave his arrows, and his torch behind,
Quenched in my fear to give offence.
Cleora. And 'twas
That modesty that took me and preserves me,
Like a fresh rose, in mine own natural sweetness;
Which, sullied with the touch of impure hands,
Loses both scent and beauty.
Leost. But, Cleora,
When I am absent, as I must go from you,
(Such is the cruelty of my fate) and leave you,
Unguarded, to the violent assaults
Of loose temptations; when the memory
Of my so many years of love and service,
Is lost in other objects; you are courted
By such as keep a catalogue of their conquests
Won upon credulous virgins; when nor father
Is here to awe you, brother to advise you,
Nor your poor servant by, to keep such off,
By lust instructed how to undermine
And blow your chastity up; when your weak senses,
At once assaulted, shall conspire against you,
And play the traitors to your soul, your virtue:
How can you stand? 'Faith, though you fall, and I
The judge, before whom you then stood accused,
I should acquit you.
Cleora. Will you then confirm
That love and jealousy, though of different natures,
Must of necessity be twins; the younger
Created only to defeat the elder,
And spoil him of his birthright? 'tis not well.
But being to part, I will not chide, I will not;
Nor with one syllable or tear, express
How deeply I am wounded with the arrows
Of your distrust: But when that you shall hear
At your return how I have borne myself,
And what an austere penance I take on me,
To satisfy your doubts: When, like a vestal,
I shew you, to your shame, the fire still burning,
Committed to my charge by true affection,
The people joining with you in the wonder:
When, by the glorious splendor of my sufferings,
The prying eyes of jealousy are struck blind,
The monster, too, that feeds on fears, even starved
For want of seeming matter to accuse me,
Expect, Leosthenes, a sharp reproof
From my just anger.
Leost. What will you do?
Cleora. Obey me,
Or from this minute you're a stranger to me;
And do it without reply.—All-seeing sun,
Thou witness of my innocence, thus I close
Mine eyes against thy comfortable light,
'Till the return of this distrustful man.
[*He binds her eyes.*
Now bind them sure;—nay, do it: if uncompelled
I loose this knot, until the hands that made it
Be pleased to untie it, may consuming plagues
Fall heavy on me! Pray you, guide me to your lips.
This kiss, when you come back, shall be a virgin,
To bid you welcome.—Nay, I have not done yet:
I will continue dumb; and, you once gone,
No accent shall come from me: Now to my chamber;
My tomb, if you miscarry: There I'll spend
My hours in silent mourning, and thus much
Shall be reported of me to my glory,
And you confess it, whether I live or die,
My chastity triumphs o'er your jealousy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter PISANDER *and* POLIPHRON, *bringing forth a Table.*

Pis. 'Twill take, I warrant thee.
Pol. You may do your pleasure;
But, in my judgment, better to make use of
The present opportunity.
Pis. No more.
Pol. I'm silenced.
Pis. More wine; pry'thee drink hard, friend,
And when we're hot, whatever I propound,

Enter CIMBRIO, GRACCULO, *and other Slaves.*

Second with vehemency.—Men of your words, all welcome!
Slaves use no ceremony; sit down, here's a health.
Pol. Let it run round, fill every man his glass.
Grac. We look for no waiters: this is wine.
Pis. The better,
Strong, lusty wine. Drink deep; this juice will make us
As free as our lords.
Grac. But, if they find we taste it,
We are all damned to the quarry during life,
Without hope of redemption.
Pis. Pish! for that
We'll talk anon: Another rouze, we lose time;
[*Drinks.*
When our low blood's wound up a little higher,
I'll offer my design:—nay, we are cold yet,
These glasses contain nothing;—do me right,
[*Takes the bottle.*
As e'er you hope for liberty. 'Tis done bravely:
How do you feel yourselves now?
Cim. I begin
To have strange conundrums in my head.
Grac. And I
To loath base water. I would be hanged in peace now,
For one month of such holidays.
Pis. An age, boys;
And yet defy the whip, if you are men,
Or dare believe you've souls.
Our lords are no gods?
Grac. They are devils to us, I am sure.
Pis. But subject to
Cold, hunger, and diseases.
Grac. In abundance:
Your lord, that feels no ach in his chine at twenty,
Forfeits his privilege; how should their chirurgeons build else,
Or ride on their foot-clothes?
Pis. Equal Nature fashioned us
All in one mould: The bear serves not the bear,
Nor the wolf the wolf; 'twas odds of strength in tyrants,
That plucked the first link from the golden chain,
With which that thing of things bound in the world.
Why then, since we are taught, by their examples,
To love our liberty, if not command,
Should the strong serve the weak, the fair deformed ones?
Or such as know the cause of things, pay tribute
To ignorant fools? All's but the outward gloss
And politic form that does distinguish us.
Cimbrio, thou art a strong man; if, in place
Of carrying burthens, thou hadst been trained up
In martial discipline, thou might'st have proved
A general, fit to lead and fight for Sicily,
As fortunate as Timoleon.
Cim. A little fighting
Will serve a general's turn.
Pis. Thou, Gracculo,
Hast fluency of language, quick conceit;
And, I think, covered with a senator's robe,
Formally set on the bench, thou wouldst appear
As brave a senator———
Grac. Would I had lands,
Or money to buy a place; and if I did not
Sleep on the bench with the drowsiest of 'em,
Play with my chain,
Look on my watch when my guts chim'd twelve, and wear
A state beard, with my barber's help; rank with them
In their most choice peculiar gifts; degrade me,
And put me to drink water again, which (now
I've tasted wine) were poison.
Pis. 'Tis spoke nobly,
And like a gown-man:—None of these, I think too,
But would prove good burghers.
Grac. Hum! the fools are modest:
I know their insides.—Here's an ill-faced fellow
(But that will not be seen in a dark shop),
If he did not in a month learn to out-swear,
In the selling of his wares, the cunningest tradesman
In Syracusa, I've no skill.—Here's another,
Observe but what a cozening look he has;
(Hold up thy head, man) if for drawing gallants
Into mortgages for commodities, cheating heirs
With your new counterfeit gold thread, and gummed velvets,
He does not transcend all that went before him,
Call in his patent. Pass the rest; they'll all make
Sufficient Beccos, and with their brow-antlers,
Bear up the cap of maintenance.
Pis. Is't not pity, then,
Men of such eminent virtues should be slaves?
Cim. Our fortune!
Pis. 'Tis your folly. Daring men
Command, and make their fates.—Say, at this instant,
I marked you out a way to liberty;
Possessed you of those blessings our proud lords
So long have surfeited in; and, what is sweetest,
Arm you with power, by strong hand to avenge
Your stripes, your unregarded toil, the pride,
The insolence, of such as tread upon
Your patient sufferings; fill your famished mouths
With the fat and plenty of the land; redeem you
From the dark vale of servitude, and seat you

Upon a hill of happiness: What would you do
To purchase this, and more?
Grac. Do any thing:
To burn a church or two, and dance by the light of it,
Were but a May-game.
Pol. I have a father living;
But, if the cutting of his throat could work this,
He should excuse me.
Cin. I would cut mine own,
Rather than miss it, so I might but have
A taste of it ere I die.
Pis. Be resolute men,
You shall run no such hazard; nor groan under
The burthen of such crying sins.
Cin. The means?
Grac. I feel a woman's longing.
Pol. Do not torment us
With expectation.
Pis. Thus then: Our proud masters,
And all the able freemen of the city
Are gone unto the wars—
Pol. Observe but that.
Pis. Old men, and such as can make no resistance,
Are only left at home.
Grac. And the proud young fool,
My master—If this take, I'll hamper him.
Pis. Their arsenal, their treasure's in our power,
If we have hearts to seize them. If our lords fall
In the present action, the whole country's ours.
Say they return victorious, we have means
To keep the town against them; at the worst
To make our own conditions. Now, if you dare
Fall on their daughters and their wives, break up
Their iron chests, banquet on their rich beds,
And carve yourselves of all delights and pleasures
You have been barred from, with one voice cry with me,
Liberty, liberty!
All. Liberty, liberty!
Pis. Go then, and take possession: Use all freedom;
But shed no blood.—So, this is well begun;
But not to be commended till it be done.
[*Exeunt all, crying liberty.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

PISANDER, *and* TIMANDRA.

Pis. Why, think you that I plot against myself?
Fear nothing; you are safe: These thickskinned slaves,
I use as instruments to serve my ends,
Pierce not my deep designs; nor shall they dare
To lift an arm against you.
Timan. With your will:
But turbulent spirits, raised beyond themselves,
With ease are not so soon laid: They oft prove
Dangerous to him that called them up.
Pis. 'Tis true,
In what is rashly undertook. Long since
I have considered seriously their natures,
Proceeded with mature advice, and know
I hold their will and faculties in more awe
Than I can do my own. Now, for their licence,
And riot in the city, I can make
A just defence and use: It may appear, too,
A politic prevention of such ills
As might with greater violence and danger
Hereafter be attempted; though some smart for it
It matters not:—However, I am resolved;
And sleep you with security. Holds Cleora
Constant to her rash vow?
Timan. Beyond belief;
To me that see her hourly, it seems a fable.
By signs I guess at her commands, and serve them
With silence; such her pleasure is made known
By holding her fair hand thus. She eats little,
Sleeps less, as I imagine: Once a-day
I lead her to this gallery, where she walks
Some half a dozen turns, and, having offered
To her absent saint a sacrifice of sighs,
She points back to her prison.
Pis. Guide her hither,
And make her understand the slaves revolt;
And with your utmost eloquence enlarge
Their insolence and rapes done in the city.
Forget not, too, I am their chief, and tell her
You strongly think my extreme dotage on her,
As I am Marullo, caused this sudden uproar
To make way to enjoy her.
Timan. Punctually
I will discharge my part. [*Exit Timandra.*

Enter POLIPHRON.

Pol. O, sir, I sought you:
You have missed the sport. Hell, I think, is broke loose,
There's such variety of all disorders,
As leaping, shouting, drinking, dancing, whoring,
Among the slaves; answered with crying, howling,
By the citizens and their wives; such a confusion
(In a word, not to tire you), as I think
The like was never read of.
Pis. I share in
The pleasure though I'm absent. This is some
Revenge for my disgrace.
Pol. But, sir, I fear,
If your authority restrain them not,
They'll fire the city, or kill one another,
They are so apt to outrage; neither know I
Whether you wish it, and came therefore to
Acquaint you with so much.
Pis. I will among them;
But must not long be absent.

Pol. At your pleasure. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

CLEORA, TIMANDRA, *a chair, a shout within.*

Timan. They're at our gates, my heart! affrights and horrors
Increase each minute: No way left to save us,
No flattering hope to comfort us, or means
By miracle to redeem us from base lust
And lawless rapine? are there gods, yet suffer
Such innocent sweetness to be made the spoil
Of brutish appetite? Or, since they decree
To ruin Nature's masterpiece (of which
They have not left one pattern), must they chuse,
To set their tyranny off, slaves to pollute
The spring of chastity, and poison it
With their most loathed embraces? And of those
He that should offer up his life to guard it?
Marullo, cursed Marullo, your own bondman,
Purchased to serve you, and fed by your favours.
[*Cleora starts.*
Nay, start not: it is he; he, the grand captain
Of these libidinous beasts, that have not left
One cruel act undone, that barbarous conquest
Yet ever practised in a captive city.
He, doating on your beauty, and to have fellows
In his foul sin, hath raised these mutinous slaves,
Who have begun the game by violent rapes,
Upon the wives and daughters of their lords:
And he, to quench the fire of his base lust,
By force comes to enjoy you:—Do not wring
[*Cleora wrings her hands.*
Your innocent hands, 'tis bootless; use the means
That may preserve you. 'Tis no crime to break
A vow when you are forced to it; shew your face,
And with the majesty of commanding beauty
Strike dead his loose affections. If that fail,
Give liberty to your tongue, and use entreaties;
There cannot be a breast of flesh and blood,
Or heart so made of flint, but must receive
Impression from your words; or eyes so stern,
But from the clear reflection of your tears,
Must melt, and bear them company: will you not
Do these good offices to yourself? Poor I, then,
Can only weep your fortune!—Here he comes.

Enter PISANDER, *speaking at the door.*

Pis. He that advances
A foot beyond this, comes upon my sword.
You have had your ways, disturb not mine.
Timan. Speak gently,
Her fears may kill her else.
Pis. Now Love inspire me!
Still shall this canopy of envious night
Obscure my suns of comfort? And those dainties,
Of purest white and red, which I take in at
My greedy eyes, denied my famished senses?
The organs of your hearing are yet open;
And you infringe no vow, though you vouchsafe
To give them warrant to convey unto
Your understanding parts, the story of
A tortured and despairing lover whom
Not fortune, but affection, marks your slave:
[*Cleora shakes.*
Shake not, best lady! for, believe it, you are
As far from danger as I am from force:
All violence I'll offer, tends no farther
Than to relate my sufferings, which I dare not
Presume to do, till by some gracious sign
You shew you're pleased to hear me.
Timan. If you are,
Hold forth your right-hand.
[*Cleora holds forth her right-hand.*
Pisan. So, 'tis done; and I
With my glad lips seal humbly on your foot,
My soul's thanks for the favour: I forbear
To tell you who I am, what wealth, what honours
I made exchange of, to become your servant:
And, though I knew worthy Leosthenes
(For sure he must be worthy, for whose love
You have endured so much) to be my rival;
When rage and jealousy counselled me to kill him,
(Which then I could have done with much more ease,
Than now, in fear to grieve you, I dare speak it)
Love, seconded with duty, boldly told me,
The man I hated, fair Cleora favoured:
And that was his protection. [*Cleora bows.*
Timan. See, she bows
Her head, in sign of thankfulness.
Pisan. He removed,
By the occasion of the war (my fires increasing
By being closed and stopt up), frantic affection
Prompted me to do something in his absence,
That might deliver you into my power,
Which you see is effected; and even now,
When my rebellious passions chide my dulness,
And tell me how much I abuse my fortunes;
Now it is in my power to bear you hence,
[*Cleora starts.*
Or take my wishes here, (nay, fear not, madam,
True love's a servant, brutish lust a tyrant,
I dare not touch those viands that ne'er taste well,
But when they're freely offered): Only thus much,
Be pleased I may speak in my own dear cause.
And think it worthy your consideration
I have loved truly (cannot say deserved;
Since duty must not take the name of merit),
That I so far prize your content, before
All blessings that my hope can fashion to me,
That willingly I entertain despair,
And for your sake embrace it. For I know,
This opportunity lost, by no endeavour
The like can be recovered. To conclude,
Forget not that I lose myself to save you.
For what can I expect but death and torture,
The war being ended? And (what is a task
Would trouble Hercules to undertake),
I do deny you to myself, to give you
A pure unspotted present to my rival.
I've said: If it distaste not, best of virgins,
Reward my temperance with some lawful favour,
Though you contemn my person.
[*Cleora kneels, then pulls off her glove, and offers her hand to Pisander.*

Timon. See, she kneels,
And seems to call upon the gods to pay
The debt she owes your virtue: To perform which
As a sure pledge of friendship, she vouchsafes you
Her right-hand.
Pis. I am paid for all my sufferings.
Now, when you please, pass to your private chamber,
My love and duty, faithful guards, shall keep you
[Makes a low courtesy as she goes off.
From all disturbance; and when you are sated
With thinking of Leosthenes, as a fee
Due to my service, spare one sigh for me.
[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Enter LEOSTHENES and TIMAGORAS.

Timag. I am so far from envy, I am proud
You have outstripped me in the race of honour.
Oh! 'twas a glorious day, and bravely won!
Your bold performance gave such lustre to
Timoleon's wise directions, as the army
Rests doubtful, to whose they stand most engaged
For their so great success.
Leost. The gods first honoured,
The glory be the general's; 'tis far from me
To be his rival.
Timag. You abuse your fortune,
To entertain her choice and gracious favours
With a contracted brow; plumed victory
Is truly painted with a cheerful look,
Equally distant from proud insolence,
And base dejection.
Leost. O Timagoras!
You only are acquainted with the cause,
That loads my sad heart with a hill of lead;
Whose ponderous weight, neither my new-got honour,
Assisted by the general applause
The soldiers crown it with, nor all war's glories,
Can lessen or remove: and, would you please,
With in consideration, to remember,
How much I wronged Cleora's innocence
With my rash doubts; and what a grievous penance
She did impose upon her tender sweetness,
To pluck away the vulture jealousy,
That fed upon my liver, you cannot blame me,
But call it a fit justice on myself,
Though I resolve to be a stranger to
The thought of mirth or pleasure.
Timag. You have redeemed
The forfeit of your fault with such a ransom
Of honourable action, as my sister
Must of necessity confess her sufferings
Weighed down by your fair merits; and, when she views you,
Like a triumphant conqueror, carried through
The streets of Syracusa, the glad people
Pressing to meet you, and the senators
Contending who should heap most honours on you;
The oxen, crowned with garlands, led before you,
Appointed for the sacrifice; and the altars
Smoaking with thankful incense to the gods;
The soldiers chaunting loud hymns to your praise;
The windows filled with matrons and with virgins,
Throwing upon your head, as you pass by,
The choicest flowers, and silently invoking
The queen of love, with their particular vows,
To be thought worthy of you; can Cleora,
(Though in the glass of self-love, she behold
Her best deserts) but with all joys acknowledge,
What she endured was but a noble trial
You made of her affection? and her anger,
Rising from your too amorous fears, soon drenched
In Lethe, and forgotten.
Leost. If those glories
You so set forth, were mine, they might plead for me:
But I can lay no claim to the least honour
Which you with foul injustice ravish from her.
Her beauty in me wrought a miracle,
Taught me to aim at things beyond my power,
Which her perfections purchased, and gave to me
From her free bounties; she inspired me with
That valour which I dare not call mine own;
And, from the fair reflection of her mind,
My soul received the sparkling beams of courage.
She, from the magazine of her proper goodness,
Stocked me with virtuous purposes; sent me forth
To trade for honour: and, she being the owner
Of the bark of my adventures, I must yield her
A just account of all, as befits a factor:
And, howsoever others think me happy,
And cry aloud, I have made a prosperous voyage,
One frown of her dislike at my return,
(Which, as a punishment for my fault, I look for)
Strikes dead all comfort.
Timag. Tush! these fears are needless;
She cannot, must not, shall not be so cruel.
A free confession of a fault wins pardon,
But, being seconded by desert, commands it.
The general is your own, and sure my father
Repents his harshness: for myself, I am
Ever your creature; one day shall be happy
In your triumph and your marriage.
Leost. May it prove so,
With her consent and pardon.
Timag. Ever touching
On that harsh string? she is your own, and you
Without disturbance seize on what's your due.
[Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter PISANDER *and* TIMANDRA.

Pis. SHE has her health, then?
Timan. Yes, sir, and, as often
As I speak of you, lends attentive ear
To all that I deliver; nor seems tired,
Though I dwell long on the relation of
Your sufferings for her, heaping praise on praise
On your unequalled temperance, and command
You hold o'er your affections.
Pis. To my wish:
Have you acquainted her with the defeat
Of the Carthaginians, and with what honours
Leosthenes comes crowned home?
Timan. With all care.
Pis. And how does she receive it?
Timan. As I guess,
With a seeming kind of joy: but yet appears not
Transported, or proud of his happy fortune.
But when I tell her of the certain ruin
You must encounter with at their arrival
In Syracusa, and that death with torments
Must fall upon you, which you yet repent not,
Esteeming it a glorious martyrdom,
And a reward of pure unspotted love,
Preserved in the white robe of innocence,
Though she were in your power; and, still spurred on
By insolent lust, you rather chose to suffer
The fruit untasted, for whose glad possession
You have called on the fury of your lord,
Than that she should be grieved or tainted in
Her reputation—
Pis. Doth it work compunction?
Pities she my misfortune?
Timan. She expressed
All signs of sorrow, which, her vow observed,
Could witness a grieved heart. At the first hearing,
She fell upon her face, rent her fair hair,
Her hands held up to heaven, and invented sighs,
In which she silently seemed to complain
Of heaven's injustice.
Pis. 'Tis enough. Wait carefully,
And, upon all watched occasions, continue
Speech and discourse of me: 'Tis time must work her.
Timan. I'll not be wanting; but still strive to serve you. [*Exit* TIMAND.

Enter POLIPHRON.

Pis. Now, Poliphron, the news?
Pol. The conquering army
Is within ken,
Pis. How brook the slaves the object?
Pol. Cheerfully yet; they do refuse no labour,
And seem to scoff at danger: 'Tis your presence
That must confirm them; with a full consent
You're chosen to relate the tyranny
Of our proud masters; and what you subscribe to
They gladly will allow of, or hold out
To the last man.
Pis. I'll instantly among them:
If we prove constant to ourselves, good fortune
Will not, I hope, forsake us.
Pol. 'Tis our best refuge. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter TIMOLEON, ARCHIDAMUS, DIPHILUS, LEOSTHENES, TIMAGORAS, *and others.*

Timol. Thus far we are returned victorious; crowned
With wreaths triumphant, (famine, blood and death
Banished your peaceful confines) and bring home
Security and peace. 'Tis therefore fit
That such as boldly stood the shock of war,
And with the dear expence of sweat and blood
Have purchased honour, should with pleasure reap
The harvest of their toil; and we stand bound
Out of the first file of the best deservers,
(Though all must be considered to their merits)
To think of you, Leosthenes, that stand,
And worthily, most dear in our esteem,
For your heroic valour.
Arch. When I look on
(The labour of so many men and ages)
This well-built city, not long since designed
To spoil and rapine, by the favour of
The gods, and you their ministers, preserved,
I cannot, in my height of joy, but offer
These tears for a glad sacrifice.
Diph. Sleep the citizens?
Or are they overwhelmed with the excess
Of comfort that flows to them?
Leost. We receive
A silent entertainment.
Timag. I have long since
Expected that the virgins and the matrons,
The old men striving with their age, the priests,
Carrying the images of their gods before them,
Should have met us with procession. Ha! the gates
Are shut against us!
Arch. And upon the walls
Armed men seem to defy us!

Enter above PISANDER, POLIPHRON, CIMBRIO, GRACCULO, *&c.*

Diph. I should know
These faces.—They are our slaves.
Timag. The mystery, rascals?
Open the ports, and play not with an anger
That will consume you.
Timol. This is above wonder!
Arch. Our bondmen stand against us?
Grac. Some such things
We were in man's remembrance.—The slaves are turned
Lords of the town, or so.—Nay, be not angry:
Perhaps, on good terms, giving security

You will be quiet men, we may allow you
Some lodgings in our garrets or out-houses:
Your great looks cannot carry it.
Cimb. The truth is,
We've been bold with your wives, toyed with your daughters——
Leost. O my prophetic soul?
Grac. Rifled your chests,
Been busy with your wardrobes.
Timag. Can we endure this!
Leost. O! my Cleora?
Grac. A candle for the gentleman!
He'll die of the pip else.
Timag. Scorned too! Are you turned stone?
Hold parley with our bondmen? Force our entrance,
Then, villains, expect——
Timol. Hold! you wear men's shapes,
And if, like men, you've reason, shew a cause
That leads you to this desperate course, which must end
In your destruction.
Grac. That, as please the fates;
But we vouchsafe.—Speak, captain.
Timag. Hell and furies!
Arch. Baved by our own curs!
Cimb. Take heed you be not worried.
Pol. We are sharp set.
Cimb. And sudden.
Pis. Briefly thus then,
Since I must speak for all.—Your tyranny
Drew us from our obedience. Happy those times
When lords were styled fathers of families,
And not imperious masters! when they numbered
Their servants almost equal with their sons,
Or one degree beneath them; when their labours
Were cherished and rewarded, and a period
Set to their sufferings; when they did not press
Their duties or their wills beyond the power
And strength of their performance; all things ordered
With such decorum, as wise law-makers,
From each well-governed private house, derived
The perfect model of a commonwealth.
Humanity then lodged in the hearts of men,
And thankful masters carefully provided
For creatures wanting reason. The noble horse,
That in his fiery youth from his wide nostrils
Neighed courage to his rider, and broke through
Armies of opposed pikes, bearing his lord
Safe to triumphant victory, old or wounded,
Was set at liberty, and freed from service.
The Athenian mules, that from the quarry drew
Marble, hewed for the temples of the gods,
The great work ended, were dismissed, and fed
At the public cost; nay, faithful dogs have found
Their sepulchres; but man, to man more cruel,
Appoints no end to the sufferings of his slave;
Since pride stepped in and riot, and overturned
This goodly frame of concord, teaching masters
To glory in the abuse of such as are
Brought under their command; who, grown unuseful,
Are less esteemed than beasts.—This you have practised,
Practised on us with rigour; this hath forced us
To shake our heavy yokes off; and, if redress
Of these just grievances be not granted us,
We'll right ourselves, and by strong hand defend
What we are now possessed of.
Grac. And not leave
One house unfired.
Cimb. Or throat uncut of those
We have in our power.
Pol. Nor will we fall alone;
You shall buy us dearly.
Timag. O the gods!
Unheard of insolence?
Timol. What are your demands?
Pis. A general pardon, first, for all offences
Committed in your absence: Liberty
To all such as desire to make return
Into their countries; and to those that stay,
A competence of land freely allotted
To each man's proper use; no lord acknowledged;
Lastly, with your consent, to chuse them wives
Out of your families.
Timag. Let the city sink first.
Leost. And ruin seize on all, ere we subscribe
To such conditions.
Arch. Carthage, though victorious,
Could not have forced more from us.
Leost. Scale the wall!
Capitulate after.
Timol. He that wins the top first,
Shall wear a mural wreath. [*Exeunt.*
Pis. Each to his place. [*Flourish and arms.*
Or death or victory.—Charge them home, and fear not.

Enter TIMOLEON, ARCHIDAMUS, *and Senators.*

Timol. We wrong ourselves, and we are justly punished,
To deal with bondmen, as if we encountered
An equal enemy.
Arch. They fight like devils;
And run upon our swords, as if their breasts
Were proof beyond their armour.

Enter LEOSTHENES *and* TIMAGORAS.

Timag. Make a firm stand.——
The slaves, not satisfied they've beat us off,
Prepare to sally forth,
Timol. They are wild beasts,
And to be tamed by policy.—Each man take
A tough whip in his hand, such as you used
To punish them with as masters: In your looks
Carry severity and awe; 'twill frighten them
More than your weapons: Savage lions fly from
The sight of fire; and these that have forgot
That duty you ne'er taught them with your swords,
When, unexpected, they behold those terrors
Advanced aloft, that they were made to shake at,

'Twill force them to remember what they are,
And stoop to due obedience.

Enter CIMBRIO, GRACCULO, *and other Slaves.*

Arch. Here they come.
Cimb. Leave not a man alive: A wound is but a flea-biting,
To what we suffered being slaves.
Grac. O, my heart!
Cimbrio, what do we see? the whip! our masters!
Timag. Dare you rebel, slaves!
[*Senators shake their whips, and they throw away their weapons, and run off.*
Cimb. Mercy! mercy! where
Shall we hide us from their fury!
Grac. Fly! they follow.
Oh! we shall be tormented.
Timol. Enter with them,
But yet forbear to kill them. Still remember
They are part of your wealth; and being disarmed,
There is no danger.
Arch. Let us first deliver
Such as they have in fetters, and at leisure
Determine of their punishment.
Leost. Friend, to you
I leave the disposition of what's mine:
I cannot think I am safe without your sister.
She's only worth my thought: and till I see
What she has suffered I am on the rack,
And furies my tormentors. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter PISANDER *and* TIMANDRA.

Pis. I know I am pursued; nor would I fly,
Although the ports were open, and a convoy
Ready to bring me off—The baseness of
These villains, from the pride of all my hopes,
Has thrown me to the bottomless abyss
Of horror and despair. Had they stood firm,
I could have bought Cleora's free consent
With the safety of her father's life and brother's;
And forced Leosthenes to quit his claim,
And kneel a suitor to me.
Timan. You must not think
What might have been, but what must now be practised,
And suddenly resolve.
Pis. All my poor fortunes
Are at the stake, and I must run the hazard.
Unseen, convey me to Cleora's chamber;
For, in her sight, if it were possible,
I would be apprehended.—Do not enquire
The reason why, but help me.
Timan. Make haste—One knocks.
[*Exit Pisander.*

Enter LEOSTHENES.

Jove turn all to the best!—You are welcome, sir.
Leost. Thou givest it in a heavy tone.
Timan. Alas! sir,
We have so long fed on the bread of sorrow,
Drinking the bitter water of afflictions,
Made loathsome too by our continued fears,
Comfort's a stranger to us.
Leost. Fears? Your sufferings,
For which I am so overgone with grief,
I dare not ask, without compassionate tears,
The villain's name, that robbed thee of thy honour;
For being trained up in chastity's cold school,
And taught by such a mistress as Cleora,
'Twere impious in me to think Timandra
Fell with her own consent.
Timan. How mean you? Fell, sir!
I understand you not.
Leost. I would thou did'st not,
Or that I could not read upon thy face,
In blushing characters, the story of
Libidinous rape.—Confess it, for you stand not
Accountable for a sin, against whose strength
Your overmatched innocence could make no resitance,
Under which odds I know Cleora fell too,
Heaven's help in vain invoked!—the amazed sun,
Hiding his face behind a mask of clouds,
Not daring to look on it.—In her sufferings
All sorrow's comprehended.—What Timandra,
Or the city, has endured, her loss considered,
Deserves not to be named.
Timan. Pray you, do not bring, sir,
In the chimeras of your jealous fears,
New monsters to affright us.
Leost. O Timandra,
That I had faith enough but to believe thee!
I should receive it with a joy beyond
Assurance of Elysian shades hereafter,
Or all the blessings in this life a mother
Could wish her children crowned with.—But I must not
Credit impossibilities; yet I strive
To find out that, whose knowledge is a curse,
And ignorance a blessing.—Come, discover
What kind of look he had that forced thy lady,
(Thy ravisher I will enquire at leisure)
That when hereafter I behold a stranger
But near him in aspect, I may conclude
(Though men and angels should proclaim him honest)
He is a hell-bred villain.
Timan. You are unworthy
To know she is preserved, preserved untainted.
Sorrow (but ill bestowed) hath only made
A rape upon her comforts in your absence.
[*Exit, and returns with Cleora.*
Come forth, dear madam.
Leost. Ha! [*Kneels.*
Timan. Nay, she deserves
The bending of your heart, that to content you,
Has kept a vow, the breach of which a vestal
(Though the infringing it had called upon her
A living funeral) must of force have shrunk at.
No danger could compel her to dispense with
Her cruel penance; though hot lust came armed

To seize upon her; when one look or accent
Might have redeemed her.
Leost. Might? O do not shew me
A beam of comfort, and straight take it from me.
——The means by which she was freed?—Speak,
O speak quickly!
Each minute of delay's an age of torment:
O! speak, Timandra!
Timan. Free her from the oath;
Herself can best deliver it. [*Takes off the scarf.*
Leost. O blest office!
Never did galley-slave shake off his chains,
Or look on his redemption from the oar,
With such true feeling of delight as now
I find myself possessed of.—Now I behold
True light indeed: For, since these fairest stars
(Covered with clouds of your determinate will)
Denied their influence to my optic sense,
The splendor of the sun appeared to me
But as some little glimpse of his bright beams
Conveyed into a dungeon, to remember
The dark inhabitants there how much they wanted.
Open these long-shut lips, and strike mine ears
With music more harmonious than the spheres
Yield in their heavenly motions: And, if ever
A true submission for a crime acknowledged
May find a gracious hearing, teach your tongue,
In the first sweet articulate sounds it utters,
To sign my wished-for pardon.
Cleora. I forgive you.
Leost. How greedily I receive this! Stay, best lady,
And let me by degrees ascend the height
Of human happiness! All at once delivered,
The torrent of my joys will overwhelm me;—
So, now a little more; and pray excuse me,
If, like a wanton epicure, I desire
The pleasant taste these cares of comfort yield me,
Should not too soon be swallowed. Have you not
(By your unspotted truth I do conjure you
To answer truly) suffered in your honour,
(By force, I mean, for in your will I free you)
Since I left Syracusa?
Cleora. I restore
This kiss, (so help me, goodness!) which I borrowed
When I last saw you.
Leost. Miracle of virtue!
One pause more, I beseech you:—I am like
A man, whose vital spirit, consumed and wasted
With a long and tedious fever, unto whom
Too much of a strong cordial at once taken,
Brings death, and not restores him. Yet I cannot
Fit here; but must enquire the man to whom
I stand indebted for a benefit,
Which to requite at full, though in this hand
I grasped all scepters the world's empire bows to,
Would leave me a poor bankrupt.—Name him, lady;
If of a mean estate, I'll gladly part with
My utmost fortunes to him—but if noble,
In thankful duty study how to serve him:
Or, if of higher rank, erect him altars,
And as a god adore him.
Cleora. If that goodness
And noble temperance, the queen of virtues,
Bridling rebellious passions (to whose sway
Such as have conquered nations have lived slaves)
Did ever wing great minds to fly to heaven;
He, that preserved mine honour, may hope boldly,
To fill a seat among the gods, and shake off
Our frail corruption.
Leost. Forward.
Cleora. Or if ever
The powers above did mask in human shapes,
To teach mortality, not by cold precepts
Forgot as soon as told, but by examples
To imitate their pureness, and draw near
To their celestial natures—I believe
He's more than man.
Leost. You do describe a wonder.
Cleora. Which will increase, when you shall understand
He was a lover.
Leost. Not yours, lady?
Cleora. Yes;
Loved me, Leosthenes; nay more, so doted,
(If e'er affections scorning gross desires
May without wrong be styled so) that he darst not
With an immodest syllable or look,
In fear it might take from me, whom he made
The object of his better part, discover
I was the saint he sued to.
Leost. A rare temper!
Cleora. I cannot speak it to the worth: All praise
I can bestow upon it, will appear
Envious detraction. Not to rack you further,
Yet make the miracle full; though, of all men,
He hated you, Leosthenes, as his rival;
So high yet prized he my content, that, knowing
You were a man I favoured, he disdained not
Against himself to serve you.
Leost. You conceal still
To owner of these excellencies.
Cleora. 'Tis Marullo,
My father's bondman.
Leost. Ha, ha, ha!
Cleora. Why do you laugh?
Leost. To hear the labouring mountain of your praise
Delivered of a mouse.
Cleora. The man deserves not
This scorn, I do assure you.
Leost. Do you call
What was his duty merit?
Cleora. Yes, and place it
As high in my esteem, as all the honours
Descended from your ancestors, or the glory,
Which you may call your own, got in this action,
In which, I must confess, you have done nobly,
And, I would add, as I desired;—but that
I fear 'twould make you proud.

Leost. Why, lady, can you
Be won to give allowance that your slave
Should dare to love you?
Cleora. The immortal gods
Accept the meanest altars that are raised
By pure devotion; and sometimes prefer
An ounce of frankincense, honey or milk,
Before whole hecatombs, or Sabæan gums,
Offered in ostentation.—Are you sick [*Aside.*
Of your old disease? I'll fit you.
Leost. You seem moved.
Cleora. Zealous, I grant, in the defence of virtue.
Why, good Leosthenes, though I endured
A penance for your sake above example,
I have not so far sold myself, I take it,
To be at your devotion, but I may
Cherish desert in others, where I find it.
How would you tyrannize, if you stood possessed of
That, which is only yours in expectation,
That now prescribe such hard conditions to me?
Leost. One kiss, and I am silenced.
Cleora. I vouchsafe it;
Yet, I must tell you 'tis a favour that
Marullo, when I was his, not mine own,
Durst not presume to ask: No; when the city
Bowed humbly to licentious rapes and lust,
And when I was, of men and gods forsaken,
Delivered to his power, he did not press me
To grace him with one look or syllable,
Or urged the dispensation of an oath,
Made for your satisfaction—The poor wretch
Having related only his own sufferings,
And kissed my hand, which I could not deny him,
Defending me from others, never since
Solicited my favours.
Leost. Pray you end;
The story does not please me.
Cleora. Well, take heed
Of doubts and fears;—for know, Leosthenes,
A greater injury cannot be offered
To innocent chastity than unjust suspicion.
I love Marullo's fair mind, not his person;
Let that secure you. And I here command you,
If I have any power in you, to stand
Between him and all punishment, and oppose
His temperance to his folly; if you fail——
No more; I will not threaten. [*Exit.*
Leost. What a bridge
Of glass I walk upon, over a river
Of certain ruin! Mine own weighty fears
Cracking what should support me:—And those helps,
Which confidence yields to others, are from me
Ravished by doubts and wilful jealousy. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter TIMAGORAS, CLEON, ASOTUS, CORISCA, *and* OLYMPIA.

Cleon. But are you sure we're safe?
Timag. You need not fear:
They are all under guard; their fangs pared off:
The wounds their insolence gave you, to be cured
With the balm of your revenge.
Asot. And shall I be
The thing I was born, my lord?
Timag. The same wise thing——
'Slight, what a beast they have made thee! Africk never
Produced the like.
Asot. I think so.—Nor the land
Where apes and monkeys grow, like crabs and walnuts
On the same tree. Not all the catalogue
Of conjurers or wise women, bound together,
Could have so soon transformed me, as my rascal
Did with his whip; Not in outside only,
But in my own belief, I thought myself
As perfect a baboon——
Timag. An ass thou wert ever.
Asot. And would have given one leg, with all my heart,
For good security to have been a man
After three lives, or one and twenty years,
Though I had died on crutches.
Cleon. Never varlets
So triumphed o'er an old fat man—I was famished.
Timag. Indeed you are fallen away.
Asot. Three years of feeding
On cullises and jelly, though his cooks
Lard all he eats with marrow, or his doctors
Pour in his mouth restoratives as he sleeps,
Will not recover him.
Timag. How now, friend?
Looks our Cleora lovely?

Enter LEOSTHENES, *and* DIPHILUS, *with a guard.*

Leost. In my thoughts, sir.
Timag. But why this guard?
Diph. It is Timoleon's pleasure;
The slaves have been examined, and confess,
Their riot took beginning from your house;
And the first mover of them to rebellion,
Your slave Marullo.
Leost. Ha! I more than fear——
Timag. They may search boldly.

Enter TIMANDRA.

Timan. You are unmannered grooms
To pry into my lady's private lodgings;
There's no Marullos there.

Enter DIPHILUS *with* PISANDER.

Timag. Now I suspect too;
Where found you him?
Diph. Close hid in your sister's chamber.
Timag. Is that the villain's sanctuary?
Leost. This confirms
All she delivered, false.
Timag. But that I scorn
To rust my sword in thy slavish blood,
Thou now wert dead.

Pis. He's more a slave than fortune
Or misery can make me, that insults
Upon unweaponed innocence.
Timag. Prate, you dog!
Pis. Curs snap at lions in the toil, whose looks
Frighted them, being free.
Timag. As a wild beast,
Drive him before you.
Pis. O divine Cleora!
Leost. Darest thou presume to name her?
Pis. Yes, and love her:
And may say have deserved her.
Timag. Stop his mouth:
Load him with irons too.
[*Exit guard with Pisand.*
Cleon. I am deadly sick
To look on him.
Asot. If he get loose, I know it,
I caper like an ape again—I feel
The whip already.
Timan. This goes to my lady. [*Aside.*
Timag. Come, cheer you, sir; we will urge his punishment
To the full satisfaction of your anger.
Leost. He is not worth my thoughts. No corner left
In all the spacious rooms of my vexed heart,
But is filled with Cleora: and the rape
She has done upon her honour, with my wrong,
The heavy burthen of my sorrow's song.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter ARCHIDAMUS *and* CLEORA.

Arch. Thou art thine own disposer. Were his honours
And glories centupled, (as I must confess,
Leosthenes is most worthy) yet I will not,
However I may counsel, force affection.
Cleora. It needs not, sir; I prize him to his worth,
Nay, love him truly; yet would not live slaved
To his jealous humours: since, by the hopes of heaven,
As I am free from violence, in a thought
I am not guilty.
Arch. 'Tis believed, Cleora;
And much the rather (our great gods be praised for it),
In that I find, beyond my hopes, no sign
Of riot in my house, but all things ordered
As if I had been present.
Cleora. May that move you
To pity poor Marullo.
Arch. 'Tis my purpose
To do him all the good I can, Cleora:
But this offence, being against the state,
Must have a public trial. In the mean time,
Be careful of yourself, and stand engaged
No further to Leosthenes, than you may
Come off with honour; for, being once his wife,
You are no more your own, nor mine, but must
Resolve to serve and suffer his commands,
And not dispute them; ere it be too late,
Consider it duly. I must to the senate.
[*Exit Arch.*
Cleora. I am much distracted; in Leosthenes
I can find nothing justly to accuse,
But this excess of love, which I have studied
To cure with more than common means; yet still
It grows upon him. And, if I may call
His sufferings merit, I stand bound to think on
Marullo's dangers; though I save his life,
His love is unrewarded. I confess,
Both have deserved me; yet of force I must be
Unjust to one—such is my destiny.

Enter TIMANDRA.

How now? whence flow these tears?
Timan. I have met, madam,
An object of such cruelty, as would force
A savage to compassion.
Cleora. Speak! What is it?
Timan. Men pity beasts of rapine, if overmatched,
Though baited for their pleasure: but these monsters,
Upon a man that can make no resistance,
Are senseless in their tyranny. Let it be granted,
Marullo is a slave; he is still a man;
A capital offender; yet in justice
Not to be tortured, till the judge pronounce
His punishment.
Cleora. Where is he?
Timan. Dragged to prison
With more than barbarous violence; spurned and spit on
By the insulting officers, his hands
Pinioned behind his back; loaden with fetters;
Yet, with a saint-like patience, he still offers
His face to their rude buffets.
Cleora. O my grieved soul!
By whose command?
Timan. It seems, my lord your brother,
For he is a looker on: and it takes from
Honoured Leosthenes to suffer it,
For his respects to you, whose name in vain
The grieved wretch loudly calls on.
Cleora. By Diana,
'Tis base in both, and to their teeth I will tell them
That I am wronged in it.
Timan. What will you do? [*As going forth.*
Cleora. In person
Visit and comfort him.

Timan. That will bring fuel
To the jealous fires, which burn too hot already
In lord Leosthenes.
Cleora. Let them consume him!
I am mistress of myself. Where cruelty reigns,
There dwells no love nor honour. [*Exit Cleora.*
Timan. So, it works.
Though hitherto I have run a desperate course
To serve my brother's purposes, now 'tis fit

Enter LEOSTHENES *and* TIMAGORAS.

I study mine own ends. They come. Assist me
In these my undertakings, love's great patron,
As my intents are honest.
Leost. 'Tis my fault.
Distrust of others springs, Timagoras,
From diffidence in ourselves. But I will strive,
With the assurance of my worth and merits,
To kill this monster jealousy.
Timag. 'Tis a guest,
In wisdom, never to be entertained
On trivial probabilities; but when
He does appear in pregnant proofs, not fashioned
By idle doubts and fears, to be received.
They make their own horns that are too secure,
As well as such as give them growth and being
From mere imagination. Though I prize
Cleora's honour equal with mine own;
And know what large additions of power
This match brings to our family, I prefer
Our friendship, and your peace of mind, so far
Above my own respects or hers, that if
She hold not her true value in the test,
'Tis far from my ambition for her cure,
That you should wound yourself.
Timan. This argues for me. [*Aside.*
Timag. Why she should be so passionate for a bondman,
Falls not in compass of my understanding,
But for some nearer interest; or he raise
This mutiny, if he loved her (as, you say,
She does confess he did), but to enjoy
By fair or foul play, what he ventured for,
To me is a riddle.
Leost. I pray you, no more; already
I have answered that objection, in my strong
Assurance of her virtue.
Timag. 'Tis unfit, then,
That I should press it farther.
Timan. Now I must
[*Timandra steps out distractedly.*
Make in, or all is lost.
Timag. What would Timandra?
Leost. How wild she looks! How is it with thy lady?
Timag. Collect thyself and speak.
Timan. As you are noble,
Have pity, or love pity. Oh!
Leost. Take breath.
Timag. Out with it boldly.
Timan. Oh! the best of ladies,
I fear, is gone for ever.
Leost. Who, Cleora?
Timag. Deliver, how. 'Sdeath, be a man, sir! speak.
Timan. Take it, then, in as many sighs as words:
My lady———
Timag. What of her?
Timan. No sooner heard
Marullo was imprisoned, but she fell
Into a deadly swoon.
Timag. But she recovered?
Say so, or he will sink too: hold, sir! fie,
This is unmanly.
Timan. Brought again to life,
But with much labour, she awhile stood silent,
Yet in that interim vented sighs, as if
They laboured from the prison of her flesh,
To give her grieved soul freedom. On the sudden,
Transported on the wings of rage and sorrow,
She flew out of the house, and, unattended,
Entered the common prison.
Leost. This confirms
What but before I feared.
Timan. There you may find her;
And, if you love her as a sister———
Timag. Damn her!
Timan. Or you respect her safety, as a lover,
Procure Marullo's liberty.
Timag. Impudence
Beyond expression!
Leost. Shall I be a bawd
To her lust and my dishonour?
Timan. She will run mad, else,
Or do some violent act upon herself.
My lord, her father, sensible of her sufferings,
Labours to gain his freedom.
Leost. O, the devil!
Has she bewitched him too?
Timag. I will hear no more:
Come, sir, we will follow her; and if no persuasion
Can make her take again her natural form,
Which by lust's powerful spell she has cast off,
This sword shall disenchant her.
Leost. O my heart-strings!
[*Exeunt Leosthenes and Timagoras.*
Timan. I knew it would take. Pardon me, fair Cleora,
Though I appear a traitoress; which thou wilt do,
In pity of my woes, when I make known
My lawful claim, and only seek mine own. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Prison.*

Enter CLEORA, *Jailor, and* PISANDER.

Cleora. There's for your privacy.—Stay, unbind his hands.
Jailor. I dare not, madam.
Cleora. I will buy thy danger,
Take more gold.—Do not trouble me with thanks:
I do suppose it done. [*Exit Jailor.*
Pis. My better angel
Assumes this shape to comfort me, and wisely;

Since from the choice of all celestial figures,
He could not take a visible form, so full
Of glorious sweetness. [*Kneels.*
Cleora. Rise—I am flesh and blood,
And do partake thy tortures.
Pis. Can it be?
That charity should persuade you to descend
So far from your own height as to vouchsafe
To look upon my sufferings! How I bless
My fetters now, and stand engaged to fortune
For my captivity—no, my freedom rather!
For who dare think that place a prison, which
You sanctify with your presence? Or believe,
Sorrow has power to use her sting on him,
That is in your compassion armed, and made
Impregnable, though tyranny raise at once
All engines to assault him?
Cleora. Indeed virtue,
With which you have made evident proofs that you
Are strongly fortified, cannot fall, though shaken
With the shock of fierce temptations; but still triumphs
In spite of opposition. For myself,
I may endeavour to confirm your goodness,
(A sure retreat which never will deceive you)
And with unfeigned tears express my sorrow
For what I cannot help—— [*Weeps.*
Pis. Do you weep for me?
O! save that precious balm for noble uses!
I am unworthy of the smallest drop,
Which, in your prodigality of pity,
You throw away on me. Ten of these pearls
Were a large ransom to redeem a kingdom
From a consuming plague, or stop heaven's vengeance,
Called down by crying sins, though at that instant
In dreadful flashes falling on the roofs
Of bold blasphemers. I am justly punished
For my intent of violence to such pureness;
And all the torments flesh is sensible of,
A soft and gentle penance.
Cleora. Which is ended
In this your free confession.

Enter LEOSTHENES *and* TIMAGORAS *unseen.*

Leost. What an object
Have I encountered?
Timag. I am blasted too!
Yet hear a little further.
Pis. Could I expire now,
These white and innocent hands closing my eyes thus,
Were not to die, but in a heavenly dream
To be transported, without the help of Charon,
To the Elysian shades.—You make me bold;
And, but to wish such happiness, I fear,
May give offence——
Cleora. No, for believe it, Marullo,
You've won so much upon me, that I know not
What happiness in my gift but you may challenge.
Leost. Are you yet satisfied?
Cleora. Nor can you wish
But what my vows will second, though it were
Your freedom first, and then in me full power
To make a second tender of myself,
And you receive the present. By this kiss
(From me a virgin bounty) I will practise
All arts for your deliverance; and, that purchased,
In what concerns your farther aims, I speak it,
Do not despair, but hope.
Timag. To have the hangman,
When he is married to the cross, in scorn
To say, gods give you joy.
Leost. But look on me, [*To Cleora.*
And be not too indulgent to your folly;
And then (but that grief stops my speech) imagine
What language I should use.
Cleora. Against thyself.——
Thy malice cannot reach me.
Timag. How?
Cleora. No, brother!
Though you join in the dialogue to accuse me,
What I have done, I'll justify; and these favours,
Which you presume will taint me in my honour,
Though jealousy use all her eyes to spy out
One stain in my behaviour, or envy
As many tongues to wound it, shall appear
My best perfections. For, to the world,
I can, in my defence, alledge such reasons,
As my accusers shall stand dumb to hear them;
When in his fetters this man's worth and virtues,
But truly told, shall shame your boasted glories,
Which fortune claims a share in.
Timag. The base villain
Shall never live to hear it.
[*Offers to stab Pisander, Cleora interposes.*
Cleora. Murder! help!
Through me you shall pass to him.

Enter ARCHIDAMUS, DIPHILUS, *and officers.*

Arch. What's the matter?
On whom is your sword drawn? Are you a judge?
Or else ambitious of the hangman's office
Before it be designed you? You are bold too!
Unhand my daughter.
Leost. She's my valour's prize.
Arch. With her consent, not otherwise. You may urge
Your title in the court; if it prove good,
Possess her freely: Guard him safely off too.
Timag. You'll hear me, Sir?
Arch. If you have aught to say,
Deliver it in public; all shall find
A just judge of Timoleon.
Diph. You must
Of force now use your patience.
[*Exeunt Arch. Diph. and Guards.*
Timag. Vengeance rather!
Whirlwinds of rage possess me! you are wronged
Beyond a stoic's sufferance; yet you stand
As you were rooted.
Leost. I feel something here,
That boldly tells me all the love and service

I pay Cleora, is another's due,
And therefore cannot prosper.
Timag. Melancholy!
Which now you must not yield to.
Leost. 'Tis apparent.
In fact your sister is innocent, however
Changed by her violent will.
Timag. If you believe so,
Follow the chace still; and in open court
Plead your own interest. We shall find the judge
Our friend, I fear not.
Leost. Something I shall say,
But what———
Timag. Collect yourself as we walk thither.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Court of Justice.*

Enter TIMOLEON, ARCHIDAMUS, CLEORA, *and Officers.*

Timol. 'Tis wondrous strange! nor can it fall within
The reach of my belief, a slave should be
The owner of a temperance, which this age
Can hardly parallel in free-born lords,
Or kings, proud of their purple.
Arch. 'Tis most true;
And, though at first it did appear a fable,
All circumstances meet to give it credit;
Which works so on me, that I am compelled
To be a suitor, not to be denied,
He may have equal hearing.
Cleora. Sir, you graced me
With the title of your mistress: but my fortune
Is so far distant from command, that I
Lay by the power you gave me, and plead humbly
For the preserver of my fame and honour;
And pray you, sir, in charity believe,
That, since I had ability of speech,
My tongue hath been so much inured to truth,
I know not how to lie.
Timol. I'll rather doubt
The oracles of the gods, than question what
Your innocence delivers; and, as far
As justice with mine honour can give way,
He shall have favour. Bring him in unbound:
[*Exeunt Officers.*
And, though Leosthenes may challenge from me,
For his late worthy service, credit to
All things he can alledge in his own cause,
Marullo (so I think you call his name)
Shall find I do reserve an ear for him,

Enter CLEON, ASOTUS, DIPHILUS, OLYMPIA, *and* CORISCA.

To let in mercy. Sit, and take your places:
The right of this fair virgin first determined,
Your bondmen shall be censured.
Cleon. With all rigour
We do expect——
Cor. Tempered, I say, with mercy.

Enter at one door LEOSTHENES *and* TIMAGORAS; *at the other, Officers with* PISANDER *and* TIMANDRA.

Timol. Your hand, Leosthenes: I cannot doubt,
You that have been victorious in the war,
Should, in a combat, fought with words, come off
But with assured triumph.
Leost. My deserts, sir,
(If without arrogance I may style them such)
Arm me from doubt and fear.
Timol. 'Tis nobly spoken!.
Nor be thou daunted (howsoever thy fortune
Has marked thee out a slave) to speak thy merits:
For virtue, though in rags, may challenge more
Than vice, set off with all the trim of greatness.
Pis. I'd rather fall under so just a judge,
Than be acquitted by a man corrupt,
And partial in his censure.
Arch. Note his language!
It relishes of better breeding than
His present state dare promise.
Timol. I observe it.——
Place the fair lady in the midst, that both,
Looking with covetous eyes upon the prize
They are to plead for, may, from the fair object,
Teach Hermes eloquence.
Leost. Am I fallen so low?
My birth, my honour, and, what is dearest to me,
My love, and witness of my love, my service,
So undervalued, that I must contend
With one, where my excess of glory must
Make his overthrow a conquest? Shall my fulness
Supply defects in such a thing, that never
Knew any thing but want and emptiness,
Give him a name, and keep it such, from this
Unequal competition? If my pride,
Or any bold assurance of my worth,
Has plucked this mountain of disgrace upon me,
I'm justly punished, and submit; but if
I have been modest, and esteemed myself
More injured in the tribute of the praise,
Which no desert of mine, prized by self-love,
Ever exacted: may this cause and minute
For ever be forgotten. I dwell long
Upon mine anger, and now turn to you,
Ungrateful fair one; and, since you are such,
'Tis lawful for me to proclaim myself,
And what I have deserved.
Cleora. Neglect and scorn
From me, for this proud vaunt.
Leost. You nourish, lady,
Your own dishonour in this harsh reply,
And almost prove, what some hold of your sex,
You're all made up of passion: For, if reason
Or judgment could find entertainment with you,
Or that you would distinguish of the objects
You look on in a true glass, not seduced
By the false light of your too violent will,
I should not need to plead for that which you

With joy should offer.—Is my high birth a blemish?
Or does my wealth, which all the vain expence
Of women cannot waste, breed loathing in you?
The honours, I can call mine own, thought scandals?
Am I deformed, or, for my father's sins,
Mulcted by Nature? If you interpret these
As crimes, 'tis fit I should yield up myself,
Most miserably guilty; But, perhaps,
(Which yet I would not credit) you have seen
This gallant pitch the bar, or bear a burden
Would crack the shoulders of a weaker bondman;
Or any other boisterous exercise,
Assuring a strong back, to satisfy
Your loose desires, insatiate as the grave.
Cleora. You are foul-mouthed.
Arch. Ill-mannered too.
Leost. I speak
In the way of supposition, and entreat you,
With all the fervour of a constant lover,
That you would free yourself from these aspersions,
Or any imputation black-tongued slander
Could throw on your unspotted virgin whiteness;
To which there is no easier way, than by
Vouchsafing him your favour; him, to whom,
Next to the general, and to the gods,
The country owes her safety.
Timag. Are you stupid?
'Slight, leap into his arms, and there ask pardon—
Oh! you expect your slave's reply; no doubt
We shall have a fine oration; I will teach
My spaniel to howl in sweeter language,
And keep a better method.
Arch. You forget
The dignity of the place.
Dipil. Silence!
Timol. Speak boldly.
Pis. 'Tis your authority gives me a tongue;
I should be dumb else; and I am secure,
I cannot clothe my thoughts, and just defence,
In such an abject phrase, but 'twill appear
Equal, if not above, my low condition.
I need no bombast language, stolen from such
As make nobility from prodigious terms
The hearers understand not; I bring with me
No wealth to boast of, neither can I number
Uncertain fortune's favours with my merits:
I dare not force affection, or presume
To censure her discretion, that looks on me
As a weak man, and not her fancy's idol.
How I have loved, and how much I have suffered,
And with what pleasure undergone the burthen
Of my ambitious hopes (in aiming at
The glad possession of a happiness,
The abstract of all goodness in mankind
Can at no part deserve), with my confession
Of mine own wants, is all that can plead for me.
But if that pure desire, not blended with
Foul thoughts, that like a river keeps his course,
Retaining still the clearness of the spring,
From whence it took beginning, may be thought
Worthy acceptance; then I dare rise up,
And tell this gay man to his teeth, I never
Durst doubt her constancy, that like a rock
Beats off temptations, as that mocks the fury
Of the proud waves; nor from my jealous fears
Question that goodness, to which, as an altar
Of all perfection, he, that truly loves,
Should rather bring a sacrifice of service,
Than raze it with the engines of suspicion;
Of which, when he can wash an Æthiop white,
Leosthenes may hope to free himself;
But, till then, never.
Timag. Bold, presumptuous villain!
Pis. I will go farther, and make good upon him,
In the pride of all his honours, birth and fortunes,
He's more unworthy than myself.
Leost. Thou liest.
Timag. Confute him with a whip, and, the doubt decided,
Punish him with a halter.
Pis. O the gods!
My ribs, though made of brass, cannot contain
My heart, swoln big with rage—The lie! A whip! [*Plucks off his disguise.*
Let fury then disperse these clouds, in which
I long have masked, disguised; that, when they know
Whom they have injured, they may faint with horror
Of my revenge, which, wretched men! expect,
As sure as fate, to suffer!
Leost. Ha! Pisander?
Timag. 'Tis the bold Theban!
Asot. There's no hope for me then!
I thought I should have put in for a share,
And borne Cleora from them both: But now,
This stranger looks so terrible, that I dare not
So much as look on her.
Pis. Now, as myself,
Thy equal at thy best, Leosthenes.—
For you, Timagoras, praise heaven you were born
Cleora's brother, 'tis your safest armour.
But I lose time.—The base lie cast upon me,
I thus return. Thou art a perjured man,
False and perfidious, and hast made a tender
Of love and service to this lady, when
Thy soul (if thou hast any) can bear witness,
That thou wert not thine own. For proof of this,
Look better on this virgin, and consider,
This Persian shape laid by, and she appearing
In a Greekish dress, such as when first you saw her,
If she resemble not Pisander's sister,
One called Statilia?
Leost. 'Tis the same! my guilt
So chokes my spirits, I cannot deny
My falsehood, nor excuse it.
Pis. This is she,
To whom thou wert contracted: This is the lady,
That, when thou wert my prisoner, fairly taken

In the Spartan war, that begged thy liberty,
And with it gave herself to thee, ungrateful!
Timan. No more, sir, I entreat you: I perceive
True sorrow in his looks, and a consent
To make me reparation in mine honour;
And then I am most happy.
Pis. The wrong done her
Drew me from Thebes with a full intent to kill thee:
But this fair object met me in my fury,
And quite disarmed me. Being denied to have her
By you, my lord Archidamus, and not able
To live far from her, love (the mistress of
All quaint devices) prompted me to treat
With a friend of mine, who as a pirate sold me
For a slave to you, my lord, and gave my sister
As a present to Cleora.
Timol. Strange meanders!
Pis. There how I bare myself needs no relation.
But, if so far descending from the height
Of my then flourishing fortunes, to the lowest
Condition of a man, to have means only
To feed my eye with the sight of what I honoured;
The dangers too I underwent; the suffering;
The clearness of my interest, may deserve
A noble recompence in your lawful favour;
Now 'tis apparent that Leosthenes
Can claim no interest in you, you may please
To think upon my service.
Cleora. Sir, my want
Of power to satisfy so great a debt,
Makes me accuse my fortune; but if that,
Out of the bounty of your mind, you think
A free surrender of myself full payment,
I gladly tender it.
Arch. With my consent too,
All injuries forgotten.
Timag. I will study,
In my future service, to deserve your favour
And good opinion.
Leost. Thus I gladly fee
This advocate to plead for me. [*Kissing Statilia.*
Pis. You will find me
An easy judge; when I have yielded reasons
Of your bondmen's falling off from their obedidience,
Then after, as you please, determine of me.
I found their natures apt to mutiny
From your too cruel usage, and made trial
How far they might be wrought on: to instruct you
To look with more prevention and care,
To what they may hereafter undertake
Upon the like occasions—The hurt's little
They have committed, nor was ever cure
But with some pain effected. I confess,
In hope to force a grant of fair Cleora
I urged them to defend the town against you:
Nor had the terror of your whips, but that
I was preparing for defence elsewhere,
So soon got entrance; In this I am guilty:
Now, as you please, your censure.
Timol. Bring them in;
And, though you have given me power, I do entreat
Such as have undergone their insolence,
It may not be offensive, though I study
Pity more than revenge.
Cor. 'Twill best become you.
Cleon. I must consent.
Asot. For me, I'll find a time
To be revenged hereafter.

Enter GRACCULO, CIMBRIO, POLIPHRON, ZANTHIA *and the other slaves, with halters about their necks.*

Grac. Give me leave;
I'll speak for all.
Timol. What canst thou say, to hinder
The course of justice?
Grac. Nothing. You may see
We are prepared for hanging, and confess
We have deserved it. Our most humble suit is,
We may not twice be executed.
Timol. Twice? How mean'st thou?
Grac. At the gallows first, and after in a ballad,
Sung to some villainous tune. There are ten-groat rhymers
About the town grown fat on these occasions.—
Let but a chapel fall, or a street be fired,
A foolish lover hang himself for pure love,
Or any such like accident, and before
They are cold in their graves, some damned ditty's made,
Which makes their ghosts walk.—Let the state take order
For the redress of this abuse, recording
'Twas done by my advice, and for my part,
I'll cut as clean a caper from the ladder
As ever merry Greek did.
Timol. Yet I think
You would shew more activity, to delight
Your master for a pardon.
Grac. O! I would dance
As I were all air and fire.
Timol. And ever be
Obedient and humble?
Grac. As his spaniel,
Though he kicked me for exercise; and the like
I promise for all the rest.
Timol. Rise then, you have it.
All Slaves. Timoleon! Timoleon!
Timol. Cease these clamours.
And now, the war being ended to our wishes,
And such as want the pilgrimage of love,
Happy in full fruition of their hopes,
'Tis lawful, thanks paid to the powers divine,
To drown our cares in honest mirth and wine.
[*Exeunt.*

THE

FATAL DOWRY.

BY

MASSINGER AND FIELD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
Charalois.	Beaumelle.
Romont.	Florimel.
Charmi.	Bellapert.
Novall, *sen.*	
Novall, *jun.*	*Advocates.*
Lelidam.	*Three Creditors.*
Du Croy.	*Officers.*
Rochfort.	*Priest.*
Beaumont.	*Taylor.*
Pontalier.	*Barber.*
Malotin.	*Perfumer.*
Aymer.	

Scene,—Dijon in Burgundy.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter Charalois *with a paper,* Romont *and* Charmi.

Charmi. Sir, I may move the court to serve your will;
But therein shall both wrong you and myself.
Rom. Why think you so, sir?
Charmi. Because I am familiar
With what will be their answer: They will say,
'Tis against law, and argue me of ignorance,
For offering them the motion.
Rom. You know not, sir,
How, in this cause, they may dispense with law,
And therefore frame not you their answer for them,
But do your part.
Charmi. I love the cause so well,
That I could run the hazard of a check for it.
Rom. From whom?
Charmi. Some of the bench that watch to give it,
More than to do the office that they sit for:
But give me, sir, my fee.
Rom. Now you are noble.
Charmi. I shall deserve this better yet, in giving
My lord some counsel (if he please to hear it)
Than I shall do with pleading.
Rom. What may it be, sir?
Charmi. That it would please his lordship, as the presidents
And counsellors of court come by, to stand
Here and but shew yourself, and to some one
Or two make his request: There is a minute,
When a man's presence speaks in his own cause,
More than the tongues of twenty advocates.
Rom. I have urged that.

Enter Rochfort *and* Du Croy.

Charmi. Their lordships here are coming,
I must go get me a place. You'll find me in court,
And at your service. [*Exit Charmi.*
Rom. Now, put on your spirits!
Du Croy. The ease that you prepare yourself, my lord,
In giving up the place you hold in court,

Will prove, I fear, a trouble in the state;
And that no slight one.
Roch. Pray you, sir, no more.
Rom. Now, sir, lose not this offered means: Their looks
Fixed on you with a pitying earnestness,
Invite you to demand their furtherance
To your good purpose. This is such a dulness,
So foolish and untimely, as——
Du Croy. You know him?
Roch. I do; and much lament the sudden fall
Of his brave house. It is young Charalois,
Son to the marshal, from whom he inherits
His fame and virtues only.
Rom. Ha! they name you.
Du Croy. His father died in prison two days since.
Roch. Yes, to the shame of this ungrateful state;
That such a master in the art of war,
So noble and so highly meriting
From this forgetful country, should, for want
Of means to satisfy his creditors
The sum he took up for the general good,
Meet with an end so infamous.
Rom. Dare you ever hope for like opportunity?
Du Croy. My good lord!
Roch. My wish bring comfort to you.
Du Croy. The time calls us.
Roch. Good morrow, Colonel!
[*Exeunt Rochfort and Du Croy.*
Rom. This obstinate spleen,
You think becomes your sorrow, and sorts well
With your black suits: But, grant me wit or judgment,
And, by the freedom of an honest man,
And a true friend to boot, I swear, 'tis shameful;
And therefore flatter not yourself with hope,
Your sable habit, with the hat and cloak,
No, though the ribbons help, have power to work them
To what you would: For those that had no eyes
To see the great acts of your father, will not,
From any fashion sorrow can put on,
Be taught to know their duties.
Char. If they will not,
They are too old to learn, and I too young
To give them counsel; since, if they partake
The understanding and the hearts of men,
They will prevent my words and tears: If not,
What can persuasion, though made eloquent
With grief, work upon such as have changed natures
With the most savage beast? Blest, blest be ever
The memory of that happy age, when justice
Had no guards to keep off wronged innocence
From flying to her succours, and, in that,
Assurance of redress: Whereas now, Romont,
The damned with more ease may ascend from hell,
Than we arrive at her. One Cerberus there
Forbids the passage; in our courts a thousand,
As loud and fertile-headed; and the client,
That wants the sops to fill their ravenous throats,
Must hope for no access. Why should I, then,
Attempt impossibilities, you, friend, being
Too well acquainted with my dearth of means
To make my entrance that way?
Rom. Would I were not!
But, sir! you have a cause, a cause so just,
Of such necessity, not to be deferred,
As would compel a maid, whose foot was never
Set o'er her father's threshold, nor, within
The house where she was born, ever spake word,
Which was not ushered with pure virgin blushes,
To drown the tempest of a pleader's tongue,
And force corruption to give back the hire
It took against her. Let examples move you.
You see men great in birth, esteem, and fortune,
Rather than lose a scruple of their right,
Fawn basely upon such, whose gowns put off,
They would disdain for servants.
Char. And to these can I become a suitor?
Rom. Without loss:
Would you consider, that, to gain their favours,
Our chastest dames put off their modesties,
Soldiers forget their honours, usurers
Make sacrifice of gold, poets of wit,
And men religious part with fame and goodness.
Be therefore won to use the means that may
Advance your pious ends.
Char. You shall o'ercome.
Rom. And you receive the glory. Pray you now practise.
'Tis well.

Enter Old NOVALL, LILADAM, *and three Creditors.*

Char. Not look on me!
Rom. You must have patience——Offer it again.
Char. And be again contemned!
Nov. I know what's to be done.——
1 *Cred.* And, that your lordship
Will please to do your knowledge, we offer first
Our thankful hearts here, as a bounteous earnest
To what we will add.——
Nov. One word more of this,
I am your enemy. Am I a man,
Your bribes can work on? Ha?
Lilad. Friends! you mistake
The way to win my lord; he must not hear this,
But I, as one in favour, in his sight,
May hearken to you for my profit. Sir!
—I pray hear them.
Nov. 'Tis well.
Lilad. Observe him now.
Nov. Your cause being good, and your proceedings so,
Without corruption I am your friend;
Speak your desires.
2 *Cred.* Oh, they are charitable;
The marshal stood engaged unto us three,
Two hundred thousand crowns, which by his death

We are defeated of. For which great loss
We aim at nothing but his rotten flesh;
Nor is that cruelty.
1 Cred. I have a son
That talks of nothing but of guns and armour,
And swears he'll be a soldier; 'tis an humour
I would divert him from; and I am told,
That if I minister to him, in his drink,
Powder made of this bankrupt marshal's bones,
Provided that the carcase rot above ground,
'Twill cure his foolish frenzy.
Nov. You shew in it
A father's care. I have a son myself,
A fashionable gentleman, and a peaceful:
And, but I am assured he is not so given,
He should take of it too. Sir, what are you?
Char. A gentleman.
Nov. So are many that rake dunghills.
If you have any suit, move it in court:
I take no papers in corners.
Ram. Yes, as the matter may be carried; and whereby
To manage the conveyance—Follow him.
Lilad. You're rude: I say he shall not pass.
[*Exeunt Novall, Charalois, and advocates.*
Ram. You say so? On what assurance?
For the well-cutting of his lordship's corns,
Picking his toes, or any office else
Nearer to baseness?
Lilad. Look upon me better;
Are these the ensigns of so coarse a fellow?
Be well advised.
Ram. Out, rogue! do not I know [*Kicks him.*
These glorious weeds spring from the sordid dunghill
Of thy officious baseness? Wert thou worthy
Of any thing from me, but my contempt,
I would do more than this,—more, you court-spider!
Lilad. But that this man is lawless, he should find
That I am valiant.
1 Cred. If your ears are fast,
'Tis nothing. What's a blow or two? As much:
2 Cred. These chastisements as useful are as frequent
To such as would grow rich.
Ram. Are they so, rascals? I will befriend you then— [*Kicks them.*
1 Cred. Bear witness, sirs!
Lilad. Truth, I have born my part already, friends!
In the court you shall hear more. [*Exit.*
Ram. I know you for
The worst of spirits, that strive to rob the tombs
Of what is their inheritance, the dead:
For usurers bred by a riotous peace;
That hold the charter of your wealth and freedom,
By being knaves and cuckolds, that never prayed,
But when you fear the rich heirs will grow wise,
To keep their lands out of your parchment toils
And then, the devil, your father, is called upon,
To invent some ways of luxury ne'er thought on.
Be gone, and quickly, or I'll leave no room
Upon your foreheads for your horns to sprout on;
Without a murmur, or I will undo you,
For I will beat you honest.
1 Cred. Thrift forbid!
We will bear this rather than hazard that.
[*Exeunt Creditors.*

Enter CHARALOIS.

Rom. I am somewhat eased in this yet.—
Char. Only friend!
To what vain purpose do I make my sorrow
Wait on the triumph of their cruelty?
Or teach their pride from my humility,
To think it has overcome? They are determined
What they will do; and it may well become me,
To rob them of the glory they expect
From my submiss entreaties.
Rom. Think not so, sir!
The difficulties that you encounter with,
Will crown the undertaking—Heaven! you weep,
And I could do so too; but that I know,
There's more expected from the son and friend
Of him whose fatal loss now shakes our natures,
Than sighs or tears, in which a village nurse,
Or cunning strumpet, when her knave is hanged,
May overcome us. We are men, young lord,
Let us not do like women. To the court,
And there speak like your birth: Wake sleeping justice,
Or dare the axe. This is a way will sort
With what you are: I call you not to that
I will shrink from myself; I will deserve
Your thanks, or suffer with you—O how bravely
That sudden fire of anger shews in you!
Give fuel to it; since you are on a shelf
Of extreme danger, suffer like yourself. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter ROCHFORT, NOVALL, *sen.* CHARMI, DU CROY, *advocates*, BEAUMONT, *officers, and three presidents.*

Du Croy. Your lordship is seated. May this meeting prove
Prosperous to us, and to the general good of Burgundy.
Nov. sen. Speak to the point!
Du Croy—Which is
With honour to dispose the place and power
Of premier president, which this reverend man,
Grave Rochfort (whom for honour's sake I name),
Is purposed to resign; a place, my lords,
In which he hath, with such integrity,
Performed the first and best parts of a judge,
That, as his life transcends all fair examples
Of such as were before him in Dijon,
So it remains to those that shall succeed him,
A precedent that they may imitate, but not equal.
Roch. I may not sit to hear this.

Du Croy. Let the love
And thankfulness we are bound to pay to goodness,
In this overcome your modesty.
Roch. My thanks
For this great favour shall prevent your trouble.
The honourable trust that was imposed
Upon my weakness, since you witness for me,
It was not ill discharged, I will not mention;
Nor now, if age had not deprived me of
The little strength I had to govern well
The province that I undertook, forsake it.
Nov. sen. That we could lend you of our years!
Du Croy. Or strength!
Nov. sen. Or, as you are, persuade you to continue
The noble exercise of your knowing judgement!
Roch. That may not be; nor can your lordships' goodness,
Since your employments have conferred upon me
Sufficient wealth, deny the use of it;
And though old age, when one foot is in the grave,
In many, when all humours else are spent,
Feeds no affection in them, but desire
To add height to the mountain of their riches;
In me it is not so; I rest content
With the honours and estate I now possess.
And, that I may have liberty to use,
What Heaven, still blessing my poor industry,
Hath made me master of, I pray the court
To ease me of my burthen; that I may
Employ the small remainder of my life
In living well, and learning how to die so.

Enter ROMANT *and* CHABALOIS.

Rom. See, sir, our advocate.
Du Croy. The court intreats
Your lordship will be pleased to name the man,
Which you would have your successor, and in me
All promise to confirm it.
Roch. I embrace it
As an assurance of their favour to me,
And name my lord Novall.
Du Croy. The court allows it.
Roch. But there are suitors wait here, and their causes
May be of more necessity to be heard,
And therefore wish that mine may be deferred,
And theirs have hearing.
Du Croy. If your lordship please
To take the place, we will proceed.
Charmi. The cause
We come to offer to your lordship's censure,
Is in itself so noble, that it needs not
Or rhetoric in me that plead, or favour
From your grave lordships, to determine of it;
Since to the praise of your impartial justice
(Which guilty, nay, condemned men, dare not scandal)
It will erect a trophy of your mercy
Which married to that justice——

Nov. sen. Speak to the cause.
Charmi. I will, my lord. To say, the late dead marshal,
The father of this young lord here, my client,
Hath done his country great and faithful service,
Might tax me of impertinence, to repeat
What your grave lordships cannot but remember:
He, in his life, became indebted to
These thrifty men, (I will not wrong their credits,
By giving them the attributes they now merit)
And failing, by the fortune of the wars,
Of means to free himself from his engagements,
He was arrested, and for want of bail,
Imprisoned at their suit: And not long after
With loss of liberty ended his life.
And, though it be a maxim in our laws,
All suits die with the person, these men's malice
In death finds matter for their hate to work on,
Denying him the recent rites of burial,
Which the sworn enemies of the christian faith
Grant freely to their slaves: May it therefore please
Your lordships so to fashion your decree,
That, what their cruelty doth forbid, your pity
May give allowance to.
Nov. sen. How long have you, sir, practised in court?
Charmi. Some twenty years, my lord.
Nov. sen. By your gross ignorance, it should appear,
Not twenty days.
Charmi. I hope I have given no cause in this, my lord——
Nov. sen. How dare you move the court
To the dispensing with an act confirmed
By parliament, to the terror of all bankrupts?
Go home! and with more care peruse the statutes:
Or the next motion, savouring of this boldness,
May force you to leap (against your will)
Over the place you plead at.
Charmi. I foresaw this.
Rom. Why, does your lordship think the moving of
A cause, more honest than this court had ever
The honour to determine, can deserve
A check like this?
Nov sen. Strange boldness!
Rom. 'Tis fit freedom:
Or, do you conclude, an advocate cannot hold
His credit with the judge, unless he study
His face more than the cause for which he pleads?
Charmi. Forbear!
Rom. Or cannot you, that have the power
To qualify the rigour of the laws,
When you are pleased, take a little from
The strictness of your sour decrees, enacted
In favour of the greedy creditor,
Against the overthrown debtor?
Nov. sen. Sirrah! you that prate
Thus saucily, what are you?
Rom. Why, I'll tell you,

Thou purple-coloured man! I am one to whom
Thou owest the means thou hast of sitting there,
A corrupt elder.
Charni. Forbear!
Ron. The nose thou wearest is my gift, and those eyes,
That meet no object so base as their master,
Had been long since torn from that guilty head,
And thou thyself slave to some needy Swiss,
Had I not worn a sword, and used it better
Than in thy prayers thou ever didst thy tongue.
Nov. sen. Shall such an insolence pass unpunished?
Charni. Hear me!
Ron. Yet I, that in my service done my country,
Disdain to be put in the scale with thee,
Confess myself unworthy to be valued
With the least part, nay, hair of the dead marshal,
Of whose so many glorious undertakings,
Make choice of any one, and that the meanest,
Performed against the subtle fox of France,
The politic Lewis, or the more desperate Swiss,
And 'twill outweigh all the good purpose,
Though put in act, that ever gownman practised.
Nov. sen. Away with him to prison!
Ron. If that curses,
Urged justly, and breathed forth so, ever fell
On those that did deserve them, let not mine
Be spent in vain now, that thou, from this instant,
Mayest, in thy fear that they will fall upon thee,
Be sensible of the plagues they shall bring with them.
And for denying of a little earth,
To cover what remains of our great soldier,
May all your wives prove whores, your factors thieves,
And, while you live, your riotous heirs undo you.
And thou, the patron of their cruelty,
Of all thy lordships live not to be owner
Of so much dung as will conceal a dog,
Or, what is worse, thyself in. And thy years,
To the end thou mayst be wretched, I wish many;
And, as thou hast denied the dead a grave,
May misery in thy life make thee desire one,
Which men, and all the elements, keep from thee:
I have begun well; imitate; exceed.
Rock. Good counsel, were it a praise-worthy deed:
[*Exeunt officers with Romont.*
Du Croy. Remember what we are.
Char. Thus low my duty
Answers your lordship's counsel. I will use,
In the few words with which I am to trouble
Your lordship's ears, the temper that you wish me;
Not that I fear to speak my thoughts as loud,
And with a liberty beyond Romont:
But that I know, for me, that am made up
Of all that's wretched, so to haste my end,
Would seem to most rather a willingness
To quit the burden of a hopeless life,
Than scorn of death, or duty to the dead.
I, therefore, bring the tribute of my praise
To your severity, and commend the justice,
That will not, for the many services
That any man hath done the commonwealth,
Wink at his least of ills: What though my father
Writ man before he was so, and confirmed it,
By numbering that day no part of his life,
In which he did not service to his country;
Was he to be free therefore from the laws,
And ceremonious form in your decrees?
Or else, because he did as much as man,
In those three memorable overthrows,
At Granson, Morat, Nancy, where his master,
The warlike Charalois (with whose misfortunes
I bear his name) lost treasure, men, and life,
To be excused from payment of those sums
Which (his own patrimony spent) his zeal
To serve his country, forced him to take up?
Nov. sen. The precedent were ill.
Char. And yet, my lord, thus much
I know you'll grant; after those great defeatures,
Which in their dreadful ruins buried quick

Enter Officers.

Courage and hope in all men but himself,
He forced the proud foe, in his height of conquest,
To yield unto an honourable peace,
And in it saved an hundred thousand lives,
To end his own, that was sure proof against
The scalding summer's heat, and winter's frost,
Ill airs, the cannon, and the enemy's sword,
In a most loathsome prison.
Du Croy. 'Twas his fault
To be so prodigal.
Nov. sen. He had from the state
Sufficient entertainment for the army.
Char. Sufficient, my lord? You sit at home,
And, though your fees are boundless at the bar,
Are thrifty in the charges of the war—
But your wills be obeyed. To these I turn,
To these soft-hearted men, that wisely know
They're only good men that pay what they owe.
2 *Cred.* And so they are.
1 *Cred.* 'Tis the city doctrine;
We stand bound to maintain it.
Char. Be constant in it;
And, since you are as merciless in your natures,
As base and mercenary in your means,
By which you get your wealth, I will not urge
The court to take away one scruple from
The right of their laws, or one good thought
In you to mend your disposition with.
I know there is no music to your ears
So pleasing as the groans of men in prison,
And that the tears of widows, and the cries
Of famished orphans, are the feasts that take you.
That to be in your danger, with more care

Should be avoided than infectious air,
The loathed embraces of diseased women,
A flatterer's poison, or the loss of honour.
Yet, rather than my father's reverend dust
Shall want a place in that fair monument,
In which our noble ancestors lie entombed,
Before the court I offer up myself
A prisoner for it. Load me with those irons
That have worn out his life: in my best strength
I'll run to the encounter of cold hunger,
And chuse my dwelling where no sun dares enter,
So he may be released.

1 *Cred.* What mean you, sir?

2 *Adve.* Only your fee again: There's so much said
Already in this cause, and said so well,
That, should I only offer to speak in it,
I should not be heard, or laughed at for it.

1 *Cred.* 'Tis the first money advocate e'er gave back,
'Though he said nothing.

Roch. Be advised, young lord,
And well considerate; you throw away
Your liberty and joys of life together:
Your bounty is employed upon a subject
That is not sensible of it, with which a wise man
Never abused his goodness; the great virtues
Of your dead father vindicate themselves
From these men's malice, and break ope the prison,
Though it contain his body.

Nov. sen. Let him alone:
If he love cords, a God's name, let him wear them,
Provided these consent.

Char. I hope they are not
So ignorant in any way of profit,
As to neglect a possibility
To get their own, by seeking it from that
Which can return them nothing but ill fame,
And curses for their barbarous cruelties.

3 *Cred.* What think you of the offer?

2 *Cred.* Very well.

1 *Cred.* Accept it by all means: Let us shut him up;
He is well shaped, and has a villainous tongue,
And, should he study that way of revenge,
As I dare almost swear he loves a wench,
We have no wives, nor ever shall get daughters,
That will hold out against him.

Du Croy. What's your answer?

2 *Cred.* Speak you for all.

1 *Cred.* Why, let our executions,
That lie upon the father, be returned
Upon the son, and we release the body.

Nov. sen. The court must grant you that.

Char. I thank your lordships;
They have in it confirmed on me such glory,
As no time can take from me. I am ready:
Come, lead me where you please: Captivity,
That comes with honour, is true liberty.

[*Exit Charalois, Creditors, and Officers.*

Nov. sen. Strange rashness.

Roch. A brave resolution rather,
Worthy a better fortune: but, however,
It is not now to be disputed; therefore
To my own cause. Already I have found
Your lordships bountiful in your favours to me:
And that should teach my modesty to end here,
And press your loves no farther.

Du Croy. There is nothing
The court can grant, but with assurance you
May ask it, and obtain it.

Roch. You encourage a bold petitioner, and 'tis not fit
Your favours should be lost. Besides, it has been
A custom many years, at the surrendering
The place I now give up, to grant the president
One boon that parted with it. And, to confirm
Your grace towards me, against all such as may
Detract my actions and life hereafter,
I now prefer it to you.

Du Croy. Speak it freely.

Roch. I then desire the liberty of Romont,
And that my lord Novall, whose private wrong
Was equal to the injury that was done
To the dignity of the court, will pardon it,
And now sign his enlargement.

Nov. sen. Pray you demand
The moiety of my estate, or any thing
Within my power but this.

Roch. Am I denied then—my first and last request?

Du Croy. It must not be.

2 *Pre.* I have a voice to give in it.

3 *Pre.* And I.
And, if persuasion will not work him to it,
We will make known our power.

Nov sen. You are too violent;
You shall have my consent. But would you had
Made trial of my love in any thing
But this, you should have found then—But it skills not.
You have what you desire.

Roch. I thank your lordships.

Du Croy. The court is up—Make way.

[*Exeunt all but Rochfort and Beaumont.*

Roch. I follow you—Beaumont!

Beaum. My lord?

Roch. You are a scholar, Beaumont,
And can search deeper into the intents of men,
Than those that are less knowing. How appeared
The piety and brave behaviour of
Young Charalois to you?

Beaum. It is my wonder,
Since I want language to express it fully;
And sure the colonel———

Roch. Fie! he was faulty.—What present money have I?

Beaum. There is no want
Of any sum a private man has use for.

Roch. 'Tis well:
I am strangely taken with this Charalois;
Methinks, from his example, the whole age
Should learn to be good, and continue so.
Virtue works strangely with us; and his goodness
Rising above his fortune, seems to me,
Prince-like, to will, not ask a courtesy. [*Exeunt*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter POSTALIER, MALOTIN *and* BEAUMONT.

Malot. 'Tis strange.
Beaum. Methinks so.
Post. In a man but young,
Yet old in judgment; theorick and practick,
In all humanity, and (to increase the wonder)
Religious, yet a soldier, that he should
Yield his free-living youth a captive, for
The freedom of his aged father's corpse,
And rather chuse to want life's necessaries,
Liberty, hope of fortune, than it should
In death be kept from christian ceremony.
Malot. Come, 'tis a golden precedent in a son
To let strong Nature have the better hand,
(In such a case) of all affected reason.
What years sit on this Charalois?
Beaum. Twenty-eight;
For since the clock did strike him seventeen old,
Under his father's wing this son hath fought,
Served and commanded, and so aptly both,
That sometimes he appeared his father's father,
And never less than his son; the old man's virtues
So recent in him as the world may swear,
Nought but a fair tree could such fair fruit bear.
Post. But wherefore lets he such a barbarous law,
And men more barbarous to execute it,
Prevail on his soft disposition,
That he had rather die alive for debt
Of the old man in prison, than they should
Rob him of sepulture, considering
These monies borrowed bought the lenders peace,
And all their means they enjoy, nor was diffused
In any impious or licentious path?
Beaum. True! for my part, were it my father's trunk,
The tyrannous ram-heads with their horns should gore it,
Or cast it to their curs, than they less currish,
Ere prey on me so, with their lion-law,
Bring in my free will (as in his) to shun it.
Post. Alas! he knows himself in poverty lost:
For in this partial avaricious age
What price bears honour? virtue? Long ago
It was but praised and freezed, but now-a-days
'Tis colder far, and has nor love nor praise;
Very praise now freezeth too: For nature
Did make the heathen far more christian then,
Than knowledge us (less heathenish) christian.
Malot. This morning is the funeral.
Post. Certainly.
And from this prison 'twas the son's request,
That his dear father might interment have.
[*Recorders Music.*
See the young son enters alive the grave.
Beaum. They come—Observe their order.

Enter funeral. The body borne by four. Captains and soldiers, mourners, 'scutcheons, &c. in very good order. CHARALOIS *and* ROMONT *meet it. Charalois speaks. Romont weeping. Solemn musick. Three creditors.*

Char. How like a silent stream shaded with night,
And gliding softly with our windy sighs,
Moves the whole frame of this solemnity:
Tears, sighs and blacks filling the simile!
Whilst I, the only murmur in this grove
Of death, thus hollowly break forth!—Vouchsafe
To stay awhile.—Rest, rest in peace, dear earth!
Thou that broughtest rest to their unthankful lives,
Whose cruelty denied thee rest in death:
Here stands thy poor executor, thy son,
That makes his life prisoner to bail thy death:
Who gladlier puts on this captivity,
Than virgins, long in love, their wedding weeds:
Of all that ever thou hast done good to,
These only have good memories; for they
Remember best, forget not gratitude.
I thank you for this last and friendly love;
And though this country, like a viperous mother,
Not only hath eat up ungratefully
All means of thee her son, but last thyself,
Leaving thy heir so bare and indigent,
He cannot raise thee a poor monument,
Such as a flatterer or an usurer hath,
Thy worth, in every honest breast, builds one,
Making their friendly hearts thy funeral stone.
Pont. Sir!
Char. Peace! O peace! This scene is wholly mine.
What! Weep ye, soldiers?—Blanch not. Romont weeps.
Ha! let me see! my miracle is eased:
The jailors and the creditors do weep:
E'en they, that make us weep, do weep themselves.
Be these thy body's balm: These and thy virtue
Keep thy fame ever odoriferous,
Whilst the great proud, rich, undeserving man,
Alive, stinks in his vices, and, being vanished,
The golden calf that was an idol, decked
With marble pillars, jet and porphyry,
Shall quickly both in bone and name consume,
Though wrapt in lead, spice, searcloth and perfume.
1 *Cred.* Sir!
Char. What!—Away, for shame! your tears, prophane rogues!
Must not be mingled with these holy relicks:
This is a sacrifice—Our shower shall crown
His sepulchre with olive, myrrh and bays,
The plants of peace, of sorrow, victory;
Your tears would spring but weeds.

1 *Cred.* Would they so?
We'll keep them to stop bottles then.
Rom. No, keep them for your own sins, you rogues,
Till you repent; you'll die else, and be damned.
2 *Cred.* Damned, ha! ha! ha!
Rom. Laugh ye?
2 *Cred.* Yes, faith, sir; we would be very glad
To please you either way.
1 *Cred.* You are never content,
Crying nor laughing.
Rom. Both with a birth, ye rogues.
2 *Cred.* Our wives, sir, taught us.
Rom. Look, look, you slaves! your thankless cruelty,
And savage manners of unkind Dijon,
Exhaust these floods, and not his father's death.
1 *Cred.* 'Slid, sir! what would you, you're so cholerick!
2 *Cred.* Most soldiers are so, in faith.—Let him alone.
They've little else to live on; we have not had
A penny of him, have we?
3 *Cred.* 'Slight, would you have our hearts?
1 *Cred.* We have nothing but his body here in durance,
For all our money.
Priest. On.
Char. One moment more,
But to bestow a few poor legacies,
All I have left in my dead father's right,
And I have done. Captain, wear thou these spurs,
That yet ne'er made his horse run from a foe.
Lieutenant, thou this scarf; and may it tie
Thy valour and thy honesty together:
For so it did in him. Ensign, this cuirass,
Your general's necklace once. You gentle bearers,
Divide this purse of gold: This other strew
Among the poor.—'Tis all I have. Romont,
Wear thou this medal of himself, that like
A hearty oak, grew'st close to this tall pine,
(E'en in the wildest wilderness of war)
Whereon foes broke their swords, and tired themselves;
Wounded and hacked ye were, but never felled.
For me, my portion provide in heaven:
My root is earthed, and I, a desolate branch,
Left scattered in the highway of the world;
Trod under foot, that might have been a column
Mainly supporting our demolished house,
This would I wear as my inheritance.
And what hope can arise to me from it,
When I and it are here both prisoners?
Only may this, if ever we be free,
Keep or redeem me from all infamy.

SONG.

Fie! cease to wonder!
Though you hear Orpheus, with his ivory lute,
Move trees and rocks,
Charm bulls, bears, and men more savage, to be mute.
Weak foolish singer, here is one
Would have transformed thyself to stone.

1 *Cred.* No farther! look to them at your own peril.
2 *Cred.* No, as they please:—Their master's a good man.
I would they were at the Bermudas.
Jailor. You must no farther.——
The prison limits you, and the creditors
Exact the strictness.
Rom. Out, you wolfish mongrels!
Whose brains should be knocked out, like dogs in July,
Lest your infection poison a whole town.
Char. They grudge our sorrow.—Your ill wills, perforce,
Turn now to charity: They would not have us
Walk too far mourning; usurers relief
Grieves if the debtors have too much of grief.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter BEAUMELLE, FLORIMEL, *and* BELLAPERT, *on one side, and* NOVALL, *jun.* PONTALIER, MALOTIN, LILADAM, *and* AYMER, *on the other*

Nov. jun. Best day to nature's curiosity,
Star of Dijon, the lustre of all France!
Perpetual spring dwell on thy rosy cheeks,
Whose breath is perfume to our continent;
See Flora trimmed in her varieties.
Bella. Oh divine lord!
Nov. jun. No autumn nor no age ever approach
This heavenly piece, which nature having wrought
She lost her needle, and did then despair
Ever to work so lively and so fair.
Lilad. Uds-light, my lord, one of the purls o your band
Is, without all discipline, fallen out of his rank.
Nov. jun. How? I would not for a thousan crowns she had seen it. Dear Liladam, reform i
Bella. Oh lord! *Per se*, lord! Quintessenc of honour! she walks not under a weed that coul deny thee any thing.
Beaumel. Prythee peace, wench! thou dost b blow the fire that flames too much already.
[*Liladam and Aymer trim Novall, whil Bellapert her lady.*
Aymer. By gad, my lord, you have the divine taylor in Christendom; he hath made you lo like an angel in your cloth of tissue doublet.
Pont. This is a three-legged lord: There is fresh assault. Oh! that men should spend tin thus!—See, see how her blood drives to her hea and strait vaults to her cheeks again.
Malot. What are these?
Pont. One of them there, the lower, is a goo foolish, knavish, sociable gallimaufry of a mu and has much caught my lord with singing; he master of a music house. The other is his dr

sing block, upon whom my lord lays all his cloaths and fashions, ere he vouchsafes them his own person; you shall see him in the morning in the galley-foist, at noon in the bullion, in the evening in Querpo, and all night in—

Malot. A bawdy-house.

Pont. If my lord deny, they deny; if he affirm, they affirm: They skip into my lord's cast skins some twice a year; and thus they live to eat, eat to live, and live to praise my lord.

Malot. Good sir, tell me one thing.

Pont. What's that?

Malot. Dare these men ever fight on any cause?

Pont. Oh, no, 'twould spoil their cloaths, and put their hands out of order.

Nov. jun. Must you hear the news: Your father has resigned his presidentship to my lord my father

Malot. And lord Charalois undone for ever.

Pont. Troth, 'tis pity, sir!

A braver hope of so assured a father
Did never comfort France.

Lilad. A good dumb mourner.

Aymer. A silent black.

Nov. jun. Oh, fie upon him, how he wears his cloaths!

As if he had come this Christmas from St Omers,
To see his friends, and returned after twelf-tide.

Lilad. His colonel looks finely like a drover.—

Nov. jun. That had a winter lain perdue in the rain.

Aymer. What, he that wears a clout about his neck?

His cuffs in his pocket, and his heart in his mouth?

Nov. jun. Now, out upon him!

Beaumel. Servant, tie my hand.

How your lips blush, in scorn that they should pay
Tribute to hands, when lips are in the way!

Nov. jun. I thus recant; yet now your hand looks white,

Because your lips robbed it of such a right.
Monsieur Aymer, I prithee sing the song
Devoted to my mistress. [*Music.*

SONG.

A dialogue between a man and a woman.

Man. *Set, Phœbus! set; a fairer sun doth rise*
From the bright radiance of my mistress' eyes
Than ever thou begat'st: I dare not look;
Each hair a golden line, each word a hook,
The more I strive, the more still I am took.
Woman. *Fair servant! come; the day these eyes do lend*
To warm thy blood, thou dost so vainly spend,
Come strangle breath.
Man. *What note so sweet as this*
That calls the spirits to a further bliss?
Woman. *Yet this out-savours wine, and this perfume,*
Man. *Let's die, I languish, I consume.*

After the song, enter ROCHFORT *and* BEAUMONT.

Beaum. Romont will come, sir, straight.

Roch. 'Tis well.

Beaumel. My father!

Nov. jun. My honourable lord!

Roch. My lord Novall! this is a virtue in you,
So early up and ready before noon,
That are the map of dressing through all France!

Nov. jun. I rise to say my prayers, sir, here's my saint.

Roch. 'Tis well and courtly;—you must give me leave;

I have some private conference with my daughter;
Pray use my garden, you shall dine with me.

Lilad. We'll wait on you.

Nov. jun. Good morn unto your lordship,
Remember what you have vowed—
[*To Beaumelle.*

[*Exeunt all but Rochfort and Beaumelle.*

Beaumel. Perform I must.

Roch. Why how now, Beaumelle, thou look'st not well.

Thou art sad of late,—come cheer thee; I have found
A wholesome remedy for these maiden fits,
A goodly oak whereon to twist my vine,
Till her fair branches grow up to the stars.
Be near at hand, success crown my intent,
My business fills my little time so full,
I cannot stand to talk: I know thy duty
Is handmaid to my will, especially
When it presents nothing but good and fit.

Beaumel. Sir, I am yours.—Oh! if my fears prove true,
Fate hath wronged love, and will destroy me too.
[*Exit Beaumelle.*

Enter ROMONT *and Keeper.*

Rom. Sent you for me, sir?

Roch. Yes.

Rom. Your lordship's pleasure?

Roch. Keeper, this prisoner I will see forthcoming,

Upon my word—Sit down, good colonel.
[*Exit Keeper.*

Why I did wish you hither, noble sir,
Is to advise you from this iron carriage,
Which, so affected, Romont, you will wear
To pity, and to counsel you to submit
With expedition to the great Novall:
Recant your stern contempt and slight neglect
Of the whole court and him, and opportunely,
Or you will undergo a heavy censure
In public, very shortly.

Rom. Reverend sir,
I have observed you, and do know you well;
And am now more afraid you know not me,
By wishing my submission to Novall,
Than I can be of all the bellowing mouths
That wait upon him to pronounce the censure,
Could it determine me to torments and shame.
Submit and crave forgiveness of a beast?
'Tis true, this boil of state wears purple tissue,
Is high fed, proud:—So is his lordship's horse,

And bears as rich caparaisons. I know
This elephant carries on his back not only
Towers, castles, but the ponderous republic,
And never stoops for it; with his strong breathed trunk
Snuffs other's titles, lordships, offices,
Wealth, bribes, and lives, under his ravenous jaws:
What's this unto my freedom? I dare die;
And therefore ask this camel, if these blessings
(For so they would be understood by a man)
But mollify one rudeness in his nature,
Sweeten the eager relish of the law,
At whose great helm he sits. Helps he the poor
In a just business? Nay, does he not cross
Every deserved soldier and scholar,
As if, when nature made him, she had made
The general antipathy of all virtue?
How savagely and blasphemously he spake
Touching the general, the brave general, dead!
I must weep when I think on't.

Roch. Sir!

Rom. My lord, I am not stubborn: I can melt, you see,
And prize a virtue better than my life:
For though I be not learned, I ever loved
That holy mother of all issues good,
Whose white hand for a scepter holds a file,
To polish roughest customs, and in you
She has her right: See! I am calm as sleep;
But when I think of the gross injuries,
The godless wrong done to my general dead,
I rave indeed, and could eat this Novall;
A soulless dromedary!

Roch. Oh! be temperate;
Sir, though I would persuade, I'll not constrain;
Each man's opinion freely is his own,
Concerning any thing, or any body;
Be it right or wrong, 'tis at the judge's peril.

Enter BEAUMONT.

Beaum. These men, sir, wait without; my lord is come too.

Roch. Pay them those sums upon the table; take
Their full releases:—Stay—I want a witness:
Let me intreat you, colonel, to walk in,
And stand but by to see this money paid;
It does concern you and your friend; it was
The better cause you were sent for, though said otherwise.
The deed shall make this my request more plain.

Rom. I shall obey your pleasure, sir, though ignorant
To what it tends. [*Exeunt Romont and Servant.*

Enter CHARALOIS.

Roch. Worthiest sir,
You are most welcome: Fie, no more of this:
You have out-wept a woman, noble Charalois!
No man but has or must bury a father.

Char. Grave sir! I buried sorrow for his death
In the grave with him. I did never think
He was immortal—though I vow I grieve,
And see no reason why the vicious,
Virtuous, valiant, and unworthy men,
Should die alike.

Roch. They do not.

Char. In the manner
Of dying, sir, they do not, but all die,
And therein differ not: But I have done.
I spied the lively picture of my father,
Passing your gallery, and that cast this water
Into mine eyes: See—foolish that I am,
To let it do so.

Roch. Sweet and gentle Nature!
How silken is this well comparatively
To other men; I have a suit to you, sir,

Char. Take it; 'tis granted.

Roch. What?

Char. Nothing, my lord.

Roch. Nothing is quickly granted.

Char. Faith, my lord!
That nothing granted is even all I have,
For all know I have nothing left to grant.

Roch. Sir, have you any suit to me? I'll grant
You something, anything.

Char. Nay, surely, I, that can
Give nothing, will but sue for that again.
No man will grant me anything I sue for.
But begging nothing, every man will give it.

Roch. Sir, the love I bore your father, and the worth
I see in you, so much resembling his,
Made me thus send for you. And tender here
[*Draws a curtain.*
Whatever you will take, gold, jewels, both,
All, to supply your wants, and free yourself.
Where heavenly virtue in high-blooded veins
Is lodged, and can agree, men should kneel down,
Adore, and sacrifice all that they have;
And well they may, it is so seldom seen.
Put off your wonder, and here freely take,
Or send your servants: Nor, sir, shall you use
In aught of this a poor man's fee, or bribe
Unjustly taken of the rich, but what's
Directly gotten, and yet by the law.

Char. How ill, sir, it becomes those hairs to mock!

Roch. Mock? thunder strike me then.

Char. You do amaze me.
But you shall wonder too; I will not take
One single piece of this great heap. Why should I
Borrow, that have not means to pay; nay, am
A very bankrupt, even in flattering hope
Of ever raising any. All my begging
Is Romont's liberty.

Enter ROMONT, BEAUMONT, *and Creditors, loaded with money.*

Roch. Here is your friend,
Enfranchised ere you spake. I give him you:
And, Charalois, I give you to your friend,
As free a man as he: Your father's debts
Are taken off.

Char. How?
Rom. Sir, it is most true.
I am the witness.
1 *Cred.* Yes, faith, we are paid.
2 *Cred.* Heaven bless his lordship—I did think him wiser.
3 *Cred.* He a statesman? He an ass—pay other men's debts?
1 *Cred.* That he was never bound for.
Rom. One more such
Would save the rest of pleaders.
Char. Honoured Rochfort,
Lie still my tongue, and blushes scald my cheeks,
That offer thanks in words for such great deeds.
Roch. Call in my daughter: Still I have a suit to you. [*Exit Beaumont.*
Would you requite me?
Rom. With his life, I assure you.
Roch. Nay, would you make me now your debtor, sir!

Enter BEAUMELLE.

This is my only child: What she appears,
Your lordship well may see: for education, Beaumelle
Follows not any: For her mind, I know it
To be far fairer than her shape, and hope
It will continue so: If now her birth
Be not too mean for Charalois, take her,
This virgin, by the hand, and call her wife,
Endowed with all my fortunes: Bless me so,
Requite me thus, and make me happier,
In joining my poor empty name to yours,
Than if my state were multiplied tenfold.
Char. Is this the payment, sir, that you expect?
Why, you precipitate me more in debt,
That nothing but my life can ever pay.
The beauty being your daughter (in which yours
I must conceive necessity of her virtue)
Without all dowry is a prince's aim.
Then, as she is, for poor and worthless me
How much too worthy! Waken me, Romont,
That I may know I dreamed, and find this vanished.
Rom. Sure I sleep not.
Roch. Your sentence—life or death.
Char. Fair Beaumelle, can you love me?
Beaumel. Yes, my lord.

Enter NOVALL *jun.* PONTALIER, MALOTIN, LILADAM, *and* AYMER.—*All salute.*

Char. You need not question me if I can you.
You are the fairest virgin in Dijon,
And Rochfort is your father.
Nov. jun. What's this change?
Roch. You met my wishes, gentlemen.
Rom. What make
These dogs in doublets here?
Beaumel. A visitation, sir.
Char. Then thus, fair Beaumelle! I write my faith,
Thus seal it in the sight of Heaven and men.
Your fingers tie my heart-strings with this touch,
In true-love knots, which nought but death shall loose.
And let these tears (an emblem of our loves)
Like crystal rivers individually
Flow into one another; make one source,
Which never man distinguish, less divide!
Breath marry breath, and kisses mingle souls;
Two hearts and bodies here incorporate;
And, though with little wooing I have won,
My future life shall be a wooing time,
And every day new as the bridal one.
Oh, sir! I groan under your courtesies,
More than my father's bones under his wrongs.
You, Curtius-like, have thrown into the gulf
Of this his country's foul ingratitude,
Your life and fortunes, to redeem their shames.
Roch. No more, my glory! come, let's in, and hasten
This celebration.
Romont, Malotin, Pontalier, and Beaumont.—All fair bliss upon it.
[*Exeunt Rochfort, Charalois, Romont, Beaumont, and Malotin.*
Nov. jun. Mistress!
Beaum. Oh servant, virtue strengthen me!
Thy presence blows round my affection's vane:
You will undo me if you speak again.
[*Exit Beaumelle.*
Lilad. Aym. Here will be sport for you. This works. [*Exeunt Liladam and Aymer.*
Nov. jun. Peace! peace!
Pont. One word, my lord Novall!
Nov. jun. What, thou would'st money—there.
Pont. No, I'll none, I'll not be bought a slave,
A pandar, or a parasite, for all
Your father's worth; though you have saved my life,
Rescued me often from my wants, I must not
Wink at your follies that will ruin you.
You know my blunt way, and my love to truth:
Forsake the pursuit of this lady's honour,
Now you do see her made another man's,
And such a man's! so good, so popular;
Or you will pluck a thousand mischiefs on you.
The benefits you've done me are not lost,
Nor cast away; they are pursed here in my heart;
But let me pay you, sir, a fairer way
Than to defend your vices, or to soothe them.
Nov. jun. Ha, ha, ha! what are my courses unto thee?
Good cousin Pontalier, meddle with that
That shall concern thyself. [*Exit Novall.*
Pont. No more but scorn?
Move on then, stars! work your pernicious will!
Only the wise rule, and prevent your ill. [*Exit.*

Hautboys.—Here a passage over the stage, while the act is playing for the marriage of Charalois with Beaumelle, &c.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter NOVALL *jun. and* BELLAPERT.

Nov. jun. FLY not to these excuses: Thou hast been
False in thy promise—and, when I have said
Ungrateful, all is spoke.
Bella. Good my lord! but hear me only.
Nov. jun. To what purpose, trifler?
Can any thing that thou canst say make void
The marriage? Or those pleasures but a dream,
Which Charalois (oh Venus!) hath enjoyed?
Bella. I yet could say that you receive advantage
In what you think a loss, would you vouchsafe me;
That you were never in the way till now
With safety to arrive at your desires;
That pleasure makes love to you, unattended
By danger or repentance.
Nov. jun. That I could
But apprehend one reason how this might be,
Hope would not then forsake me.
Bella. The enjoying
Of what you most desire; I say the enjoying,
Shall, in the full possession of your wishes,
Confirm that I am faithful.
Nov. jun. Give some relish
How this may appear possible.
Bella. I will.
Relish and taste, and make the banquet easy.
You say my lady's married—I confess it:
That Charalois hath enjoyed her—'tis most true:
That with her he's already master of
The best part of my lord's estate. Still better:
But that the first or last should be your hindrance,
I utterly deny: For, but observe me,
While she went for, and was, I swear, a virgin,
What courtesy could she with her honour give,
Or you receive with safety?
Nov. jun. But for her marriage.
Bella. 'Tis a fair protection
'Gainst all arrests of fear or shame for ever.
Such as are fair, and yet not foolish, study
To have one at thirteen; but they are mad
That stay till twenty. Then, sir! for the pleasure;
To say adultery is sweeter, that is stale.
This only—Is not the contentment more,
To say, this is my cuckold, than my rival?
More I could say—but, briefly, she doats on you;
If it prove otherwise, spare not, poison me
With the next gold you give me.

Enter BEAUMELLE.

Beaumel. How is this, servant? courting my woman?
Bella. As an entrance to
The favour of the mistress; You are together,
And I am perfect in my cue. [*Going.*
Beaumel. Stay, Bellapert.
Bella. In this I must not, with your leave, obey you.
Your taylor and your tire-woman wait without,
And stay my counsel and direction for
Your next day's dressing. I have much to do,
Nor will your ladyship now, time is precious,
Continue idle; this choice lord will find
So fit employment for you. [*Exit* BELLAPERT.
Beaumel. I shall grow angry.
Nov. jun. Not so; you have a jewel in her, madam!
Beaumel. You come to chide me, servant, and bring with you
Sufficient warrant. You will say, and truly,
My father found too much obedience in me,
By being won too soon: Yet, if you please
But to remember all my hopes and fortunes
Had reference to his liking, you will grant,
That though I did not well towards you, I yet
Did wisely for myself.
Nov. jun. With too much fervour
I have so long loved, and still love you, mistress,
To esteem that an injury to me,
Which was to you convenient; that is past
My help, is past my cure. You yet may, lady,
In recompence of all my duteous service,
(Provided that your will answer your power)
Become my creditress.
Beaumel. I understand you;
And for assurance the request you make
Shall not be long unanswered, pray you sit,
And by what you shall hear, you'll easily find,
My passions are much fitter to desire
Than to be sued to.

Enter ROMANT *and* FLORIMEL.

Flor. Sir, it is not envy
At the start my fellow has got of me in
My lady's good opinion, that is the motive
Of this discovery; but due payment
Of what I owe her honour.
Rom. So I conceive it.
Flor. I have observed too much, nor shall my silence
Prevent the remedy——yonder they are,
I dare not be seen with you. You may do
What you think fit, which will be, I presume,
The office of a faithful and tried friend
To my young lord. [*Exit Florimel.*
Rom. This is no vision: Ha!
Nov. jun. With the next opportunity.
Beaumel. By this kiss, and this, and this.
Nov. jun. That you would ever swear thus!
Rom. If I seem rude, your pardon, lady! yours
I do not ask: Come, do not dare to shew me
A face of anger, or the least dislike;
Put on, and suddenly, a milder look;
I shall grow rough else.

Nov. jun. Whst have I done, sir,
To draw this harsh unsavoury language from you?
Rom. Done, popinjay? Why, dost thou think that, if
I e'er had dreamt that thou hadst done me wrong,
Thou shouldst outlive it?
Beaumel. This is something more
Than my lord's friendship gives commission for.
Nov. jun. Your presence and the place make him presume
Upon my patience.
Rom. As if thou e'er wert angry
But with thy taylor, and yet that poor shred
Can bring more to the making up of a man,
Than can be hoped from thee: Thou art his creature,
And, did he not each morning new create thee,
Thou would'st stink and be forgotten. I will not change
One syllable more with thee, until thou bring
Some testimony, under good men's hands,
Thou art a Christian. I suspect thee strongly,
And will be satisfied: 'Till which time, keep from me.
The entertainment of your visitation
Has made what I intended one a business.
Nov. jun. So we shall meet—madam!
Rom. Use that leg again, and I'll cut off the other.
Nov. jun. Very good. [*Exit Nov.*
Rom. So I respect you,
Not for yourself, but in remembrance of
Who is your father, and whose wife you now are,
That I chuse rather not to understand
Your nasty scuff, than——
Beaumel. What, you will not beat me,
If I expound it to you? Here's a tyrant
Spares neither man nor woman.
Rom. My intents,
Madam, deserve not this; nor do I stay
To be the whetstone of your wit: preserve it
To spend on such as know how to admire
Such coloured stuff. In me there is now speaks to you,
As true a friend and servant to your honour,
And one that will with as much hazard guard it,
As ever man did goodness. But then, lady!
You must endeavour, not alone to be,
But to appear, worthy such love and service.
Beaumel. To what tends this?
Rom. Why, to this purpose, lady;
I do desire you should prove such a wife
To Charalois (and such a one he merits)
As Cæsar, did he live, could not except at,
Not only innocent from crime, but free
From all taint and suspicion.
Beaumel. They are base that judge me otherwise.
Rom. But yet be careful!
Detraction is a bold monster, and fears not
To wound the fame of princes, if it find
But any blemish in their lives to work on:
But I will be plainer with you: had the people
Been learnt to speak, but what even now I saw,
Their malice out of that would raise an engine
To overthrow your honour. In my sight,
With yonder painted fool I frighted from you,
You used familiarity beyond
A modest entertainment: you embraced him
With too much ardour for a stranger, and
Met him with kisses neither chaste nor comely:
But learn you to forget him, as I will
Your bounties to him; you will find it safer
Rather to be uncourtly than immodest.
Beaumel. This pretty rag about your neck shews well,
And, being coarse and little worth, it speaks you
As terrible as thrifty.
Rom. Madam!
Beaumel. Yes.
And this strong belt, in which you hang your honour,
Will outlast twenty scarfs.
Rom. What mean you, lady?
Beaumel. And all else about you cap-a-pee,
So uniform in spite of handsomeness,
Shews such a bold contempt of comeliness,
That it is not strange your laundress in the Leaguer
Grew mad with love of you.
Rom. Is my free counsel
Answered with this ridiculous scorn?
Beaumel. These objects
Stole very much of my attention from me;
Yet something I remember, to speak truth,
Delivered gravely, but to little purpose,
That almost would have made me swear, some curate
Had stolen into the person of Romont,
And, in the praise of good-wife honesty,
Had read an homily.
Rom. By this hand——
Beaumel. And sword;
I will make up your oath, it will want weight else.
You are angry with me, and poor I laugh at it.
Do you come from the camp, which affords only
The conversation of cast suburb whores,
To set down to a lady of my rank
Limits of entertainment?
Rom. Sure a legion has possest this woman.
Beaumel. One stamp more would do well: yet I desire not
You should grow horn-mad till you have a wife.
You are come to warm meat, and perhaps clean linen:
Feed, wear it, and be thankful. For me, know,
That though a thousand watches were set on me,
And you the master-spy, I yet would use
The liberty that best likes me. I will revel,
Feast, kiss, embrace. Perhaps, grant larger favours.
Yet such as live upon my means, shall know
They must not murmur at it. If my lord

Be now grown yellow, and has chose out you
To serve his jealousy that way, tell him this.
You have something to inform him.
[*Exit Beaumelle.*
Rom. And I will!
Believe it, wicked one, I will. Hear, heaven!
But, hearing, pardon me: if these fruits grow
Upon the tree of marriage, let me shun it,
As a forbidden sweet. An heir and rich,
Young, beautiful; yet add to this, a wife,
And I will rather chuse a spital sinner,
Carted an age before, though three parts rotten,
And take it for a blessing, rather than
Be fettered to the hellish slavery
Of such an impudence.

Enter BEAUMONT *with writings.*

Beaum. Colonel! good fortune
To meet you thus: you look sad, but I will tell you
Something that shall remove it. O how happy
Is my lord Charalois in his fair bride!
Rom. A happy man indeed! pray you in what?
Beaum. I dare swear, you would think so good a lady
A dower sufficient.
Rom. No doubt. But on.
Beaum. So fair, so chaste, so virtuous: indeed
All that is excellent.
Rom. Women have no cunning to gull the world!
Beaum. Yet to all these, my lord,
Her father gives the full addition of
All he does now possess in Burgundy:
These writings to confirm it are new sealed,
And I most fortunate to present him with them;
I must go seek him out; can you direct me?
Rom. You will find him breaking a young horse.
Beaum. I thank you. [*Exit Beaumont.*
Rom. I must do something worthy Charalois' friendship.
If she were well inclined, to keep her so
Deserved not thanks: and yet, to stay a woman,
Spurred headlong by hot lust to her own ruin,
Is harder than to prop a falling tower
With a deceiving reed.

Enter ROCHFORT.

Roch. Some one seek for me,
As soon as he returns.
Rom. Her father! ha!——
How if I break this to him? Sure it cannot
Meet with an ill construction. His wisdom,
Made powerful by the authority of a father,
Will warrant and give priviledge to his counsels.
It shall be so—my lord!
Roch. Your friend, Romont:
Would you aught with me?
Rom. I stand so engaged
To your so many favours, that I hold it
A breach in thankfulness, should I not discover,
Though with some imputation to myself,
All doubts that may concern you.
Roch. The performance
Will make this protestation worth my thanks.
Rom. Then, with your patience, lend me your attention:
For what I must deliver, whispered only,
You will with too much grief receive.

Enter BEAUMELLE *and* BELLAPERT.

Beaumel. See, wench!
Upon my life as I forespake, he's now
Preferring his complaint: But be thou perfect,
And we will fit him.
Bella. Fear not me, pox on him!
A captain turned informer against kissing?
Would he were hanged up in his rusty armour!
But, if our fresh wits cannot turn the plots
Of such a mouldy murrion on itself,
Rich clothes, choice fare, and a true friend at a call,
Forsake us.
Roch. This in my daughter? Do not wrong her.
Bella. Now begin.
The game's afoot, and we in distance.
Beaumel. 'Tis thy fault, foolish girl! pin on my veil,
I will not wear those jewels. Am I not
Already matched beyond my hopes? Yet still
You prune and set me forth, as if I were
Again to please a suitor.
Bella. 'Tis the course
That our great ladies take.
Rom. A weak excuse!
Beaumel. Those that are better seen, in what concerns
A lady's honour and fair fame, condemn it.
You wait well: in your absence, my lord's friend,
The understanding, grave and wise Romont——
Rom. Must I be still her sport? [*Aside.*
Beaumel. Reproved me for it;
And he has travelled to bring home a judgment,
Not to be contradicted. You will say
My father, that owes more to years than he,
Has brought me up to music, language, courtship,
And I must use them. True, but not to offend,
Or render me suspected.
Roch. Does your fine story begin from this?
Beaumel. I thought a parting kiss
From young Novall would have displeased no more
Than heretofore it hath done; but I find
I must restrain such favours now; look, therefore,
As you are careful to continue mine,
That I no more be visited. I'll endure
The strictest course of life that jealousy
Can think secure enough, ere my behaviour
Shall call my fame in question.
Rom. Ten dissemblers
Are in this subtle devil. You believe this?
Roch. So far, that if you trouble me again
With a report like this, I shall not only

Judge you malicious in your disposition,
But study to repent what I have done
To such a nature.
Rom. Why, 'tis exceeding well.
Rock. And for you, daughter, off with this; off with it;
I have that confidence in your goodness, I,
That I will not consent to have you live
Like to a recluse in a cloister: Go,
Call in the gallants, let them make you merry,
Use all fit liberty.
Bella. Blessing on you.
If this new preacher, with the sword and feather,
Could prove his doctrine for canonical,
We should have a fine world. [*Exit Bellapert.*
Rock. Sir, if you please
To bear yourself as fits a gentleman,
The house is at your service; but, if not,
Though you seek company elsewhere, your absence
Will not be much lamented—— [*Exit Rockfort.*
Rom. If this be
The recompence of striving to preserve
A wanton giggiet honest, very shortly
'Twill make all mankind pandars.—Do you smile,
Good lady looseness? Your whole sex is like you,
And that man's mad that seeks to better any:
What new change have you next?
Beaumel. Oh, fear not you, sir!
I'll shift into a thousand, but I will
Convert your heresy.
Rom. What heresy? speak!
Beaumel. Of keeping a lady that is married,
From entertaining servants.——

Enter NOVALL *jun.* MALOTIN, LILADAM, AYMER, *and* PONTALIER.

O, you're welcome.
Use any means to vex him,
And then with welcome follow me.
[*Exit Beaumel.*
Nov. jun. You are tired
With your grave exhortations, colonel!
Lilad. How is it? Faith, your lordship may do well
To help him to some church-preferment: 'Tis
Now the fashion for men of all conditions,
However they have lived, to end that way.
Aymer. That face would do well in a surplice.
Rom. Rogues, be silent—or—
Pont. S'death! will you suffer this?
Rom. And you, the master rogue, the coward rascal,
I shall be with you suddenly.
Nov. jun. Pontalier,
If I should strike him, I know I shall kill him:
And therefore I would have thee beat him, for
He is good for nothing else.
Lilad. His back
Appears to me, as it would tire a beadle.
And then he has a knotted brow, would bruise
A court-like hand to touch it.
Aymer. He looks like
A currier, when his hide's grown dear.
Pont. Take heed he curry not some of you.
Nov. jun. Gads me! he is angry.
Rom. I break no jests, but I can break my sword
About your pates.

Enter CHARALOIS *and* BEAUMONT.

Lilad. Here is more.
Aymer. Come, let us be gone!
We are beleaguered.
Nov. jun. Look, they bring up their troops.
Pont. Will you sit down with this disgrace?
You are abused most grossly.
Lilad. I grant you, sir, we are; and you would have us
Stay, and be more abused.
Nov. jun. My lord, I am sorry
Your house is so inhospitable, we must quit it.
[*Exeunt. Manent Charalois and Romont.*
Char. Prythee, Romont, what caused this uproar?
Rom. Nothing.
They laughed and used their scurvy wits upon me.
Char. Come, 'tis thy jealous nature: but I wonder
That you, which are an honest man and worthy,
Should foster this suspicion. No man laughs,
No one can whisper, but thou apprehendest
His conference and his scorn reflects on thee.
For my part, they should scoff their thin wits out,
So I not heard them; beat me, not being there.
Leave, leave these fits to conscious men, to such
As are obnoxious to those foolish things
As they can gibe at.
Rom. Well, sir?
Char. Thou art known
Valiant without defect, rightly defined,
Which is (as fearing to do injury,
As tender to endure it) not a brabbler,
A swearer.
Rom. Pish, pish! what needs this, my lord?
If I be known none such, how vainly you
Do cast away good counsel? I have loved you,
And yet must freely speak: So young a tutor
Fits not so old a soldier as I am.
And I must tell you, 'twas in your behalf
I grew enraged thus; yet had rather die
Than open the great cause a syllable further.
Char. In my behalf? Wherein hath Charalois
Unfitly so demeaned himself, to give
The least occasion to the loosest tongue
To throw aspersions on him? Or so weakly
Protected his own honour, as it should
Need defence from any but himself?
They're fools that judge me by my outward seeming;
Why should my gentleness beget abuse?
The lion is not angry that does sleep,
Nor every man a coward that can weep.
For God's sake speak the cause.

Rom. Not for the world.
Oh! it will strike disease into your bones,
Beyond the cure of physick; drink your blood,
Rob you of all your rest, contract your sight,
Leave you no eyes but to see misery,
And of your own; nor speech, but to wish thus,
Would I had perished in the prison's jaws,
From whence I was redeemed! 'Twill wear you old,
Before you have experience in that art
That causes your affliction.
Char. Thou dost strike
A deathful coldness to my heart's high heat,
And shrinkest my liver like the calenture.
Declare this foe of mine, and life's, that like
A man I may encounter and subdue it.
It shall not have one such effect in me
As thou denouncest: With a soldier's arm,
If it be strength, I'll meet it:
If a fault belonging to my mind, I'll cut it off
With mine own reason as a scholar should.
—Speak, though it make me monstrous.
Rom. I'll die first.
Farewell! continue merry, and high heaven
Keep your wife chaste.
Char. Hum!—Stay, and take this wolf
Out of my breast, that thou hast lodged there, or
For ever lose me.
Rom. Lose not, sir, yourself,
And I will venture—so the door is fast.
[*Locks the door.*
Now, noble Charalois, collect yourself;
Summon your spirits; muster all your strength
That can belong to man; sift passion
From every vein, and, whatsoe'er ensues,
Upbraid not me hereafter, as the cause of
Jealousy, discontent, slaughter and ruin:
Make me not parent to sin:—You will know
This secret that I burn with?
Char. Devil on't,
What should it be? Romont, I hear you wish
My wife's continuance of chastity.
Rom. There was no hurt in that.
Char. Why, do you know
A likelihood or possibility unto the contrary?
Rom. I know it not, but doubt it; these the grounds.
The servant of your wife now, young Novall,
The son unto your father's enemy,
(Which aggravates my presumption the more)
I have been warned of, touching her; nay, seen them
Tie heart to heart, one in another's arms,
Multiplying kisses, as if they meant
To pose arithmetic, or whose eyes would
Be first burnt out with gazing on the other's.
I saw their months engender, and their palms
Glewed, as if love had locked them; their words flow
And melt each other's, like two circling flames,
Where chastity, like a phœnix, methought, burned,
But left the world nor ashes nor an heir.
Why stand you silent thus? What cold dull phlegm,
As if you had no drop of choler mixed
In your whole constitution, thus prevails,
To fix you now thus stupid, hearing this?
Char. Ha! ha! ha!
Rom. Laugh you! E'en so did your wife,
And her indulgent father.
Char. They were wise.
Would'st have me be a fool?
Rom. No, but a man.
Char. There is no dram of manhood to suspect,
On such thin airy circumstance as this;
Mere compliment and courtship. Was this tale
The hideous monster which you so concealed?
Away, thou curious impertinent,
And idle searcher of such lean nice toys!
Go, thou seditious sower of debate!
Fly to such matches, where the bridgroom doubts
He holds not worth enough to countervail
The virtue and the beauty of his wife.
Thou buzzing drone, that 'bout my ears dost hum,
To strike thy rankling sting into my heart,
Whose venom, time nor medicine could assuage;
Thus do I put thee off, and, confident
In mine own innocency and desert,
Dare not conceive her so unreasonable,
To put Novall in balance against me,
An upstart, craned up to the height he has.
Hence, busy body! thou'rt no friend to me,
That must be kept to a wife's injury.
Rom. I'st possible?—Farewell fine honest man!
Sweet tempered lord, adieu! What apoplexy
Hath knit sense up? Is this Romont's reward?
Bear witness, the great spirit of thy father,
With what a healthful hope I did administer
This potion, that hath wrought so virulently!
I not accuse thy wife of act, but would
Prevent her precipice to thy dishonour,
Which now thy tardy sluggishness will admit!
Would I had seen thee graved with thy great sire,
Ere live to have men's marginal fingers point.
At Charalois, as a lamented story.
An emperor put away his wife for touching
Another man; but thou wouldst have thine tasted,
And keep her, I think. Phoh! I am a fire
To warm a dead man, that waste out myself.
Blood!—What a plague, a vengeance, is't to me,
If you will be a cuckold? Here I shew
A sword's point to thee; this side you may shun,
Or that, the peril; if you will run on,
I cannot help it.
Char. Didst thou never see me
Angry, Romont?
Rom. Yes, and pursue a foe
Like lightning.
Char. Prithee see me so no more.
I can be so again.—Put up thy sword,
And take thyself away, lest I draw mine.

Rom. Come, fright your foes with this, sir; I am your friend,
And dare stand by you thus.
Char. Thou'rt not my friend;
Or being so, thou'rt mad.—I must not buy
Thy friendship at this rate; had I just cause,
Thou knowest I durst pursue such injury
Through fire, air, water, earth, nay, were they all
Shuffled again to chaos; but there's none.
Thy skill, Romont, consists in camps, not courts.
Farewell, uncivil man! let's meet no more.
Here our long web of friendship I untwist.
Shall I go whine, walk pale, and lock my wife
For nothing, from her birth's free liberty,
That opened mine to me? Yes; if I do———
The name of cuckold then dog me with scorn.
I am a Frenchman, no Italian born. [*Exit.*
Rom. A dull Dutch rather:—Fall and cool my blood!
Boil not in zeal of thy friend's hurt so high,
That is so low, and cold himself in it! woman,
How strong art thou! how easily beguiled!
How thou dost rack us by the very horns!
Now wealth, I see, change manners and the man.
Something I must do, mine own wrath to assuage,
And note my friendship to an after-age. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter NOVALL *jun. as newly dressed, a Taylor, Barber, Perfumer,* LILADAM, AYMER, *and Page.*

Nov. jun. Mend this a little: Pox! thou hast burnt me. Oh! fie upon it!—O lard! he has made me smell, for all the world, like a flax, or a red-headed woman's chamber: Powder, powder, powder.

Perf. Oh, sweet lord!

[*Novall sits in a chair, barber orders his hair, perfumer gives powder, tailor sets clothes.*

Page. That's his perfumer.

Tayl. Oh, dear lord!

Page. That's his taylor.

Nov. jun. Monsieur Liladam! Aymer! how allow you the model of these clothes?

Aymer. Admirably, admirably; oh, sweet lord! assuredly it is pity the worms should eat thee.

Page. Here is a fine cell; a lord, a taylor, a perfumer, a barber, and a pair of monsieurs: Three to three, as little wit in the one, as honesty in the other. S'foot I'll into the country again, learn to speak truth, drink ale, and converse with my father's tenants: here I hear nothing all day, but—upon my soul! as I am a gentleman, and an honest man!

Aymer. I vow and affirm, your taylor must needs be an expert geometrician; he has the longitude, latitude, altitude, profundity, every dimension of your body, so exquisitely.—Here is a lace laid as directly, as if truth were a taylor.

Page. That were a miracle.

Lilad. With a hair's breadth's error, there is a shoulder-piece cut, and the base of a pickadille in puncto.

Aymer. You are right, monsieur, his vestments sit as if they grew upon him; or art had wrought them on the same loom, as nature framed his lordship; as if your taylor were deeply read in astrology, and had taken measure of your honourable body, with a Jacob's staff, an ephimerides.

Tayl. I am bound to ye, gentlemen!

Page. You are deceived; they will be bound to you: You must remember to trust them none.

Nov. jun. Nay, 'faith, thou art a reasonable, neat artificer, give the devil his due.

Page. Aye, if he would but cut the coat according to the cloth still.

Nov. jun. I now want only my mistress's approbation, who is, indeed, the most polite punctual queen of dressing in all Burgundy. Pah, and makes all other young ladies appear as if they came from board last week out of the country. Is it not true, Liladam?

Lilad. True, my lord! as if any thing your lordship could say, could be otherwise than true.

Nov. jun. Nay, o' my soul, it is so; what fouler object in the world, than to see a young, fair, handsome beauty, unhandsomely dighted, and incongruently accoutered; or a hopeful chevalier, unmethodically appointed, in the external ornaments of nature? For, even as the index tells us the contents of stories, and directs to the particular chapters, even so does the outward habit and superficial order of garments (in man or woman), give us a taste of the spirit, and demonstratively point (as it were a manual note from the margin) all the internal quality and habiliment of the soul; and there cannot be a more evident, palpable, gross manifestation of poor, degenerate, dunghilly blood and breeding, than a rude, unpolished, disordered, and slovenly outside.

Page. An admirable lecture! ah, all you gallants, that hope to be saved by your clothes, edify, edify!

Aymer. By the lard, sweet lard! thou deservest a pension of the state.

Page. O' the taylors; two such lords were able to spread taylors over the face of a whole kingdom.

Nov. jun. 'Pox o' this glass! It flatters.—I could find in my heart to break it.

Page. O, save the glass, my lord! and break their heads: They are the great flatterers, I assure you.

Aymer. Flatters! detracts, impairs.—Yet, put it bye,

Lest thou, dear lord, Narcissus-like, should doat
Upon thyself, and die; and rob the world
Of Nature's copy, that she works forms by.
Lilad. Oh, that I were the infanta queen of Europe!
Who, but thyself, sweet lord, should marry me!
Nov. jun. I marry? Were there a queen of the world, not I.
Wedlock? No, padlock; horse-lock; I wear spurs [*He capers.*
To keep it off my heels; yes, my Aymer!
Like a free, wanton jennet in the meadows,
I look about, and neigh, take hedge and ditch,
Feed in my neighbour's pastures; pick my choice
Of all their fair maned mares: But, married once,
A man is staked or pounded, and cannot graze
Beyond his own hedge

Enter PONTALIER *and* MALOTIN.

Pont. I have waited, sir,
Three hours to speak with you, and take it not well,
Such magpies are admitted, whilst I dance
Attendance.
Lilad. Magpies! What do ye take me for!
Pont. A long thing, with a most unpromising face.
Aymer. I'll never ask him what he takes me for.
Malot. Do not, sir!
For he'll go near to tell you.
Pont. Art not thou a barber-surgeon!
Barb. Yes, sirrah! why?
Pont. My lord is sorely troubled with two scabs.
Lilad. Aymer. Humph———
Pont. I prythee, cure him of them.
Nov. jun. Pish! no more;
Thy gall sure is overflown: These are my council,
And we were now in serious discourse.
Pont. Of perfume and apparel. Can you rise,
And spend five hours in dressing-talk with these?
Nov. jun. Thou wouldst have me be a dog: Up, stretch, and shake,
And ready for all day.
Pont. Sir! would you be
More curious in preserving of your honour
Trim, 'twere more manly. I am come to wake
Your reputation from this lethargy
You let it sleep in; to persuade, importune,
Nay, to provoke you, sir! to call to account
This colonel Romont, for the foul wrong,
Which, like a burden, he hath laid on you,
And, like a drunken porter, you sleep under.
'Tis all the town-talk; and, believe, sir,
If your tough sense persist thus, you are undone,
Utterly lost; you will be scorned and baffled
By every lacquey; season now your youth
With one brave thing, and it shall keep the odour
Even to your death, beyond; and on your tomb,
Scent like sweet oils and frankincense: Sir! this life,
Which once you saved, I never since counted mine;
I borrowed it of you, and now will pay it;
I tender you the service of my sword
To bear your challenge; if you'll write, your fate
I'll make mine own! Whate'er betide you, I,
That have lived by you, by your side will die.
Nov. jun. Ha! ha! wouldst have me challenge poor Romont:
Fight with close breeches? Thou may'st think I dare not;
Do not mistake me, coz: I'm very valiant;
But valour shall not make me such an ass.
What use is there of valour now-a-days?
'Tis sure, or to be killed, or to be hanged.
Fight thou as thy mind moves thee; 'tis thy trade:
Thou hast nothing else to do. Fight with Romont?
No, I'll not fight under a lord.
Pont. Farewell, sir! I pity you.
Such loving lords walk their dead honour's graves,
For no companions fit, but fools and knaves.
Come, Malotin. [*Exeunt Pontalier and Malotin.*

Enter ROMONT.

Lilad. 'Sfoot, Colbrand, the low giant!
Aymer. He has brought a battle in his face; let's go.
Page. Colbrand, do you call him? He'll make some of you smoke, I believe.
Rom. By your leave, sirs!
Aymer. Are you a concert?
Rom. Do you take me for
A fidler? you are deceived: Look. I'll pay you. [*Kicks him.*
Page. It seems he knows you one, he bastinadoes you so.
Lilad. Was there ever so base a fellow?
Aymer. A rascal.
Lilad. A most uncivil groom!
Aymer. Offer to kick a gentleman in a nobleman's
Chamber! A-pox of your manners.
Lilad. Let him alone, let him alone, thou shalt lose thy aim, fellow! if we stir against thee, hang us.
Page. 'Sfoot, I think they have the better of him, though they be kicked, they talk so.
Lilad. Let us leave the mad ape.
Nov. jun. Gentlemen!
Lilad. Nay, my lord! we will not offer to dishonour you so much as to stay by you, since he's alone.
Nov. jun. Hark you.
Aymer. We doubt the cause, and will not disparage you so much as to take your lordship's quarrel in hand. Plague on him, how he has crumpled our bands.
Page. I'll e'en away with them, for this soldier beats
Man, woman, and child.
[*Exeunt all but Novall and Romont.*

Nov. jun. What mean you, sir? My people!
Rom. Your boy is gone,
[*Locks the door.*
And door is locked, yet for no hurt to you,
But privacy: call up your blood again, sir!
And therefore come without more circumstance,
Tell me how far the passages have gone
'Twixt you and your fair mistress Beaumelle.
Tell me the truth, and, by my hope of Heaven,
It never shall go farther.
Nov. jun. Tell you? Why, sir?
Are you my confessor?
Rom. I will be your confounder, if you do not.
[*Draws a pocket dagger.*
Stir not, nor spend your voice.
Nov. jun. What will you do?
Rom. Nothing but line your brain-pan, sir! with lead,
If you not satisfy me suddenly.
I am desperate of my life, and command yours.
Nov. jun. Hold! hold! I'll speak. I vow to Heaven and you,
She's yet untouched, more than her face and hands.
I cannot call her innocent; for, I yield,
On my solicitous wooing she consented,
Where time and place met opportunity,
To grant me all requests.
Rom. But, may I build
On this assurance?
Nov. jun. As upon your faith.
Rom. Write this, sir! nay, you must.
[*Draws inkhorn and paper.*
Nov. jun. Pox of this gun.
Rom. Withall, sir! you must swear, and put your oath
Under your hand, (shake not) ne'er to frequent
This lady's company; nor ever send
Token, or message, or letter, to incline
This (too much prone already) yielding lady.
Nov. jun. 'Tis done, sir!
Rom. Let me see—this first is right;
And here you wish a sudden death may light
Upon your body, and hell take your soul,
If ever more you see her but by chance,
Much less allure her. Now, my lord! your hand.
Nov. jun. My hand to this?
Rom. Your heart else, I assure you.
Nov. jun. Nay, there 'tis.
Rom. So, keep this last article
Of your faith given, and instead of threatenings, sir,
The service of my sword and life is yours:
But not a word of it—'tis fairies' treasure;
Which, but revealed, brings on the blabber's ruin.
Use your youth better, and this excellent form
Heaven hath bestowed upon you. So, good morrow to your lordship. [*Exit.*
Nov. jun. Good devil to your rogueship. No man's safe.——
I'll have a cannon planted in my chamber
Against such roaring rogues.

Enter BELLAPERT.

Bella. My lord, away!——
The coach stays: Now have your wish, and judge
If I have been forgetful.
Nov. jun. Ha!
Bella. Do you stand
Humming and hawing now! [*Exit.*
Nov. jun. Sweet wench, I come.
Hence, fear!
I swore,—that's all one; my next oath I'll keep
That I did mean to break, and then 'tis quit.
No pain is due to lovers' perjury:
If Jove himself laugh at it, so will I. [*Exit Novall.*

SCENE II.

Enter CHARALOIS *and* BEAUMONT.

Beaum. I grieve for the distaste
(Though I have manners
Not to inquire the cause) fallen out between
Your lordship and Romont.
Char. I love a friend,
So long as he continues in the bounds
Prescribed by friendship; but, when he usurps
Too far what is proper to myself,
And puts the habit of a governor on,
I must and will preserve my liberty.
But speak of something else; this is a theme
I take no pleasure in: What's this Aymer?
Whose voice for song, and excellent knowledge in
The chiefest parts of music, you bestow
Such praises on?
Beaum. He is a gentleman,
(For so his quality speaks him) well received
Among our greatest gallants; but yet holds
His main dependance from the young lord Novall.
Some tricks and crotchets he has in his head,
As all musicians have, and more of him
I dare not author: But, when you have heard him,
I may presume your lordship so will like him,
That you'll hereafter be a friend to music.
Char. I never was an enemy to it, Beaumont;
Nor yet do I subscribe to the opinion
Of those old captains, that thought nothing musical,
But cries of yielding enemies, neighing of horses,
Clashing of armour, loud shouts, drums and trumpets:
Nor, on the other side, in favour of it,
Affirm the world was made by musical discord,
Or that the happiness of our life consists
In a well-varied note upon the lute:
I love it to the worth of it, and no farther.
But let us see this wonder.
Beaum. He prevents my calling of him.

Enter AYMER.

Aymer. Let the coach be brought
To the back gate, and serve the banquet up:

My good lord Charalois! I think my house
Much honoured in your presence.
Char. To have means
To know you better, sir, has brought me hither,
A willing visitant; and you'll crown my welcome
In making me a witness to your skill,
Which, crediting from others, I admire.
Aymer. Had I been one hour sooner made acquainted
With your intent, my lord, you should have found me
Better provided: Now, such as it is,
Pray you grace with your acceptance.
Beaum. You are modest.
Aymer. Begin the last new air.
Char. Shall we not see them?
Aymer. This little distance from the instruments
Will to your ears convey the harmony
With more delight.
Char. I'll not contend.
Aymer. You are tedious.—
By this means shall I with one banquet please
Two companies, those within, and these gulls here.
[*Music, and a song above.*
Beaumel. within. Ha! ha! ha!
Char. How's this? It is my lady's laugh, most certain——
When I first pleased her, in this merry language,
She gave me thanks.
Beaum. How like you this?
Char. 'Tis rare——
Yet I may be deceived, and should be sorry,
Upon uncertain suppositions, rashly
To write myself in the black list of those
I have declaimed against, and to Romont.
Aymer. I would he were well off. Perhaps your lordship
Likes not these sad tunes: I have a new song,
Set to a lighter note, may please you better;
'Tis called *The Happy Husband.*
Char. Pray sing it.

Song below.—At the end of the song, BEAUMELLE *within.*

Beaumel. Ha! ha! 'tis such a groom.
Char. Do I hear this,
And yet stand doubtful? [*Exit Charalois.*
Aymer. Stay him!—I am undone,
And they discovered.
Beaum. What's the matter?
Aymer. Ah!
That women, when they're pleased, cannot hold,
But must laugh out.

Enter NOVALL *jun.* CHARALOIS, BEAUMELLE, *and* BELLAPERT.

Nov. jun. Help! save me! murder! murder!
Bella. Undone for ever!
Char. Oh, my heart!
Hold yet a little. Do not hope to escape
By flight, it is impossible: Though I might
On all advantage take thy life, and justly,
This sword, my father's sword, that ne'er was drawn
But to a noble purpose, shall not now
Do the office of a hangman; I reserve it
To right mine honour, not for a revenge
So poor, that though with thee it should cut off
Thy family, with all that are allied
To thee in lust or baseness, 'twere still short of
All terms of satisfaction. Draw!
Nov. jun. I dare not:
I have already done you too much wrong
To fight in such a cause.
Char. Why, darest thou neither
Be honest coward, nor yet valiant knave?
In such a cause! come, do not shame thyself;
Such whose blood's wrongs, or wrong done to themselves,
Could never heat, are yet, in the defence
Of their whores, daring. Look on her again.
You thought her worth the hazard of your soul,
And yet stand doubtful, in her quarrel, to
Venture your body.
Beaum. No, he fears his clothes
More than his flesh.
Char. Keep from me: Guard thy life;
Or, as thou hast lived like a goat, thou shalt
Die like a sheep.
Nov. jun. Since there is no remedy,
Despair of safety now in me prove courage!
[*They fight. Novall is slain.*
Char. How soon weak wrong's o'erthrown! Lend me your hand;
Bear this to the caroch—Come, you have taught me
To say, you must and shall: I wrong you not;
You are but to keep company you love.
—Is't done? 'tis well. Raise officers! and take care,
All you can apprehend within the house
May be forth-coming. Do I appear much moved?
Beaum. No, sir.
Char. My griefs are now thus to be borne;
Hereafter I'll find time and place to mourn.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter ROMONT *and* PONTALIER.

Pont. I was bound to seek you, sir.
Rom. And, had you found me
In any place but in the street, I should
Have done, not talked to you. Are you the captain?
The hopeful Pontalier? whom I have seen
Do in the field such service, as then made you
Their envy that commanded, here at home
To play the parasite to a gilded knave,
And, it may be, the pandar?
Pont. Without this,
I come to call you to account for what
Is past already. I, by your example

Of thankfulness to the dead general,
By whom you were raised, have practised to be so
To my good lord Novall, by whom I live;
Whose least disgrace, that is or may be offered,
With all the hazard of my life and fortunes,
I will make good on you, or any man
That has a hand in't: and, since you allow me
A gentleman and a soldier, there's no doubt
You will except against me. You shall meet
With a fair enemy; you understand
The right I look for, and must have.
Ram. I do;
And with the next day's sun you shall hear from me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter CHARALOIS *with a casket*, BEAUMELLE *and* BEAUMONT.

Char. Pray bear this to my father; at his leisure
He may peruse it: But, with your best language,
Intreat his instant presence. You have sworn
Not to reveal what I have done.
Beaum. Nor will I—but—
Char. Doubt me not. By Heaven, I will do nothing
But what may stand with honour. Pray you, leave me
[*Exit Beaumont.*
To my own thoughts.—if this be to me, rise:
[*Beaumel. kneels.*
I am not worthy the looking on, but only
To feed contempt and scorn; and that from you,
Who with the loss of your fair name have ceased it,
Were too much cruelty.
Beaumel. I dare not move you
To hear me speak. I know my fault is far
Beyond qualification or excuse;
That 'tis not fit for me to hope, or you
To think of mercy; only I presume
To entreat you would be pleased to look upon
My sorrow for it, and believe these tears
Are the true children of my grief,
And not a woman's cunning.
Char. Can you, Beaumelle,
Having deceived so great a trust as mine,
Though I were all credulity, hope again
To get belief? No, no; if you look on me
With pity, or dare practise any means
To make my sufferings less, or give just cause
To all the world to think what I must do,
Was called upon by you, use other ways;
Deny what I have seen, or justify
What you have done; and, as you desperately
Made shipwreck of your faith, to be a whore,
Use the arms of such a one, and such defence,
And multiply the sin with impudence.
Stand boldly up, and tell me to my teeth,
That you have done but what is warranted
By great examples, in all places where
Women inhabit: Urge your own deserts,
Or want in me of merit: Tell me how
Your dower, from the low gulf of poverty,
Weighed up my fortunes to what now they are:
That I was purchased by your choice and practice
To shelter you from shame, that you might sin
As boldly as securely; that poor men
Are married to those wives that bring them wealth,
One day their husbands, but observers ever:
That when by this proud usage you have blown
The fire of my just vengeance to the height,
I then may kill you; and yet say, it was done
In heat of blood, and after die myself,
To witness my repentance.
Beaumel. O my fate!
That never would consent that I should see
How worthy thou wert both of love and duty,
Before I lost you; and my misery made
The glass, in which I now behold your virtue!
While I was good I was a part of you,
And of two, by the virtuous harmony
Of our fair minds, made one: But, since I wandered
In the forbidden labyrinth of lust,
What was inseparable is by me divided.
With justice, therefore, you may cut me off,
And from your memory wash the remembrance
That e'er I was; like to some vicious purpose,
Which, in your better judgment, you repent of,
And study to forget.
Char. O Beaumelle!
That you can speak so well and do so ill!
But you had been too great a blessing, if
You had continued chaste: See how you force me
To this, because mine honour will not yield
That I again should love you.
Beaumel. In this life
It is not fit you should: Yet you shall find,
Though I was bold enough to be a strumpet,
I dare not yet live one: Let those famed matrons,
That are canonized worthy of our sex,
Transcend me in their sanctity of life,
I yet will equal them in dying nobly,
Ambitious of no honour after life,
But that, when I am dead you will forgive me.
Char. How pity steals upon me! should I hear her [*Knocks within.*
But ten words more, I were lost.—One knocks, go in. [*Exit Beaumel.*
That to be merciful should be a sin!

Enter ROCHEFORT.

O, sir, most welcome! Let me take your cloak;
I must not be denied. Here are your robes;
As you love justice, once more put them on.
There is a cause to be determined of,
That does require such an integrity
As you have ever used. I'll put you to
The trial of your constancy and goodness;
And look that you, that have been eagle-eyed
In other men's affairs, prove not a mole
In what concerns yourself. Take you your seat;
I will before you presently. [*Exit.*
Rock. Angels guard me!

To what strange tragedy does this destruction
Serve for a prologue?

Enter CHARALOIS *with* NOVALL'S *body*, BEAUMELLE *and* BEAUMONT.

Char. So, set it down before
The judgment seat, and stand you at the bar:
For me, I am the accuser.
Roch. Novall slain?
And Beaumelle, my daughter, in the place
Of one to be arraigned!
Char. O, are you touched?
I find that I must take another course.
[*He hoodwinks Rochfort.*
Fear nothing; I will only blind your eyes,
For justice should do so, when 'tis to meet
An object, that may sway her equal doom
From what it should be aimed at. Good my lord!
A day of hearing.
Roch. It is granted, speak—You shall have justice.
Char. I then here accuse,
Most equal judge, the prisoner, your fair daughter,
For whom I owed so much to you: your daughter,
So worthy in her own parts, and that worth
Set forth by yours, to whose so rare perfections,
Truth witness with me, in the place of service,
I almost paid idolatrous sacrifice,
To be a false adultress.
Roch. With whom?
Char. With this Novall, here dead.
Roch. Be well advised,
And, ere you say adultress again,
Her fame depending on it, be most sure
That she is one.
Char. I took them in the act.
I know no proof beyond it.
Roch. O my heart!
Char. A judge should feel no passions.
Roch. Yet, remember
He is a man, and cannot put off nature.
What answer makes the prisoner!
Beaumel. I confess
The fact I am charged with, and yield myself
Most miserably guilty.
Roch. Heaven take mercy
Upon your soul, then! It must leave your body.——
Now free mine eyes: I dare unmoved look on her,
And fortify my sentence with strong reasons.
Since that the politic law provides the servants,
To whose care we commit our goods, shall die,
If they abuse our trust; what can you look for,
To whose charge this most hopeful lord gave up
All he received from his brave ancestors,
Or he could leave to his posterity?
His honour: wicked woman! in whose safety
All his life's joys and comforts were locked up,
Which thy lust, a thief, hath now stolen from him;
And therefore——
Char. Stay, just judge.—May not what's lost
By her one fault (for I am charitable,
And charge her not with many) be forgotten
In her fair life hereafter?
Roch. Never, sir!
The wrong that's done to the chaste married bed,
Repentant tears can never expiate;
And be assured, to pardon such a sin,
Is an offence as great as to commit it.
Char. I may not then forgive her?
Roch. Nor she hope it:
Nor can she wish to live. No sun shall rise,
But ere it set shall shew her ugly lust
In a new shape, and every one more horrid:
Nay, even those prayers, which with such humble fervour
She seems to send up yonder, are beat back;
And all suits which her penitence can proffer,
As soon as made, are with contempt thrown off
From all the courts of mercy.
Char. Let her die, then. [*He kills her.*
Better prepared I am sure I could not take her,
Nor she accuse her father as a judge,
Partial against her.
Beaumel. I approve his sentence,
And kiss the executioner: My lust
Is now run from me in that blood, in which
It was begot and nourished. [*Dies.*
Roch. Is she dead, then?
Char. Yes, Sir, this is her heart-blood, is it not?
I think it be.
Roch. And you have killed her?
Char. True, and did it by your doom.
Roch. But I pronounced it
As a judge only, and a friend to justice,
And, zealous in defence of your wronged honour,
Broke all the ties of nature; and cast off
The love and soft affection of a father.
I, in your cause, put on a scarlet robe
Of red dyed cruelty; but, in return,
You have advanced for me no flag of mercy.
I looked on you as a wronged husband; but
You closed your eyes against me as a father.
O Beaumelle! my daughter!
Char. This is madness.
Roch. Keep from me.—Could not one good thought rise up,
To tell you that she was my age's comfort,
Begot by a weak man, and born a woman,
And could not, therefore, but partake of frailty:
Or wherefore did not thankfulness step forth,
To urge my many merits, which I may
Object unto you, since you prove ungrateful;
Flinty-hearted Charalois!
Char. Nature does prevail above your virtue.
Roch. No; it gives me eyes,
To pierce the heart of your design against me.
I find it now; it was my estate was aimed at,
A nobler match was sought for, and the hours
I lived, grew tedious to you: my compassion
Towards you hath rendered me most miserable,
And foolish charity undone myself.

But there is a heaven above, from whose just wreak
No mists of policy can hide offenders.

Enter NOVALL sen. *with Officers.*

Nov. sen. Force ope the doors.—O monster! cannibal!
Lay hold on him—My son! my son!—O Rochfort!
Twas you gave liberty to this bloody wolf
To worry all our comforts.—But this is
No time to quarrel; now give your assistance
For the revenge.
Roch. Call it a fitter name.
—Justice for innocent blood.
Char. Though all conspire
Against that life which I am weary of,
A little longer yet I'll strive to keep it,
To shew, in spite of malice and their laws,
His plea must speed, that hath an honest cause.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter LILADAM, *Tailor, and Officers.*

Lilad. Why, it is both most unconscionable and untimely,
To arrest a gallant for his clothes, before
He has worn them out. Besides, you said you asked
My name in my lord's bond but for form only,
And now you'll lay me up for it. Do not think
The taking measure of a customer
By a brace of varlets, though I rather wait
Never so patiently, will prove a fashion
Which any courtier or Inns-of-court-man
Would follow willingly.
Tail. There I believe you.
But, sir! I must have present monies, or
Assurance, to secure me when I shall——
Or I will see to your coming forth.
Lilad. Plague on it!
You have provided for my entrance in:
That coming forth you talk of, concerns me.
What shall I do? You have done me a disgrace
In the arrest, but more in giving cause
To all the street, to think I cannot stand
Without these two supporters for my arms.
Pray you, let them loose me: For their satisfaction
I will not run away.
Tail. For theirs you will not;
But for your own you would. Look to him, fellows!
Lilad. Why do you call them fellows? Do not wrong
Your reputation, as you are merely
A tailor, faithful, apt to believe in gallants.
You are a companion at a ten crown supper
For cloth of bodkin, and may with one lark
Eat up three manchets, and no man observe you.
Or call your trade in question for it. But, when
You study your debt-book, and hold correspondence
With officers of the hanger, and leave swordsmen,
The learned conclude, the tailor and serjeant,
In the expression of a knave or thief,
To be synonymous. Look, therefore, to it!
And let us part in peace. I would be loth
You should undo yourself.

Enter Old NOVALL *and* PONTALIER.

Tail. To let you go
Were the next way. But, see! here is your old lord;
Let him but give his word I shall be paid,
And you are free.
Lilad. 'Slid! I'll put him to it;
I can be but denied: or—what say you?
His lordship owing me three times your debt,
If you arrest him at my suit, and let me
Go run before, to see the action entered,
'Twould be a witty jest.
Tail. I must have earnest.—
I cannot pay my debts so.
Pont. Can your lordship
Imagine, while I live, and wear a sword,
Your son's death shall be unrevenged?
Nov. sen. I know not
One reason why you should not do like others:
I am sure, of all the herd that fed upon him,
I cannot see in any, now he is gone,
In pity or in thankfulness, one true sign
Of sorrow for him.
Pont. All his bounties yet
Fell not in such unthankful ground: 'Tis true,
He had weaknesses, but such as few are free from.
And, though none soothed them less than I, for now,
To say that I foresaw the dangers that
Would rise from cherishing them, were but untimely,
I yet could wish the justice, that you seek for
In the revenge, had been trusted to me,
And not the uncertain issue of the laws:
It has robbed me of a noble testimony
Of what I durst do for him.—But, however,
My forfeit life, redeemed by him, though dead,
Shall do him service.
Nov. sen. As far as my grief
Will give me leave, I thank you.
Lilad. O, my lord!
Oh, my good lord! deliver me from these furies.

Pont. Arrested? This is one of them, whose base
And abject flattery helped to dig his grave:
He is not worth your pity, nor my anger.—
Go to the basket, and repent.
Nov. sen. Away!—I only know now to hate thee deadly:
I will do nothing for thee.
Lilad. Nor you, captain?
Pont. No: to your trade again; put off this case!
It may be, the discovering what you were,
When your unfortunate master took you up,
May move compassion in your creditor.
Confess the truth.
[*Exit. Novall sen. and Pontalier.*
Lilad. And, now I think on it better,
I will. Brother, your hand; your hand, sweet brother.
I am of your sect, and my gallantry but a dream,
Out of which these two fearful apparitions,
Against my will, have waked me. This rich sword
Grew suddenly out of a tailor's bodkin;
These hangers from my vails and fees in hell;
And where, as now this beaver fits, full often
A thrifty cap, composed of broad-cloth lists,
Near-'kin unto the cushion where I sat
Cross-legged, and yet ungartered, hath been seen;
Our breakfasts, famous for the buttered loaves,
I have with joy been oft acquainted with;
And therefore use a conscience, though it be
Forbidden in our hall towards other men,
To me that, as I have been, will again
Be of the brotherhood.
Officer. I know him now:
He was a 'prentice to Le Robe at Orleance.
Lilad. And from thence brought by my young lord, now dead,
Unto Dijon; and with him, till this hour,
Have been received here for a complete monsieur.
Nor wonder at it: for, but tythe our gallants,
Even those of the first rank, and you will find,
In every ten, one, peradventure two,
That smell rank of the dancing-school or fiddle,
The pantofle or pressing-iron:—But hereafter
We'll talk of this. I will surrender up
My suits again; there cannot be much loss.
'Tis but the turning of the lace, with one
Addition more you know of, and what wants
I will work out.
Tail. Then here our quarrel ends:
The gallant is turned tailor, and all friends.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter ROMONT *and* BEAUMONT.

Rom. You have them ready.
Beaum. Yes; and they will speak
Their knowledge in this cause, when thou think'st fit
To have them called upon.
Rom. 'Tis well; and something
I can add to their evidence, to prove
This brave revenge, which they would have called murder,
A noble justice.
Beaum. In this you express
(The breach, by my lord's want of you, now made up)
A faithful friend.
Rom. That friendship's raised on sand,
Which every sudden gust of discontent,
Or flowing of our passions, can change,
As if it ne'er had been:—But do you know
Who are to sit on him?
Beaum. Monsieur Du Croy,
Assisted by Charmi.
Rom. The advocate,
That pleaded for the marshal's funeral,
And was checked for it by Novall?
Beaum. The same.
Rom. How fortunes that?
Beaum. Why, sir, my lord Novall,
Being the accuser, cannot be the judge;
Nor would grieved Rochfort, but lord Charalois
(However he might wrong him by his power)
Should have an equal hearing.
Rom. By my hopes
Of Charalois's acquittal, I lament
That reverend old man's fortune.
Beaum. Had you seen him,
As to my grief I have, now promise patience,
And ere it was believed, though spoke by him,
That never breaks his word, enraged again
So far as to make war upon those hairs,
Which not a barbarous Scythian durst presume
To touch, but with a superstitious fear,
As something sacred:—and then curse his daughter;
But with more frequent violence himself,
As if he had been guilty of her fault,
By being incredulous of your report,
You would not only judge him worthy pity,
But suffer with him.—But here comes the prisoner;

Enter CHARALOIS, *with officers.*

I dare not stay to do my duty to him;
Yet, rest assured, all possible means in me
To do him service, keeps you company.
Rom. It is not doubted. [*Exit Beaumont.*
Char. Why, yet, as I came hither,
The people, apt to mock calamity,
And tread on the oppressed, made no horns at me,
Though they are too familiar I deserve them.
And, knowing too what blood my sword hath drunk,
In wreak of that disgrace, they yet forbear
To shake their heads, or to revile me for
A murderer; they rather all put on
(As for great losses the old Romans used)

A general face of sorrow, waited on
By a sad murmur, breaking through their silence,
And no eye but was readier with a tear
To witness 'twas shed for me, than I could
Discern a face made up with scorn against me.
Why should I, then, though for unusual wrongs
I chose unusual means to right those wrongs,
Condemn myself, as over partial
In my own cause?—Romont!
Rom. Best friend, well met!
By my heart's love to you, and join to that
My thankfulness that still lives to the dead,
I look upon you now with more true joy,
Than when I saw you married.
Char. You have reason
To give you warrant for it. My falling off
From such a friendship, with the scorn that answered
Your too prophetic counsel, may well move you
To think your meeting me, going to my death,
A fit encounter for that hate, which justly
I have deserved from you.
Rom. Shall I still, then,
Speak truth, and be ill understood?
Char. You are not.
I'm conscious I have wronged you, and allow me
Only a moral man, to look on you,
Whom foolishly I have abused and injured,
Must of necessity be more terrible to me,
Than any death the judges can pronounce
From the tribunal which I am to plead at.
Rom. Passion transports you.
Char. For what I have done
To my false lady, or Novall, I can
Give some apparent cause; but, touching you,
In my defence, child-like, I can say nothing,
But I am sorry for it; a poor satisfaction!
And yet, mistake me not; for it is more
Than I will speak, to have my pardon signed
For all I stand accused of.
Rom. You much weaken
The strength of your good cause, should you but think,
A man for doing well could entertain
A passion, were it offered. You have given
To blind and slow-paced justice, wings and eyes,
To see and overtake impieties,
Which from a cold proceeding had received
Indulgence or protection.
Char. Think you so?
Rom. Upon my soul, nor should the blood you challenge
And took to cure your honour, breed more scruple
In your soft conscience, than if your sword
Had been sheathed in a tygress or she bear,
That in their bowels would have made your tomb.
To injure innocence is more than murder:
But when inhuman lasts transform us, then
As beasts we are to suffer, not like men,
To be lamented. Nor did Charalois ever
Perform an act so worthy the applause
Of a full theatre of perfect men,
As he hath done in this: The glory got
By overthrowing outward enemies,
Since strength and fortune are main sharers in it,
We cannot, but by pieces, call our own:
But, when we conquer our intestine foes,
Our passions bred within us, and of those
The most rebellious tyrant, powerful love,
Our reason suffering us to like no longer
Than the fair object, being good, deserves it,
That's a true victory; which, were great men
Ambitious to atchieve by your example,
Setting no price upon the breach of faith,
But loss of life, 'twould fright adultery
Out of their families; and make lust appear
As loathsome to us in the first consent,
As when 'tis waited on by punishment.
Char. You have confirmed me. Who would love a woman
That might enjoy, in such a man, a friend?
You've made me know the justice of my cause,
And marked me out the way how to defend it.
Rom. Continue to that resolution constant,
And you shall, in contempt of their worst malice,
Come off with honour.—Here they come.
Char. I am ready.

SCENE III.

Enter DU CROY, CHARMI, ROCHFORT, NOVALL *sen.* PONTALIER, *and* BEAUMONT.

Nov. sen. See, equal judges, with what confidence
The cruel murderer stands, as if he would
Out-face the court and justice!
Roch. But look on him,
And you shall find (for still methinks I do,
Though guilt hath dyed him black) something good in him,
That may perhaps work with a wiser man,
Than I have been, again to set him free,
And give him all he has.
Charm. This is not well.
I would you had lived so, my lord! that I,
Might rather have continued your poor servant,
Than sit here as your judge.
Du Croy. I am sorry for you.
Roch. In no act of my life I have deserved
This injury from the court, that any here
Should thus uncivilly usurp on what
Is proper to me only.
Du Croy. What distaste
Receives my lord?
Roch. You say you are sorry for him:
A grief in which I must not have a partner:
'Tis I alone am sorry, that when I raised
The building of my life, for seventy years,
Upon so sure a ground, that all the vices,
Practised to ruin mine, though brought against me,
Could never undermine, and no way left
To send these grey hairs to the grave with sorrow,

Virtue, that was my patroness, betrayed me:
For, entering, nay, possessing, this young man,
It lent him such a powerful majesty,
To grace whatever he undertook, that freely
I gave myself up with my liberty,
To be at his disposing: Had his person,
Lovely I must confess, or far-famed valour,
Or any other seeming good, that yet
Holds a near neighbourhood with ill, wrought on me,
I might have borne it better: But, when goodness
And piety itself, in her best figure,
Were bribed to my destruction, can you blame me,
Though I forget to suffer like a man,
Or rather act a woman?
Beaum. Good my lord!
Nov. sen. You hinder our proceeding.
Charmi. And forget
The part of an accuser.
Beaum. 'Pray you, remember
To use the temper, which to me you promised.
Roch. Angels themselves must break, Beaumont, that promise,
Beyond their strength and patience of angels.
But I have done:—My good lord! pardon me,
A weak old man; and pray add to that
A miserable father; yet be careful
That your compassion of my age, nor his,
Move you to any thing, that may mis-become
The place on which you sit.
Charmi. Read the indictment.
Char. It shall be needless; I myself, my lords,
Will be my own accuser, and confess
All they can charge me with: nor will I spare
To aggravate that guilt with circumstance,
They seek to load me with: Only I pray,
That, as for them you will vouchsafe me hearing,
I may not be denied it for myself,
When I shall urge by what unanswerable reasons
I was compelled to what I did, which yet,
Till you have taught me better, I repent not.
Roch. The motion's honest.
Charmi. And 'tis freely granted.
Char. Then I confess, my lords, that I stood bound,
When, with my friends, even hope itself had left me,
To this man's charity for my liberty;
Nor did his bounty end there, but began;
For, after my enlargement, cherishing
The good he did, he made me master of
His only daughter and his whole estate:
Great ties of thankfulness, I must acknowledge;
Could any one, fee'd by you, press this further?
But yet consider, my most honoured lords!
If to receive a favour, make a servant,
And benefits are bonds to tie the taker
To the imperious will of him that gives,
There's none but slaves will receive courtesies,
Since they must fetter us to our dishonours.
Can it be called magnificence in a prince,
To pour down riches, with a liberal hand,
Upon a poor man's wants, if that must bind him
To play the soothing parasite to his vices?
Or any man, because he saved my hand,
Presume my head and heart are at his service?
Or, did I stand engaged to buy my freedom
(When my captivity was honourable)
By making myself here, and fame hereafter,
Bondslaves to men's scorn and calumnious tongues?
Had his fair daughter's mind been like her features,
Or, for some little blemish, I had sought
For my content elsewhere, wasting on others
My body and her dowry; my forehead then
Deserved the brand of base ingratitude:
But if obsequious usage, and fair warning,
To keep her worth my love, could not preserve her
From being a whore, and yet no cunning one,
So to offend, and yet the fault kept from me;
What should I do? Let any free-born spirit
Determine truly, if that thankfulness,
Choice form, with the whole world given for a dowry,
Could strengthen so an honest man with patience,
As with a willing neck to undergo
The insupportable yoke of slave or wittol!
Charmi. What proof have you she did play false, besides
Your oath?
Char. Her own confession to her father.
I ask him for a witness.
Roch. 'Tis most true.
I would not willingly blend my last words
With an untruth.
Char. And then to clear myself,
That his great wealth was not the mark I shot at,
But that I held it, when fair Beaumelle
Fell from her virtue, like the fatal gold
Which Brennus took from Delphos, whose possession
Brought with it ruin to himself and army,
Here's one in court, Beaumont, by whom I sent
All grants and writings back which made it mine,
Before his daughter died by his own sentence,
As freely as unasked he gave it to me.
Beaum. They are here to be seen.
Charmi. Open the casket.
Peruse that deed of gift.
Raw. Half of the danger
Already is discharged: The other part
As bravely, and you are not only free,
But crowned with praise for ever.
Du Croy. 'Tis apparent.
Charmi. Your estate, my lord, again is yours.
Roch. Not mine;
I am not of the world: If it can prosper,
(And yet, being justly got, I'll not examine
Why it should be so fatal) do you bestow it
On pious uses: I'll go seek a grave.
And yet, for proof, I die in peace, your pardon

I ask; and, as you grant it me, may Heaven,
Your conscience, and these judges, free you from
What you are charged with! So farewell for ever.
[*Exit Rochfort.*
Nov. sen. I'll be mine own guide. Passion, nor example,
Shall be my leaders. I have lost a son,
A son, grave judges! I require his blood
From his accursed homicide.
Charmi. What reply you,
In your defence, for this?
Char. I but attended
Your lordship's pleasure. For the fact, as of
The former, I confess it; but with what
Base wrongs I was unwillingly drawn to it,
To my few words there are some other proofs
To witness this for truth. When I was married
(For there I must begin) the slain Novall
Was to my wife, in way of our French courtship,
A most devoted servant; but yet aimed at
Nothing but means to quench his wanton heat,
His heart being never warmed by lawful fires,
As mine was, lords; and though, on these presumptions,
Joined to the hate between his house and mine,
I might, with opportunity and ease,
Have found a way for my revenge, I did not;
But still he had the freedom as before,
When all was mine; and, told that he abused it
With some unseemly licence, by my friend,
My approved friend, Romont, I gave no credit
To the reporter, but reproved him for it,
As one uncourtly and malicious to him.
What could I more, my lords? Yet, after this,
He did continue in his first pursuit,
Hotter than ever, and at length obtained it;
But, how it came to my most certain knowledge,
For the dignity of the court, and my own honour,
I dare not say.
Nov. sen. If all may be believed
A passionate prisoner speaks, who is so foolish,
That durst be wicked, that will appear guilty?
No, my grave lords: In his impunity
But give example unto jealous men
To cut the throats they hate, and they will never
Want matter or pretence for their bad ends.
Charmi. You must find other proofs to strengthen these,
But mere presumptions.
Du Croy. Or we shall hardly
Allow your innocence.
Char. All your attempts
Shall fall on me, like brittle shafts on armour,
That break themselves; or like waves against a rock,
That leave no sign of their ridiculous fury
But foam and splinters; my innocence like these
Shall stand triumphant, and your malice serve
But for a trumpet to proclaim my conquest:
Nor shall you, though you do the worst fate can,
However condemn, affright an honest man.
Rom. May it please the court, I may be heard?
Nov. sen. You come not
To rail again? But do—You shall not find
Another Rochfort.
Rom. In Novall I cannot.
But I come furnished with what will stop
The mouth of his conspiracy against the life
Of innocent Charalois. Do you know this character?
Nov. sen. Yes, 'tis my son's.
Rom. May it please your lordships, read it,
And you shall find there, with what vehemency
He did solicit Beaumelle; how he had got
A promise from her to enjoy his wishes;
How after he abjured her company,
And yet—(but that 'tis fit I spare the dead)
Like a damned villain, as soon as recorded,
He brake that oath: To make this manifest,
Produce his bawds and her's.

Enter AYMER, FLORIMEL, *and* BELLAPERT.

Charmi. Have they took their oaths?
Rom. They have, and, rather than endure the rack,
Confess the time, the meeting, nay the act;
What would you more? Only this matron made
A free discovery to a good end;
And therefore I sue to the court, she may not
Be placed in the black list of the delinquents.
Pont. I see by this, Novall's revenge needs me;
And I shall do.
Charmi. 'Tis evident——
Nov. sen. That I
Till now was never wretched: Here's no place
To curse him or my stars. [*Exit Novall sen.*
Charmi. Lord Charalois!
The injuries, you have sustained, appear
So worthy of the mercy of the court,
That, notwithstanding you have gone beyond
The letter of the law, they yet acquit you.
Pont. But, in Novall, I do condemn him—thus.
[*Stabs him.*
Char. I am slain!
Rom. Can I look on? Oh, murderous wretch!
Thy challenge now I answer. So, die with him!
[*Stabs Pontalier.*
Charmi. A guard! disarm him!
Rom. I yield up my sword
Unforced—Oh, Charalois!
Char. For shame, Romont!
Mourn not for him that dies as he hath lived;
Still constant and unmoved: What's fallen upon me,
Is by Heaven's will; because I made myself
A judge in my own cause without their warrant:
But he, that lets me know thus much in death,
With all good men—forgive me. [*Dies.*
Pont. I receive
The vengeance, which my love, not built on virtue,
Has made me worthy of. [*Dies.*
Charmi. We're taught
By this sad precedent, how just soever

Our reasons are to remedy our wrongs,
We're yet to leave them to their will and power,
That to that purpose have authority.
For you, Romont, although in your excuse
You may plead what you did was in revenge
Of the dishonour done unto the court,
Yet, since from us you had not warrant for it,
We banish you the state: For these, they shall,
As they are found guilty or innocent,
Or be set free, or suffer punishment. [*Exeunt.*

THE

FALSE ONE.

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

JULIUS CÆSAR, *emperor of Rome.*
PTOLOMY, *king of Egypt.*
ACHOREUS, *an honest counsellor, priest of Isis.*
PHOTINUS, *a politician, minion to Ptolomy.*
ACHILLAS, *captain of the guard to Ptolomy.*
SEPTIMIUS, *a revolted Roman villain.*
LABIENUS, *a Roman soldier, and nuncio.*
APOLLODORUS, *guardian to Cleopatra.*
ANTONY, DOLABELLA, } *Cæsar's captains.*
SCEVA, *a free speaker, also captain to Cæsar.*
Three lame soldiers.
Guard.
Servants.

WOMEN.

CLEOPATRA, *queen of Egypt. Cæsar's mistress.*
ARSINOE, *Cleopatra's sister.*
EROS, *Cleopatra's waiting woman.*

Scene,—Egypt.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter ACHILLAS *and* ACHOREUS.

Achoreus. I LOVE the king, nor do dispute his power,
For that is not confined, nor to be censured
By me, that am his subject; yet allow me
The liberty of a man, that still would be
A friend to justice, to demand the motives,
That did induce young Ptolomy, or Photinus,
(To whose directions he gives up himself,
And I hope wisely) to commit his sister,
The princess Cleopatra——If I said
The queen, Achillas, it were, I hope, no treason,
She being by her father's testament
(Whose memory I bow to) left co-heir
In all, he stood possessed of.
Achil. 'Tis confessed,
My good Achoreus, that, in these eastern kingdoms,
Women are not exempted from the sceptre,
But claim a privilege equal to the male;
But how much such divisions have taken from
The majesty of Egypt, and what factions
Have sprung from those partitions, to the ruin
Of the poor subject, doubtful which to follow,
We have too many and too sad examples:
Therefore the wise Photinus, to prevent
The murders, and the massacres, that attend
On disunited government, and to shew
The king without a partner, in full splendour,
Thought it convenient the fair Cleopatra
(An attribute not frequent in this climate)
Should be committed to safe custody,
In which she is attended like her birth,
Until her beauty, or her royal dower,
Hath found her out a husband.
Achor. How this may
Stand with the rules of policy, I know not;
Most sure I am, it holds no correspondence

With the rites of Egypt, or the laws of nature.
But, grant that Cleopatra can sit down
With this disgrace, though insupportable,
Can you imagine, that Rome's glorious senate,
To whose charge, by the will of the dead king,
This government was delivered, or great Pompey,
That is appointed Cleopatra's guardian,
As well as Ptolomy's, will e'er approve
Of this rash counsel, their consent not sought for,
That should authorize it?

Achil. The civil war,
In which the Roman empire is embarked
On a rough sea of danger, does exact
Their whole care to preserve themselves, and give them
No vacant time to think of what we do,
Which hardly can concern them.

Achor. What's your opinion
Of the success? I have heard, in multitudes
Of soldiers, and all glorious pomp of war,
Pompey is much superior.

Achil. I could give you
A catalogue of all the several nations,
From whence he drew his powers; but that were tedious.
They have rich arms, are ten to one in number,
Which makes them think the day already won;
And Pompey being master of the sea,
Such plenty of all delicates are brought in,
As if the place, on which they are entrenched,
Were not a camp of soldiers, but Rome,
In which Lucullus and Apicius joined
To make a public feast. They at Dirachium
Fought with success; but knew not to make use of
Fortune's fair offer: So much, I have heard,
Cæsar himself confessed.

Achor. Where are they now?

Achil. In Thessaly, near the Pharsalian plains;
Where Cæsar, with a handful of his men,
Hems in the greater number. His whole troops
Exceed not twenty thousand, but old soldiers,
Fleshed in the spoils of Germany and France,
Inured to his command, and only know
To fight and overcome: And though that famine
Reigns in his camp, compelling them to taste
Bread made of roots, forbid the use of man,
(Which they, with scorn, threw into Pompey's camp,
As in derision of his delicates)
Or corn not yet half ripe, and that a banquet;
They still besiege him, being ambitious only
To come to blows, and let their swords determine
Who hath the better cause.

Enter SEPTIMIUS.

Achor. May victory
Attend on it, where'er it is.

Achil. We every hour
Expect to hear the issue.

Sept. Save my good lords!
By Isis and Osiris, whom you worship,
And the four hundred gods and goddesses,
Adored in Rome, I am your honours' servant.

Achor. Truth needs, Septimius, no oaths.

Achil. You're cruel;
If you deny him swearing, you take from him
Three full parts of his language.

Sept. Your honour's bitter.
Confound me, where I love, I cannot say it,
But I must swear it; Yet such is my ill fortune,
Nor vows nor protestations win belief;
I think, (and I can find no other reason)
Because I am a Roman.

Achor. No, Septimius;
To be a Roman were an honour to you,
Did not your manners and your life take from it,
And cry aloud, that from Rome you bring nothing
But Roman vices, which you would plant here,
But no seed of her virtues.

Sept. With your reverence,
I am too old to learn.

Achor. Any thing honest;
That I believe without an oath.

Sept. I fear
Your lordship has slept ill to-night, and that
Invites this sad discourse; it will make you old
Before your time. Oh, these virtuous morals,
And old religious principles, that fool us!
I have brought you a new song will make you laugh,
Though you were at your prayers.

Achor. What is the subject?
Be free, Septimius.

Sept. 'Tis a catalogue
Of all the gamesters of the court and city,
Which lord lies with that lady, and what gallant
Sports with that merchant's wife; and does relate
Who sells her honour for a diamond,
Who for a tissue robe; whose husband's jealous,
And who so kind, that, to share with his wife,
Will make the match himself: Harmless conceits,
Though fools say they are dangerous. I sang it
The last night, at my lord Photinus' table.

Achor. How? as a fiddler?

Sept. No, sir, as a guest,
A welcome guest too; and it was approved of
By a dozen of his friends, though they were touched in it:
For, look you, it is a kind of merriment,
When we have laid by foolish modesty,
(As not a man of fashion will wear it)
To talk what we have done, at least to hear it;
If merrily set down, it fires the blood,
And heightens crest-fallen appetite.

Achor. New doctrine!

Achil. Was it of your own composing?

Sept. No, I bought it
Of a skulking scribbler for two Ptolomies:
But the hints were mine own: The wretch was fearful;
But I have damned myself, should it be questioned,
That I will own it.

Achor. And be punished for it?
Take heed, for you may so long exercise
Your scurrilous wit against authority,
The kingdom's counsels, and make profane jests
(Which to you, being an atheist, is nothing)
Against religion, that your great maintainers,
Unless they would be thought copartners with you,
Will leave you to the law; and then, Septimius,
Remember there are whips.
Sept. For whores, I grant you,
When they are out of date; 'till then they are safe too,
And, for mine own defence, I'll only add this;
I'll be admitted for a wanton tale,
To some most private cabinets, when your priesthood,
Though laden with the mysteries of your goddess,
Shall wait without unnoted: So I leave you
To your pious thoughts. [*Exit.*
Achil. 'Tis a strange impudence
This fellow does put on.
Achor. The wonder great,
He is accepted of.
Achil. Vices, for him,
Make as free way as virtues do for others.
'Tis the time's fault; yet great ones still have graced,
To make them sport, or rub them o'er with flattery,
Observers of all kinds.

Enter PHOTINUS *and* SEPTIMIUS.

Achor. No more of him,
He is not worth our thoughts; a fugitive
From Pompey's army, and now in a danger,
When he should use his service.
Achil. See how he hangs
On great Photinus' ear.
Sept. Hell, and the furies,
And all the plagues of darkness, light upon me,
You are my god on earth! and let me have
Your favour here, fall what can fall hereafter!
Pho. Thou art believed; dost thou want money?
Sept. No, Sir.
Pho. Or hast thou any suit? These ever follow
Thy vehement protestations.
Sept. You much wrong me;
How can I want, when your beams shine upon me,
Unless employment to express my zeal
To do your greatness service. Do but think
A deed, so dark the sun would blush to look on,
For which mankind would curse me, and arm all
The powers above, and those below, against me;
Command me, I will on.
Pho. When I have use,
I'll put you to the test.
Sept. May it be speedy,
And something worth my danger. You are cold,
And know not your own powers: this brow was fashioned
To wear a kingly wreath, and your grave judgement
Given to dispose of monarchies, not to govern
A child's affairs. The people's eye is upon you,
The soldier courts you: Will you wear a garment
Of sordid loyalty, when it is out of fashion?
Pho. When Pompey was thy general, Septimius,
Thou saidst as much to him.
Sept. All my love to him,
To Cæsar, Rome, and the whole world, is lost
In the ocean of your bounties: I've no friend,
Project, design, or country, but your favour,
Which I'll preserve at any rate.
Pho. No more;
When I call on you, fall not off: Perhaps,
Sooner than you expect, I may employ you;
So, leave me for a while.
Sept. Ever your creature! [*Exit.*
Pho. Good day, Achoreus. My best friend, Achillas,
Hath fame delivered yet no certain rumour
Of the great Roman action?
Achil. That we are
To enquire and learn of you, sir, whose grave care
For Egypt's happiness, and great Ptolomy's good,
Hath eyes and ears in all parts.

Enter PTOLOMY, LABIENUS, *and guard.*

Pho. I'll not boast
What my intelligence costs me; but ere long
You shall know more. The king! with him a Roman.
Achor. The scarlet livery of unfortunate war
Dyed deeply on his face.
Achil. 'Tis Labienus,
Cæsar's lieutenant in the wars of Gaul,
And fortunate in all his undertakings:
But, since these civil jars, he turned to Pompey,
And, though he followed the better cause,
Not with the like success.
Pho. Such as are wise
Leave falling buildings, fly to those that rise.
But more of that hereafter.
Lab. In a word, sir,
These gaping wounds, not taken as a slave,
Speak Pompey's loss. To tell you of the battle,
How many thousand several bloody shapes
Death wore that day in triumph; how we bore
The shock of Cæsar's charge; or with what fury
His soldiers came on, as if they had been
So many Cæsars, and, like him, ambitious
To tread upon the liberty of Rome;
How fathers killed their sons, or sons their fathers;
Or how the Roman pikes on each side
Drew Roman blood, which spent, the prince of weapons
(The sword) succeeded, which, in civil wars,
Appoints the tent, on which winged victory
Shall make a certain stand: then, how the plains

Flowed o'er with blood, and what a cloud of vultures,
And other birds of prey, hung o'er both armies,
Attending, when their ready servitors,
The soldiers, from whom the angry gods
Had took all sense of reason and of pity,
Would serve, in their own carcasses, for a feast;
How Cæsar, with his javelin, forced them on,
That made the least stop, when their angry hands
Were lifted up against some known friend's face;
Then, coming to the body of the army,
He shews the sacred senate, and forbids them
To waste their force upon the common soldier,
(Whom willingly, if e'er he did know pity,
He would have spared)———

Ptol. The reason, Labienus?

Lab. Full well he knows, that in their blood he was
To pass to empire, and that through their bowels
He must invade the laws of Rome, and give
A period to the liberty of the world.
Then fell the Lepidi, and the bold Corvini,
The famed Torquati, Scipio's, and Marcelli,
Names, next to Pompey's, most renowned on earth.
The nobles, and the commons, lay together,
And Pontic, Punic, and Assyrian blood,
Made up one crimson lake: Which Pompey seeing,
And that his, and the fate of Rome, had left him,
Standing upon the rampier of his camp,
Though scorning all that could fall on himself,
He pities them, whose fortunes are embarked
In his unlucky quarrel; cries aloud, too,
That they should sound retreat, and save themselves:
That he desired not so much noble blood
Should be lost in his service, or attend
On his misfortunes: And then, taking horse,
With some few of his friends, he came to Lesbos,
And, with Cornelia, his wife, and sons,
He has touched upon your shore. The king of Parthia,
Famous in his defeature of the Crassi,
Offered him his protection; but Pompey,
Relying on his benefits, and your faith,
Hath chosen Egypt for his sanctuary,
'Till he may recollect his scattered powers,
And try a second day. Now, Ptolomy,
Though he appear not like that glorious thing,
That three times rode in triumph, and gave laws
To conquered nations, and made crowns his gift,
(As this of yours, your noble father took
From his victorious hand, and you still wear it
At his devotion) to do you more honour
In his declined estate, as the straightest pine
In a full grove of his yet-flourishing friends,
He flies to you for succour, and expects
The entertainment of your father's friend,
And guardian to yourself.

Ptol. To say I grieve his fortune,
As much as if the crown I wear (his gift)
Were ravished from me, is a holy truth,
Our gods can witness for me: Yet, being young,
And not a free disposer of myself,
Let not a few hours, borrowed for advice,
Beget suspicion of unthankfulness,
Which, next to hell, I hate. Pray you retire,
And take a little rest; and let his wounds
Be with that care attended, as they were
Carved on my flesh. Good Labienus, think
The little respite, I desire, shall be
Wholly employed to find the readiest way
To do great Pompey service.

Lab. May the gods,
As you intend, protect you! [*Exit.*

Ptol. Sit, sit all;
It is my pleasure. Your advice, and freely.

Achor. A short deliberation in this,
May serve to give you counsel. To be honest,
Religious, and thankful, in themselves
Are forcible motives, and can need no flourish
Or gloss in the persuader; your kept faith,
Though Pompey never rise to the height he is fallen from,
Cæsar himself will love; and my opinion
Is, still committing it to graver censure,
You pay the debt you owe him, with the hazard
Of all you can call yours.

Ptol. What is yours, Photinus?

Pho. Achoreus, great Ptolomy, hath counselled,
Like a religious and honest man,
Worthy the honour that he justly holds
In being priest to Isis. But, alas,
What in a man, sequestered from the world,
Or in a private person, is preferred,
No policy allows of in a king:
To be or just, or thankful, makes kings guilty;
And faith, though praised, is punished, that supports
Such as good fate forsakes: Join with the gods,
Observe the man they favour, leave the wretched;
The stars are not more distant from the earth,
Than profit is from honesty; all the power,
Prerogative, and greatness of a prince
Are lost, if he descend once but to steer
His course, as what is right guides him: Let him leave
The sceptre, that strives only to be good,
Since kingdoms are maintained by force and blood.

Achor. Oh, wicked!

Ptol. Peace!—Go on.

Pho. Proud Pompey shews how much he scorns your youth,
In thinking, that you cannot keep your own
From such as are o'ercome. If you are tired
With being a king, let not a stranger take
What nearer pledges challenge: Resign rather
The government of Egypt, and of Nile,
To Cleopatra, that has title to them;
At least, defend them from the Roman gripe.
What was not Pompey's, while the war endured,

The conqueror will not challenge. By all the world
Forsaken and despised, your gentle guardian,
His hopes and fortunes desperate, makes choice of
What nation he shall fall with; and, pursued
By their pale ghosts, slain in this civil war,
He flies not Cæsar only, but the senate,
Of which the greater part have cloyed the hunger
Of sharp Pharsalian fowl; he flies the nations,
That he drew to his quarrel, whose estates
Are sunk in his; and, in no place received,
Hath found out Egypt, by him yet not ruined.
And Ptolomy, things considered, justly may
Complain of Pompey: Wherefore should he stain
Our Egypt with the spots of civil war,
Or make the peaceable, or quiet Nile,
Doubted of Cæsar? Wherefore should he draw
His loss and overthrow upon our heads,
Or chuse this place to suffer in? Already
We have offended Cæsar, in our wishes,
And no way left us to redeem his favour
But by the head of Pompey.

Achor. Great Osiris,
Defend thy Egypt from such cruelty,
And barbarous ingratitude!

Pho. Holy trifles,
And not to have place in designs of state.
This sword, which fate commands me to unsheath,
I would not draw on Pompey, if not vanquished;
I grant, it rather should have passed through Cæsar,
But we must follow where his fortune leads us:
All provident princes measure their intents
According to their power, and so dispose them.
And think'st thou, Ptolomy, that thou canst prop
His ruins, under whom sad Rome now suffers,
Or tempt the conqueror's force when it is confirmed?
Shall we, that in the battle sat as neuters,
Serve him, that is overcome? No, no, he is lost.
And though it is noble to a sinking friend
To lend a helping hand, while there is hope
He may recover, thy part not engaged:
Though one most dear, when all his hopes are dead,
To drown him, set thy foot upon his head.

Achor. Most execrable counsel!

Achil. To be followed;
'Tis for the kingdom's safety.

Ptol. We give up
Our absolute power to thee: Dispose of it
As reason shall direct thee.

Pho. Good Achillas,
Seek out Septimius: Do you but soothe him;
He is already wrought. Leave the dispatch
To me of Labienus: 'Tis determined
Already how you shall proceed. Nor fate
Shall alter it, since now the dye is cast,
But that this hour to Pompey is his last!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter APOLLODORUS, EROS, *and* ARSINOE.

Apol. Is the queen stirring, Eros!

Eros. Yes; for in truth
She touched no bed to-night.

Apol. I'm sorry for it,
And wish it were in me, with any hazard,
To give her ease.

Ars. Sir, she accepts your will,
And does acknowledge she hath found you noble,
So far, as if restraint of liberty
Could give admission to a thought of mirth,
She is your debtor for it.

Apol. Did you tell her
Of the sports I have prepared to entertain her?
She was used to take delight, with her fair hand
To angle in the Nile, where the glad fish,
As if they knew who 'twas sought to deceive them,
Contended to be taken: Other times,
To strike the stag, who, wounded by her arrows,
Forgot his tears in death, and, kneeling, thanks her
To his last gasp; then prouder of his fate,
Than if, with garlands crowned, he had been chosen
To fall a sacrifice before the altar
Of the virgin huntress. The king, nor great Photinus,
Forbid her any pleasure; and the circuit,
In which she is confined, gladly affords
Variety of pastimes, which I would
Encrease with my best service.

Eros. Oh, but the thought
That she, that was born free, and to dispense
Restraint or liberty to others, should be
At the devotion of her brother, (whom
She only knows her equal) makes this place,
In which she lives, though stored with all delights,
A loathsome dungeon to her.

Apol. Yet, howe'er
She shall interpret it, I'll not be wanting
To do my best to serve her: I've prepared
Choice music near her cabinet, and composed
Some few lines, set unto a solemn time,
In the praise of imprisonment. Begin, boy.

THE SONG.

Look out, bright eyes, and bless the air:
Even in shadows you are fair.
Shut-up beauty is like fire,
That breaks out clearer still and higher.
Though your body be confined,
And soft love a prisoner bound,
Yet the beauty of your mind
Neither check nor chain hath found.
Look out nobly then, and dare
Even the fetters, that you wear.

Enter CLEOPATRA.

Cleo. But that we are assured this tastes of duty
And love in you, my guardian, and desire

In you, my sister, and the rest, to please us,
We should receive this as a saucy rudeness,
Offered our private thoughts. But your intents
Are to delight us: Alas, you wash an Ethiop!
Can Cleopatra, while she does remember
Whose daughter she is, and whose sister (oh,
I suffer in the name!) and that, in justice,
There is no place in Egypt, where I stand,
But that the tributary earth is proud
To kiss the foot of her, that is her queen;
Can she, I say, that is all this, e'er relish
Of comfort or delight, while base Photinus,
Bondman Achillas, and all other monsters,
That reign o'er Ptolomy, make that a court,
Where they reside; and this, where I, a prison?
But there's a Rome, a senate, and a Cæsar,
Though the great Pompey lean to Ptolomy,
May think of Cleopatra.

Apol. Pompey, madam——

Cleo. What of him? Speak! If ill, Apollodorus,
It is my happiness; and, for thy news,
Receive a favour, kings have kneeled in vain for,
And kiss my hand.

Apol. He's lost.

Cleo. Speak it again!

Apol. His army routed, he fled, and pursued
By the all-conquering Cæsar.

Cleo. Whither bends he?

Apol. To Egypt.

Cleo. Ha! In person?

Apol. 'Tis received
For an undoubted truth.

Cleo. I live again;
And if assurance of my love and beauty
Deceive me not, I now shall find a judge
To do me right! But how to free myself,
And get access? The guards are strong upon me;
This door I must pass through.—Apollodorus,
Thou often hast professed, to do me service,
Thy life was not thine own.

Apol. I am not altered;
And let your excellency propound a means,
In which I may but give the least assistance,
That may restore you to that you were born to,
Though it call on the anger of the king,
Or, what's more deadly, all his minion
Photinus can do to me, I, unmoved,
Offer my throat to serve you; ever provided,
It bear some probable show to be effected:
To lose myself upon no ground were madness,
Not loyal duty.

Cleo. Stand off!—To thee alone,
I will discover what I dare not trust
My sister with. Cæsar is amorous,
And taken more with the title of a queen,
Than feature or proportion; he loved Eunoe,
A moor, deformed too, I have heard, that brought
No other object to inflame his blood,
But that her husband was a king; on both
He did bestow rich presents: Shall I, then,
That, with a princely birth, bring beauty with me,
That know to prize myself at mine own rate,
Despair his favour? Art thou mine?

Apol. I am.

Cleo. I have found out a way shall bring me to him,
Spite of Photinus' watches. If I prosper,
As I am confident I shall, expect
Things greater than thy wishes.—Though I purchase
His grace with loss of my virginity,
It skills not, if it bring home majesty. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter SEPTIMIUS, *with a head*, ACHILLAS, *and guard.*

Sept. 'Tis here, 'tis done! Behold, you fearful viewers,
Shake, and behold the model of the world here,
The pride, and strength! Look, look again; 'tis finished!
That, that whole armies, nay, whole nations,
Many and mighty kings, have been struck blind at,
And fled before, winged with their fears and terrors;
That steel war waited on, and fortune courted,
That high-plumed honour built up for her own;
Behold that mightiness, behold that fierceness,
Behold that child of war, with all his glories,
By this poor hand made breathless! Here, my Achillas;
Egypt, and Cæsar, owe me for this service,
And all the conquered nations.

Achil. Peace, Septimius;
Thy words sound more ungrateful than thy actions.
Though sometimes safety seek an instrument
Of thy unworthy nature, (thou loud boaster!)
Think not she's bound to love him too that's barbarous.
Why did not I, if this be meritorious,
And binds the king unto me, and his bounties,
Strike this rude stroke? I'll tell thee, thou poor Roman;
It was a sacred head, I durst not heave at,
Not heave a thought.

Sept. It was?

Achil. I'll tell thee truly,
And, if thou ever yet heardst tell of honour,
I'll make thee blush: It was thy general's;
That man's, that fed thee once, that man's, that bred thee;
The air, thou breathedst, was his, the fire, that warmed thee,
From his care kindled ever; Nay, I'll shew thee,

Because I'll make thee sensible of thy baseness,
And why a noble man durst not touch at it,
There was no piece of earth, thou put'st thy foot on,
But was his conquest, and he gave thee motion!
He triumphed three times: Who durst touch his person?
The very walls of Rome bowed to his presence;
Dear to the gods he was; to them, that feared him,
A fair and noble enemy. Didst thou hate him,
And for thy love to Cæsar sought his ruin?
Armed, in the red Pharsalian fields, Septimius,
Where killing was in grace, and wounds were glorious,
Where kings were fair competitors for honour,
Thou shouldst have come up to him, there have fought him,
There, sword to sword.

Sept. I killed him on commandment,
If kings commands be fair, when you all fainted,
When none of you durst look———

Achil. On deeds so barbarous.
What hast thou got?

Sept. The king's love, and his bounty,
The honour of the service; which though you rail at,
Or a thousand envious souls fling their foams on me,
Will dignify the cause, and make me glorious;
And I shall live———

Achil. A miserable villain.
What reputation and reward belong to it,
Thus, with the head, I seize on, and make mine:
And be not impudent to ask me why, sirrah,
Nor bold to stay; read in mine eyes the reason!
The shame and obloquy I leave thine own;
Inherit those rewards; they are fitter for thee.
Your oil's spent, and your snuff stinks: Go out basely!

Sept. The king will yet consider. [*Exit.*

Enter PTOLOMY, ACHORBUS, *and* PHOTINUS.

Achil. Here he comes.

Achor. Yet, if it be undone, hear me, great sir!
If this inhumane stroke be yet unstrucken,
If that adored head be not yet severed
From the most noble body, weigh the miseries,
The desolations, that this great eclipse works.
You are young, be provident; fix not your empire
Upon the tomb of him will shake all Egypt;
Whose warlike groans will raise ten thousand spirits,
Great as himself, in every hand a thunder;
Destructions darting from their looks, and sorrows,
That easy women's eyes shall never empty.

Pho. You have done well; and 'tis done. See Achillas,
And in his hand the head.

Pto. Stay; come no nearer!
Methinks I feel the very earth shake under me!
I do remember him; he was my guardian,
Appointed by the senate to preserve me.
What a full majesty sits in his face yet!

Pho. The king is troubled. Be not frighted, sir;
Be not abused with fears: His death was necessary,
If you consider, sir, most necessary,
Not to be missed: And humbly thank great Isis,
He came so opportunely to your hands.
Pity must now give place to rules of safety.
Is not victorious Cæsar new arrived,
And entered Alexandria with his friends,
His navy riding by to wait his charges?
Did he not beat this Pompey, and pursued him?
Was not this great man his great enemy?
This godlike virtuous man, as people held him?
But what fool dare be friend to flying virtue?
I hear their trumpets; 'tis too late to stagger.
Give me the head; and be you confident.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, DOLABELLA, *and* SCEVA.

Hail, conqueror, and head of all the world,
Now this head's off!

Cæsar. Ha!

Pho. Do not shun me, Cæsar.
From kingly Ptolomy I bring this present,
The crown and sweat of thy Pharsalian labour,
The goal and mark of high ambitious honour.
Before, thy victory had no name, Cæsar,
Thy travel and thy loss of blood no recompence;
Thou dream'dst of being worthy, and of war,
And all thy furious conflicts were but slumbers:
Here they take life: here they inherit honour,
Grow fixed, and shoot up everlasting triumphs.
Take it, and look upon thy humble servant,
With noble eyes look on the princely Ptolomy,
That offers with this head, most mighty Cæsar,
What thou wouldst once have given for it, all Egypt.

Achil. Nor do not question it, most royal conqueror,
Nor disesteem the benefit, that meets thee,
Because 'tis easily got; it comes the safer:
Yet, let me tell thee, most imperious Cæsar,
Though he opposed no strength of swords to win this,
Nor laboured through no showers of darts and lances,
Yet here he found a fort, that faced him strongly,
An inward war: He was his grandsire's guest,
Friend to his father, and, when he was expelled
And beaten from this kingdom by strong hand,
And had none left him to restore his honour,
No hope to find a friend in such a misery,
Then in stept Pompey, took his feeble fortune,
Strengthened, and cherished it, and set it right again:
This was a love to Cæsar.

Sce. Give me hate, gods!

Pha. This Cæsar may account a little wicked;
But yet remember, if thine own hands, conqueror,

Had fallen upon him, what it had been then;
If thine own sword had touched his throat, what that way!
He was thy son-in-law; there to be tainted
Had been most terible! Let the worst be rendered,
We have deserved for keeping thy hands innocent.
Cæsar. Oh, Sceva, Sceva, see that head! see, captains,
The head of godlike Pompey!
Sce. He was basely ruined;
But let the gods be grieved, that suffered it,
And be you Cæsar.
Cæsar. Oh, thou conqueror,
Thou glory of the world once, now the pity,
Thou awe of nations, wherefore didst thou fall thus?
What poor fate followed thee, and plucked thee on,
To trust thy sacred life to an Egyptian?
The life and light of Rome, to a blind stranger,
That honourable war ne'er taught a nobleness,
Nor worthy circumstance shewed what a man was?
That never heard thy name sung, but in banquets,
And loose lascivious pleasures? to a boy,
That had no faith to comprehend thy greatness,
No study of thy life, to know thy goodness?
And leave thy nation, nay, thy noble friend,
Leave him distrusted, that in tears falls with thee,
In soft relenting tears? Hear me, great Pompey,
If thy great spirit can hear, I must task thee!
Thou hast most unnobly robbed me of my victory,
My love and mercy.
Ant. Oh, how brave these tears shew!
How excellent is sorrow in an enemy!
Dol. Glory appears not greater than this goodness.
Cæsar. Egyptians, dare ye think your highest pyramids,
Built to out-dare the sun, as you suppose,
Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,
Are monuments fit for him? No, brood of Nilus,
Nothing can cover his high fame, but heaven;
No pyramids set off his memories,
But the eternal substance of his greatness,
To which I leave him. Take the head away,
And, with the body, give it noble burial:
Your earth shall now be blessed to hold a Roman,
Whose braveries all the world's earth cannot balance.
Sce. If thou be'st thus loving, I shall honour thee:
But great men may dissemble, it is held possible,
And be right glad of what they seem to weep for;
There are such kind of philosophers. Now do I wonder
How he would look, if Pompey were alive again;
How would he set his face.
Cæsar. You look now, king,

And you, that have been agents in this glory,
For our special favour?
Ptol. We desire it.
Cæsar. And, doubtless, you expect rewards?
Sce. Let me give them:
I'll give them such as nature never dreamed of;
I'll beat him and his agents in a mortar,
Into one man, and that one man I'll bake thee.
Cæsar. Peace! I forgive you all; that is recompence.
You are young, and ignorant; that pleads your pardon,
And fear, it may be, more than hate provoked you.
Your ministers, I must think, wanted judgment,
And so they erred: I'm bountiful to think this,
Believe me, most bountiful: Be you most thankful;
That bounty share amongst you. If I knew what
To send you for a present, king of Egypt,
I mean a head of equal reputation,
And that you loved, though it were your brightest sister's,
(But her you hate) I would not be behind you.
Ptol. Hear me, great Cæsar!
Cæsar. I have heard too much;
And study not with smooth shows to invade
My noble mind, as you have done my conquest:
You are poor and open. I must tell you roundly,
That man, that could not recompence the benefits,
The great and bounteous services, of Pompey,
Can never dote upon the name of Cæsar.
Though I had hated Pompey, and allowed his ruin,
I gave you no commission to perform it:
Hasty to please in blood are seldom trusty;
And, but I stand environed with my victories,
My fortune never failing to befriend me,
My noble strengths, and friends about my person,
I durst not try you, nor expect a courtesy,
Above the pious love you shewed to Pompey.
You have found me merciful in arguing with ye;
Swords, hangmen, fires, destructions of all natures,
Demolishments of kingdoms, and whole ruins,
Are wont to be my orators. Turn to tears,
You wretched and poor reeds of sun-burnt Egypt,
And now you have found the nature of a conqueror,
That you cannot decline; with all your flatteries,
That where the day gives light, will be himself still;
Know how to meet his worth with humane courtesies!
Go, and embalm those bones of that great soldier,
Howl round about his pile, fling on your spices,
Make a Sabæan bed, and place this phœnix,
Where the hot sun may emulate his virtues,
And draw another Pompey from his ashes,
Divinely great, and fix him amongst the worthies!
Ptol. We will do all.
Cæsar. You have robbed him of those tears

His kindred and his friends kept sacred for him,
The virgins of their funeral lamentations;
And that kind earth, that thought to cover him,
(His country's earth) will cry out against your cruelty,
And weep unto the ocean for revenge,
'Till Nilus raise his seven heads and devour ye!
My grief has stopt the rest! When Pompey lived,
He used you nobly; now he is dead, use him so.
[*Exit.*

Ptol. Now, where's your confidence, your aim, Photinus,
The oracles, and fair favours from the conqueror,
You rung into mine ears? How stand I now?
You see the tempest of his stern displeasure;
The death of him, you urged a sacrifice
To stop his rage, presaging a full ruin!
Where are your counsels now?

Achor. I told you, sir,
And told the truth, what danger would fly after:
And, though an enemy, I satisfied you
He was a Roman, and the top of honour;
And howsoever this might please great Cæsar,
I told you, that the foulness of his death,
The impious baseness——

Pho. Peace; you are a fool!
Men of deep ends must tread as deep ways to them;
Cæsar I know is pleased, and for all his sorrows,
Which are put on for forms, and mere dissemblings,
I am confident he is glad: To have told you so,
And thanked you outwardly, had been too open,
And taken from the wisdom of a conqueror.
Be confident, and proud you have done this service;
You have deserved, and you will find it, highly.
Make bold use of this benefit, and be sure
You keep your sister, the high-souled Cleopatra,
Both close and short enough, she may not see him.
The rest, if I may counsel, sir——

Ptol. Do all;
For in thy faithful service rests my safety.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter SEPTIMIUS.

Sept. Here's a strange alteration in the court;
Mens' faces are of other sets and motions,
Their minds of subtler stuff. I pass by now,
As though I were a rascal; no man knows me,
No eye looks after; as I were a plague,
Their doors shut close against me, and I wondered at,
Because I have done a meritorious murder:
Because I have pleased the time, does the time plague me?
I have known the day they would have hugged me for it;
For a less stroke than this, have done me reverence,

Opened their hearts, and secret closets to me,
Their purses and their pleasures, and bid me wallow.
I now perceive the great thieves eat the less,
And the huge leviathans of villainy
Sup up the merits, nay, the men and all,
That do them service, and spout them out again
Into the air, as thin and unregarded
As drops of water, that are lost in the ocean.
I was loved once for swearing and for drinking,
And for other principal qualities, that became me;
Now a foolish unthankful murder has undone me,
If my lord Photinus be not merciful,
That set me on. And he comes; now, Fortune!

Enter PHOTINUS.

Pho. Cæsar's unthankfulness a little stirs me,
A little frets my blood: Take heed, proud Roman!
Provoke me not, stir not mine anger further!
I may find out a way unto thy life too,
Though armed in all thy victories, and seize it!
A conqueror has a heart, and I may hit it.

Sept. May't please your lordship——

Pho. Oh, Septimius!

Sept. Your lordship knows my wrongs?

Pho. Wrongs?

Sept. Yes, my lord;
How the captain of the guard, Achillas, slights me?

Pho. Think better of him, he has much befriended thee,
Shewed thee much love, in taking the head from thee.
The times are altered, soldier; Cæsar's angry,
And our design to please him, lost and perished:
Be glad, thou art unnamed; 'tis not worth the owning.
Yet, that thou mayest be useful——

Sept. Yes, my lord,
I shall be ready.

Pho. For I may employ thee
To take a rub or two out of my way,
As time shall serve; say, that it be a brother,
Or a hard father?

Sept. 'Tis most necessary;
A mother, or a sister, or whom you please, sir.

Pho. Or to betray a noble friend?

Sept. 'Tis all one.

Pho. I know thou wilt stir for gold.

Sept. 'Tis all my motion.

Pho. There, take that for thy service, and farewell!
I have greater business now.

Sept. I'm still your own, sir.

Pho. One thing I charge thee; see me no more, Septimius,
Unless I send. [*Exit.*

Sept. I shall observe your hour.
So! this brings something in the mouth, some favour:
This is the lord I serve, the power I worship,
My friends, allies; and here lies my allegiance.

Let people talk as they please of my rudeness,
And shun me for my deed; bring but this to them,
Let me be damned for blood, yet still I am honourable:
This god creates new tongues, and new affections;
And, though I'd killed my father, give me gold,
I'll make men swear I've done a pious sacrifice.
Now I will out-brave all, make all my servants,
And my brave deed shall be writ in wine for virtuous. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, DOLABELLA, *and* SCEVA.

Cæsar. Keep strong guards, and with wary eyes, my friends;
There is no trusting to these base Egyptians:
They, that are false to pious benefits,
And make compelled necessities their faiths,
Are traitors to the gods.
Ant. We'll call ashore
A legion of the best.
Cæsar. Not a man, Antony;
That were to shew our fears, and dim our greatness:
No; 'tis enough my name's ashore.
Sce. Too much too;
A sleeping Cæsar is enough to shake them.
There are some two or three malicious rascals,
Trained up in villainy, besides that Cerberus,
That Roman dog, that licked the blood of Pompey.
Dol. 'Tis strange; a Roman soldier?
Sce. You are cozened;
There be of us, as be of all other nations,
Villains and knaves: 'Tis not the name contains him,
But the obedience; when that is once forgotten,
And duty flung away, then, welcome devil!
Photinus and Achillas, and this vermin,
That's now become a natural crocodile,
Must be with care observed.
Ant. And 'tis well counselled;
No confidence, nor trust——
Sce. I'll trust the sea first,
When with her hollow murmurs she invites me,
And clutches in her storms, as politic lions
Conceal their claws; I'll trust the devil first;
The rule of ill I'll trust, before the doer.
Cæsar. Go to your rests, and follow your own wisdoms,
And leave me to my thoughts; pray no more compliment;
Once more, strong watches.
Dol. All shall be observed, sir. [*Exeunt.*

Manet CÆSAR.

Cæsar. I'm dull and heavy, yet I cannot sleep.
How happy was I, in my lawful wars
In Germany, and Gaul, and Britany!
When every night with pleasure I set down
What the day ministered, the sleep came sweetly:
But, since I undertook this home-division,
This civil war, and passed the Rubicon,
What have I done, that speaks an ancient Roman,
A good, great man? I have entered Rome by force,
And on her tender womb, that gave me life,
Let my insulting soldiers rudely trample:
The dear veins of my country I have opened,
And sailed upon the torrents, that flowed from her,
The bloody streams, that in their confluence
Carried before them thousand desolations:
I robbed the treasury; and at one gripe
Snatched all the wealth so many worthy triumphs
Placed there as sacred to the peace of Rome:
I razed Massilia in my wanton anger;
Petreius and Afranius I defeated;
Pompey I overthrew; what did that get me?
The slubbered name of an authorized enemy.
[*Noise within.*
I hear some noise; they are the watches, sure.
What friends have I tied fast by these ambitions?
Cato, the lover of his country's freedom,
Is now passed into Africk to affront me;
Juba, that killed my friend, is up in arms too;
The sons of Pompey are masters of the sea,
And, from the relics of their scattered faction,
A new head's sprung: Say, I defeat all these too?
I come home crowned an honourable rebel.
I hear the noise still, and it comes still nearer.
Are the guards fast? Who waits there?

Enter SCEVA, *with a packet,* CLEOPATRA *in it.*

Sce. Are you awake, sir?
Cæsar. In the name of wonder——
Sce. Nay, I am a porter,
A strong one too, or else my sides would crack, sir;
An my sins were as weighty, I should scarce walk with them.
Cæsar. What hast thou there?
Sce. Ask them, which stay without,
And brought it hither. Your presence I denied them,
And put them by, took up the load myself.
They say 'tis rich, and valued at the kingdom;
I'm sure 'tis heavy: If you like to see it,
You may; if not, I'll give it back.
Cæsar. Stay, Sceva;
I would fain see it.
Sce. I'll begin to work then.
No doubt, to flatter you, they have sent you something
Of a rich value, jewels, or some rich treasure.
May-be, a rogue within, to do a mischief:
I pray you stand further off; if there be villainy,
Better my danger first; he shall escape hard too.
Ha! what art thou?
Cæsar. Stand further off, good Sceva!
What heavenly vision? Do I wake or slumber?
Further off, that hand, friend!
Sce. What apparition,

What spirit, have I raised? Sure, 'tis a woman;
She looks like one; now she begins to move too.
A tempting devil, o' my life! Go off, Cæsar!
Sir, if you be a soldier, come no nearer;
She's sent to dispossess you of your honour;
A sponge, a sponge, to wipe away your victories.
Be loyal to yourself!—Thou damned woman,
Dost thou come hither with thy flourishes,
Thy flaunts, and faces, to abuse men's manners?
And am I made the instrument?

Cæsar. Hold, on thy life, and be more temperate,
Thou beast!

Sce. Thou beast?

Cæsar. Couldst thou be so inhuman,
So far from noble man, to draw thy weapon
Upon a thing divine?

Sce. Divine, or human,
They're never better pleased, nor more at heart's ease,
Than when we draw with full intent upon them.

Cæsar. Move this way, lady: Pray you let me speak to you.

Sce. And, woman, you had best stand——

Cæsar. By the gods,
But that I see her here, and hope her mortal,
I should imagine some celestial sweetness,
The treasure of soft love!

Sce. Oh, this sounds mangily,
Poorly, and scurvily, in a soldier's mouth!
You'd best be troubled with the tooth-ache too,
For lovers ever are, and let your nose drop,
That your celestial beauty may befriend you.
At these years, do you learn to be fantastical?
After so many bloody fields, a fool?
She brings her bed along too (she'll lose no time),
Carries her litter to lie soft; do you see that?
Invites you like a gamester; note that impudence.
For shame, reflect upon yourself, your honour,
Look back into your noble parts, and blush!
Let not the dear sweat of the hot Pharsalia,
Mingle with base embraces! Am I he
That have received so many wounds for Cæsar?
Upon my target, groves of darts still growing;
Have I endured all, hungers, colds, distresses,
And, as I had been bred that iron that armed me,
Stood out all weathers, now to curse my fortune?
To ban the blood I lost for such a general?

Cæsar. Offend no more; be gone!

Sce. I will, and leave you,
Leave you to women's wars, that will proclaim you:
You'll conquer Rome now, and the capitol,
With fans and looking-glasses. Farewell, Cæsar!
[*Exit.*

Cleo. Now I am private, sir, I dare speak to you;
But thus low first, for as a god I honour you!
Contemn me not, because I kneel thus, Cæsar:
I am a queen, and co-heir to this country,
The sister to the mighty Ptolomy;
Yet one distressed, that flies unto thy justice,
One, that lays sacred hold on thy protection,
As on a holy altar, to preserve me.

Cæsar. Speak, queen of beauty, and stand up.

Cleo. I dare not;
Till I have found that favour in thine eyes,
That godlike great humanity, to help me,
Thus, to thy knees must I grow, sacred Cæsar,
And, if it be not in thy will to right me,
And raise me, like a queen, from my sad ruins;
If these soft tears cannot sink to thy pity,
And waken, with their murmurs, thy compassions;
Yet, for thy nobleness, for virtue's sake,
And, if thou be'st a man, for despised beauty,
For honourable conquest, which thou dotest on,
Let not those cankers of this flourishing kingdom,
Photinus and Achillas, the one an eunuch,
The other a base bondman, thus reign over me,
Seize my inheritance, and leave my brother
Nothing of what he should be, but the title!
As thou art wonder of the world———

Cæsar. Stand up then,
And be a queen; this hand shall give it to you:
Or, chuse a greater name, worthy my bounty;
A common love makes queens: Chuse to be worshipped,
To be divinely great, and I dare promise it.
A suitor of your sort, and blessed sweetness,
That hath adventured thus to see great Cæsar,
Must never be denied. You have found a patron,
That dare not, in his private honour, suffer
So great a blemish to the heaven of beauty:
The god of love would clap his angry wings,
And from his singing bow let fly those arrows,
Headed with burning griefs and pining sorrows,
Should I neglect your cause, would make me monstrous;
To whom, and to your service, I devote me!

Enter SCEVA.

Cleo. He is my conquest now, and so I'll work him;
The conqueror of the world will I lead captive.

Sce. Still with this woman? tilting still with babies?
As you are honest, think the enemy,
Some valiant foe indeed, now charging on you,
Ready to break your ranks, and fling these——

Cæsar. Hear me,
But tell me true; if thou hadst such a treasure,
(And, as thou art a soldier, do not flatter me)
Such a bright gem, brought to thee, wouldst thou not
Most greedily accept?

Sce. Not as an emperor,
A man that first should rule himself, then others:
As a poor hungry soldier, I might bite, sir;
Yet that is a weakness too. Hear me, thou tempter!
And hear thou, Cæsar, too, for it concerns thee,
And if thy flesh be deaf, yet let thine honour,
The soul of a commander, give ear to me.

Thou wanton bane of war, thou gilded lethargy,
In whose embraces, ease (the rust of arms)
And pleasure (that makes soldiers poor) inhabits!
Cæsar. Fy! thou blasphemest.
Sce. I do, when she is a goddess.
Thou melter of strong minds, darest thou presume
To smother all his triumphs with thy vanities?
And tie him, like a slave, to thy proud beauties,
To thy imperious looks, that kings have followed,
Proud of their chains, have waited on? I shame, sir!
Cæsar. Alas, thou art rather mad! Take thy rest, Sceva;
Thy duty makes thee err; but I forgive thee.
Go, go, I say! shew me no disobedience!
[*Exit Sceva.*
'Tis well; farewell! The day will break, dear lady;
My soldiers will come in. Please you retire,
And think upon your servant?
Cleo. Pray you, sir, know me,
And what I am.
Cæsar. The greater, I more love you;
And you must know me too.
Cleo. So far as modesty,
And majesty gives leave, sir. You are too violent.
Cæsar. You are too cold to my desires.
Cleo. Swear to me,
And by yourself (for I hold that oath sacred),
You'll right me as a queen———
Cæsar. These lips be witness!
And, if I break that oath———
Cleo. You make me blush, sir;
And in that blush interpret me.
Cæsar. I will do.
Come, let us go in, and blush again. This one word,
You shall believe.
Cleo. I must; you are a conqueror. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter PTOLOMY *and* PHOTINUS.

Pho. Good sir, but hear!
Ptol. No more! you have undone me!
That, that I hourly feared, is fallen upon me,
And heavily, and deadly,
Pho. Hear a remedy.
Pho. A remedy, now the disease is ulcerous,
And has infected all? Your secure negligence
Has broke through all the hopes I have, and ruined me!
My sister is with Cæsar, in his chamber;
All night she has been with him; and, no doubt,
Much to her honour.
Pho. 'Would that were the worst, sir!
That will repair itself: But I fear mainly,
She has made her peace with Cæsar.
Ptol. 'Tis most likely;
And what am I then?
Pho. Plague upon that rascal,
Apollodorus, under whose command,
Under whose eye——

Enter ACHILLAS.

Ptol. Curse on you all, ye are wretches!
Pho. 'Twas providently done, Achillas.
Achil. Pardon me.
Pho. Your guards were rarely wise, and wondrous watchful!
Achil. I could not help it, if my life had lain for it.
Alas, who would suspect a pack of bedding,
Or a small truss of houshold furniture,
And, as they said, for Cæsar's use? or who durst,
Being for his private chamber, seek to stop it?
I was abused.

Enter ACHOREUS.

Achor. 'Tis no hour now for anger,
No wisdom to debate with fruitless choler.
Let us consider timely what we must do,
Since she is flown to his protection,
From whom we have no power to sever her,
Nor force conditions.
Ptol. Speak, good Achoreus.
Achor. Let indirect and crooked counsels vanish,
And straight and fair directions——
Pho. Speak your mind, sir.
Achor. Let us chuse Cæsar (and endear him to us)
An arbitrator in all differences
Betwixt you and your sister; this is safe now,
And will shew off, most honourable.
Pho. Base,
Most base and poor; a servile, cold submission!
Hear me, and pluck your hearts up, like stout counsellors;
Since we are sensible this Cæsar loathes us,
And have begun our fortune with great Pompey,
Be of my mind.
Achor. 'Tis most uncomely spoken,
And if I say most bloodily, I lie not:
The law of hospitality it poisons,
And calls the gods in question, that dwell in us.
Be wise, oh, king!
Ptol. I will be. Go, my counsellor,
To Cæsar go, and do my humble service;
To my fair sister my commends negociate;
And here I ratify whate'er thou treat'st on.
Achor. Crowned with fair peace, I go. [*Exit.*
Ptol. My love go with thee;
And from my love go you, you cruel vipers!
You shall know now I am no ward, Photinus.
[*Exit.*

Pho. This for our service? Princes do their pleasures,
And they, that serve, obey in all disgraces.
The lowest, we can fall to, is our graves;
There we shall know no difference. Hark, Achillas!
I may do something yet, when times are ripe,
To tell this raw unthankful king——
Achil. Photinus,
Whatever it be, I shall make one, and zealously:
For better die attempting something nobly,
Than fall disgraced.
Pho. Thou lovest me, and I thank thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter ANTONY, DOLABELLA, *and* SCEVA.

Dol. Nay, there is no rousing him; he is bewitched sure,
His noble blood curdled, and cold within him;
Grown now a woman's warrior.
Ant. Be not too angry,
For, by this light, the woman's a rare woman;
A lady of that catching youth and beauty,
That unmatched sweetness——
Dol. But why should he be fooled so?
Let her be what she will, why should his wisdom,
His age, and honour——
Ant. Say it were your own case,
Or mine, or any man's, that has heat in him:
'Tis true, at this time, when he has no promise
Of more security than his sword can cut through,
I do not hold it so discreet: But a good face, gentlemen,
And eyes, that are the winningest orators,
A youth, that opens like perpetual spring,
And, to all these, a tongue, that can deliver
The oracles of love——
Sce. I would you had her,
With all her oracles, and miracles:
She were fitter for your turn.
Ant. 'Would I had, Sceva,
With all her faults too! let me alone to mend them;
On that condition I made thee mine heir.
Sce. I would rather have your black horse than your harlots.
Dol. Cæsar writes sonnets now; the sound of war
Is grown too boisterous for his mouth; he sighs too.
Sce. And learns to fiddle most melodiously,
And sings—it would make your ears prick up, to hear him, gentlemen.
Shortly she will make him spin; and it is thought he will prove
An admirable maker of bonelace;
And what a rare gift will that be in a general!
Ant. I would he could abstain!
Sce. She is a witch sure,
And works upon him with some damned enchantment.
Dol. How cunning she will carry her behaviours,
And set her countenance in a thousand postures,
To catch her ends!
Sce. She will be sick, well, sullen,
Merry, coy, overjoyed, and seem to die,
All in one half-an-hour, to make an ass of him:
I make no doubt she will be drunk too, damnably,
And in her drink will fight; then she fits him.
Ant. That thou shouldst bring her in!
Sce. 'Twas my blind fortune.
My soldiers told me, by the weight, it was wicked.
'Would I had carried Milo's bull a furlong,
When I brought in this cow-calf! He has advanced me,
From an old soldier to a bawd of memory:
Oh, that the sons of Pompey were behind him,
The honoured Cato and fierce Juba with them,
That they might whip him from his whore, and rouse him;
That their fierce trumpets from his wanton trances
Might shake him, like an earthquake!

Enter SEPTIMIUS.

Ant. What is this fellow?
Dol. Why, a brave fellow, if we judge men by their cloaths.
Ant. By my faith, he is brave indeed! He is no commander?
Sce. Yes, he has a Roman face; he has been at fair wars,
And plenteous too, and rich; his trappings shew it.
Sept. An they'll not know me now, they'll never know me.
Who dare blush now at my acquaintance? Ha?
Am I not totally a span-new gallant,
Fit for the choicest eyes? Have I not gold,
The friendship of the world? If they shun me now,
(Though I were the arrantest rogue, as I'm well forward)
Mine own curse and the devil's are lit on me.
Ant. Is it not Septimius?
Sce. Yes.
Dol. He that killed Pompey?
Sce. The same dog scab; that gilded botch, that rascal!
Dol. How glorious villainy appears in Egypt!
Sept. Gallants, and soldiers! sure they do admire me.
Sce. Stand further off; thou stinkest.
Sept. A likely matter:
These cloaths smell mustily, do they not, gallants?
They stink, they stink, alas, poor things, contemptible!
By all the Gods in Egypt, the perfumes,
That went to trimming these cloaths, cost me——
Sce. Thou stinkest still.
Sept. The powdering of this head too——
Sce. If thou hast it,
I'll tell thee all the gums in sweet Arabia

Are not sufficient, were they burnt about thee,
To purge the scent of a rank rascal from thee.
Ant. I smell him now: Fy, how the knave perfumes him!
How strong he scents of traitor!
Dol. You had an ill mailiner,
He laid too much of the gum of ingratitude
Upon your coat; you should have washed off that, sir;
Fy, how it choaks! too little of your loyalty,
Your honesty, your faith, that are pure ambers.
I smell the rotten smell of a hired coward;
A dead dog's sweeter.
Sept. Ye are merry, gentlemen,
And, by my troth, such harmless mirth takes me too.
You speak like good blunt soldiers! and it is well enough:
But did you live at court, as I do, gallants,
You would refine, and learn an apter language.
I've done ye simple service on your Pompey;
You might have looked him yet this brace of twelvemonths,
And hunted after him, like foundered beagles,
Had not this fortunate hand———
Ant. He brags on't too,
By the good gods, rejoices in it! Thou wretch,
Thou most contemptible slave!
Sce. Dog, mangy mongrel,
Thou murdering mischief, in the shape of soldier,
To make all soldiers hateful! thou disease,
That nothing but the gallows can give ease to!
Dol. Thou art so impudent, that I admire thee,
And know not what to say.
Sept. I know your anger,
And why you prate thus; I've found your melancholy:
Ye all want money, and ye are liberal captains,
And in this want will talk a little desperately.
Here's gold; come, share; I love a brave commander:
And be not peevish; do as Cæsar does;
He's merry with his wench now, be you jovial,
And let's all laugh and drink. Would ye have partners?
I do consider all your wants, and weigh them;
He has the mistress, you shall have the maids;
I'll bring them to ye, to your arms.
Ant. I blush,
All over me, I blush, and sweat to hear him;
Upon my conscience, if my arms were on now,
Through them I should blush too: Pray ye let's be walking.
Sce. Yes, yes: But, ere we go, I'll leave this lesson,
And let him study it: First, rogue! then, pandar!
Next, devil that will be! get thee from men's presence,
And, where the name of soldier has been heard of,
Be sure thou live not! To some hungry desart,
Where thou canst meet with nothing but thy conscience;
And that, in all the shapes of all thy villainies,
Attend thee still! where brute beasts will abhor thee,
And even the sun will shame to give thee light,
Go, hide thy head! or, if thou think'st it fitter,
Go hang thyself!
Dol. Hark to that clause.
Sce. And that speedily,
That Nature may be eased of such a monster!
[*Exeunt.*

Manet SEPTIMIUS.

Sept. Yet all this moves not me, nor reflects on me;
I keep my gold still, and my confidence.
Their want of breeding makes these fellows murmur;
Rude valours, so I let them pass, rude honours!
There is a wench yet, that I know affects me,
And company for a king; a young plump villain,
That, when she sees this gold, she'll leap upon me;

Enter EROS.

And here she comes: I'm sure of her.
My pretty Eros, welcome!
Eros. I have business.
Sept. Above my love, thou canst not.
Eros. Yes, indeed, sir,
Far, far above.
Sept. Why, why so coy? Pray you tell me.
We are alone.
Eros. I'm much ashamed we are so.
Sept. You want a new gown now, and a handsome petticoat,
A scarf, and some odd toys: I've gold here ready;
Thou shalt have any thing.
Eros. I want your absence.
Keep on your way; I care not for your company.
Sept. How? how? you are very short: Do you know me, Eros?
And what I have been to you?
Eros. Yes, I know you,
And I hope I shall forget you: Whilst you were honest,
I loved you too.
Sept. Honest? come, prithee kiss me.
Eros. I kiss no knaves, no murderers, no beasts,
No base betrayers of those men, that fed them;
I hate their looks; and though I may be wanton,
I scorn to nourish it with bloody purchase,
Purchase so foully got. I pray you, unhand me;
I'd rather touch the plague, than one unworthy!
Go, seek some mistress that a horse may marry,
And keep her company; she's too good for you.
[*Exit.*
Sept. Marry, this goes near! now I perceive I'm hateful:
When this light stuff can distinguish, it grows dangerous;
For money, seldom they refuse a leper;
But sure I am more odious, more diseased too:

Enter three lame Soldiers.

It sits cold here. What are these? three poor soldiers?
Both poor and lame: Their misery may make them
A little look upon me, and adore me.
If these will keep me company, I'm made yet.
1 *Sold.* The pleasure, Cæsar sleeps in, makes us miserable:
We are forgot, our maims and dangers laughed at;
He banquets, and we beg.
2 *Sold.* He was not wont
To let poor soldiers, that have spent their fortunes,
Their bloods, and limbs, walk up and down like vagabonds.
Sept. Save ye, good soldiers! good poor men, heaven help ye!
Ye have borne the brunt of war, and shew the story.
1 *Sold.* Some new commander, sure.
Sept. You look, my good friends,
By your thin faces, as you would be suitors.
2 *Sold.* To Cæsar, for our means, sir.
Sept. And 'tis fit, sir.
3 *Sold.* We are poor men, and long forgot.
Sept. I grieve for it;
Good soldiers should have good rewards, and favours.
I'll give up your petitions, for I pity you,
And freely speak to Cæsar.
All. Oh, we honour you!
1 *Sold.* A good man sure you are; the gods preserve you!
Sept. And to relieve your wants the while, hold, soldiers! [*Gives money.*
Nay, 'tis no dream; 'tis good gold; take it freely;
'Twill keep you in good heart.
2 *Sold.* Now goodness quit you!
Sept. I'll be a friend to your afflictions,
And eat, and drink with you too, and we'll be merry;
And every day I'll see you!
1 *Sold.* You are a soldier,
And one sent from the gods, I think.
Sept. I'll cloath ye,
Ye are lame, and then provide good lodging for you;
And at my table, where no want shall meet you.

Enter SCEVA.

All. Was never such a man!
1 *Sold.* Dear honoured sir,
Let us but know your name, that we may worship you.
2 *Sold.* That we may ever thank——
Sept. Why, call me any thing,
No matter for my name—that may betray me.
Sce. A cunning thief! Call him Septimius, soldiers,
The villain, that killed Pompey!
All. How?
Sce. Call him the shame of men! [*Exit.*
1 *Sold.* Oh, that this money
Were weight enough to beat thy brains out!
Fling all;
And fling our curses next; let them be mortal!
Out, bloody wolf! dost thou come gilded over,
And painted with thy charity, to poison us?
2 *Sold.* I know him now: May never father own thee,
But as a monstrous birth shun thy base memory!
And, if thou hadst a mother, (as I cannot
Believe thou wert a natural burden) let her womb
Be cursed of women for a bed of vipers!
3 *Sold.* Methinks the ground shakes to devour this rascal,
And the kind air turns into fogs and vapours,
Infectious mists, to crown his villainies:
Thou mayst go wander like a thing heaven-hated!
1 *Sold.* And valiant minds hold poisonous to remember!
The hangman will not keep thee company;
He has an honourable house to thine;
No, not a thief, though thou couldst save his life for it,
Will eat thy bread, nor one, for thirst starved, drink with thee!
2 *Sold.* Thou art no company for an honest dog,
And so we'll leave thee to a ditch, thy destiny.
[*Exeunt.*
Sept. Contemned of all? and kicked too? Now I find it!
My valour's fled, too, with mine honesty;
For since I would be knave, I must be coward.
This 'tis to be a traitor, and betrayer.
What a deformity dwells round about me!
How monstrous shews that man, that is ungrateful!
I am afraid the very beasts will tear me;
Inspired with what I have done, the winds will blast me!
Now I am paid, and my reward dwells in me,
The wages of my fact; my soul's oppressed!
Honest and noble minds, you find more rest.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter PTOLOMY, ACHOREUS, PHOTINUS, *and* ACHILLAS.

Ptol. I have commanded, and it shall be so!
A preparation I have set on foot,
Worthy the friendship and the fame of Cæsar:
My sister's favours shall seem poor and withered;
Nay, she herself, trimmed up in all her beauties,
Compared to what I'll take his eyes withal,
Shall be a dream.
Pho. Do you mean to shew the glory
And wealth of Egypt?
Ptol. Yes; and in that lustre,
Rome shall appear, in all her famous conquests,
And all her riches, of no note unto it.

Achor. Now you are reconciled to your fair sister,
Take heed, sir, how you step into a danger,
A danger of this precipice. But note, sir,
For what Rome ever raised her mighty armies;
First for ambition, then for wealth. 'Tis madness,
Nay, more, a secure impotence, to tempt
An armed guest: Feed not an eye, that conquers,
Nor teach a fortunate sword the way to be covetous.
Ptol. Ye judge amiss, and far too wide to alter me;
Let all be ready, as I gave direction:
The secret way of all our wealth appearing
Newly, and handsomely; and all about it:
No more dissuading: 'Tis my will.
Achor. I grieve for it.
Ptol. I'll dazzle Cæsar with excess of glory.
Pho. I fear you'll curse your will; we must obey you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, DOLABELLA, *and* SCEVA, *above.*

Cæsar. I wonder at the glory of this kingdom,
And the most bounteous preparation,
Still as I pass, they court me with.
Sce. I'll tell you;
In Gaul and Germany we saw such visions,
And stood not to admire them, but possess them:
When they are ours, they're worth our admiration.

Enter CLEOPATRA.

Ant. The young queen comes: Give room!
Cæsar. Welcome, my dearest!
Come, bless my side.
Sce. Ay, marry, here's a wonder!
As she appears now, I am no true soldier,
If I be not readiest to recant.
Cleo. Be merry, sir;
My brother will be proud to do you honour,
That now appears himself.

Enter PTOLOMY, ACHOREUS, ACHILLAS, PHOTINUS, *and* APOLLODORUS.

Ptol. Hail to great Cæsar,
My royal guest! First I will feast thine eyes
With wealthy Egypt's store, and then thy palate,
And wait myself upon thee. [*Treasure brought in.*
Cæsar. What rich service!
What mines of treasure! richer still?
Cleo. My Cæsar,
What do you admire? Pray you turn, and let me talk to you.
Have you forgot me, sir? How, a new object?
Am I grown old on the sudden? Cæsar!
Cæsar. Tell me,
From whence comes all this wealth?
Cleo. Is your eye that way,
And all my beauties banished?
Ptol. I'll tell thee, Cæsar;
We owe for all this wealth to the old Nilus:
We need no dropping rain to cheer the husbandman,
Nor merchant, that ploughs up the sea to seek us;
Within the wealthy womb of reverend Nilus,
All this is nourished; who, to do thee honour,
Comes to discover his seven deities,
His concealed heads, unto thee: See with pleasure.
Cæsar. The matchless wealth of this land!
Cleo. Come, you shall hear me.
Cæsar. Away! Let me imagine.
Cleo. How! frown on me?
The eyes of Cæsar wrapt in storms!
Cæsar. I'm sorry:
But, let me think——

Music.—Enter ISIS, *and three Labourers.*

Isis. *Isis, the goddess of this land,*
Bids thee, great Cæsar, understand
And mark our customs, and first know,
With greedy eyes these watch the flow
Of plenteous Nilus; when he comes,
With songs, with dances, timbrels, drums,
They entertain him; cut his way,
And give his proud heads leave to play:
Nilus himself shall rise, and shew
His matchless wealth in overflow.
Labourers. *Come, let us help the reverend Nile;*
He's very old; alas the while!
Let us dig him easy ways,
And prepare a thousand plays:
To delight his streams, let's sing
A loud welcome to our spring;
This way let his curling heads
Fall into our new-made beds;
This way let his wanton spawns
Frisk, and glide it o'er the lawns.
This way profit comes, and gain:
How he tumbles here amain!
How his waters haste to fall
Into our channels! Labour, all,
And let him; let Nilus flow,
And perpetual plenty shew.
With incense let us bless the brim,
And as the wanton fishes swim,
Let us gums and garlands fling,
And loud our timbrels ring.
Come, old father, come away!
Our labour is our holiday.

Enter NILUS.

Isis. *Here comes the aged River now,*
With garlands of great pearl his brow
Begirt and rounded: In his flow
All things take life, and all things grow.
A thousand wealthy treasures still,
To do him service at his will,
Follow his rising flood, and pour
Perpetual blessings in our store.
Hear him; and next there will advance
His sacred heads, to tread a dance

In honour of my royal guest:
Mark them too; and you have a feast.

Cleo. A little dross betray me?
Cæsar. I am ashamed I warred at home, my friends,
When such wealth may be got abroad! What honour,
Nay, everlasting glory, had Rome purchased,
Had she a just cause but to visit Egypt!

Nilus. *Make room for my rich waters' fall,*
And bless my flood;
Nilus comes flowing to you all
Encrease and good.
Now the plants and flowers shall spring,
And the merry ploughman sing.
In my hidden waves I bring
Bread, and wine, and every thing.
Let the damsels sing me in,
Sing aloud, that I may rise:
Four holy feasts and hours begin,
And each hand bring a sacrifice.
Now my wanton pearls I shew,
That to ladies' fair necks grow.
Now my gold
And treasures, that can ne'er be told,
Shall bless this land, by my rich flow,
And after this, to crown your eyes,
My hidden holy head arise. [Dance.

Cæsar. The wonder of this wealth so troubles me,
I am not well: Good night!
Sce. I'm glad you have it:
Now we shall stir again.
Dol. Thou wealth, still haunt him!
Sce. A greedy spirit set thee on! We're happy.
Ptol. Lights, lights for Cæsar, and attendance!
Cleo. Well,
I shall yet find a time to tell thee, Cæsar,
Thou hast wronged her love—The rest here.
Ptol. Lights along still:
Music, and sacrifice to sleep, for Cæsar.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter PTOLOMY, PHOTINUS, ACHILLAS, *and* ACHOREUS.

Achor. I TOLD you carefully, what this would prove to,
What this inestimable wealth and glory
Would draw upon you: I advised your majesty
Never to tempt a conquering guest, nor add
A bait, to catch a mind, bent by his trade
To make the whole world his.
Pho. I was not heard, sir,
Or, what I said, lost and contemned: I dare say,
And freshly now, 'twas a poor weakness in you,
A glorious childishness! I watched his eye,
And saw how falcon-like it towered, and flew
Upon the wealthy quarry; how round it marked it:
I observed his words, and to what it tended;
How greedily he asked from whence it came,
And what commerce we held for such abundance.
The show of Nilus how he laboured at,
To find the secret ways the song delivered!
Achor. He never smiled, I noted, at the pleasures,
But fixed his constant eyes upon the treasure:
I do not think his ears had so much leisure,
After the wealth appeared, to hear the music.
Most sure he has not slept since; his mind's troubles
With objects, that would make their own still labour.
Pho. Your sister he ne'er gated on; that's a main note:
The prime beauty of the world had no power over him.

Achor. Where was his mind the whilst?
Pho. Where was your carefulness,
To shew an armed thief the way to rob you?
Nay, would you give him this, it will excite him
To seek the rest: Ambition feels no gift,
Nor knows no bounds; indeed you have done most weakly.
Ptol. Can I be too kind to my noble friend?
Pho. To be unkind unto your noble self, but savours
Of indiscretion; and your friend has found it.
Had you been trained up in the wants and miseries
A soldier marches through, and known his temperance
In offered courtesies, you would have made
A wiser master of your own, and stronger.
Ptol. Why, should I give him all, he would return it:
'Tis more to him to make kings.
Pho. Pray be wiser,
And trust not, with your lost wealth, your loved liberty:
To be a king still at your own discretion,
Is like a king; to be at his, a vassal.
Now take good counsel, or no more take to you
The freedom of a prince.
Achil. 'Twill be too late else:
For, since the masque, he sent three of his captains,
Ambitious as himself, to view again
The glory of your wealth.
Pho. The next himself comes,
Not staying for your courtesy, and takes it.
Ptol. What counsel, my Achoreus?

Achor. I'll go pray, sir,
(For that's best counsel now) the gods may help you. [*Exit.*
Pho. I found you out a way, but 'twas not credited;
A most secure way: Whither will you fly now?
Achil. For when your wealth is gone, your power must follow.
Pho. And that diminished also, what's your life worth?
Who would regard it?
Ptol. You say true.
Achil. What eye
Will look upon king Ptolomy? If they do look,
It must be in scorn; for a poor king's a monster:
What ear remember ye? 'twill be then a courtesy,
A noble one, to take your life too from you:
But if reserved, you stand to fill a victory;
As who knows conquerors' minds, though outwardly
They bear fair streams? Oh, sir, does not this shake ye?
If to be honied on to these afflictions——
Ptol. I never will: I was a fool!
Pho. For then, sir,
Your country's cause falls with you too, and fettered:
All Egypt shall be ploughed up with dishonour.
Ptol. No more; I am sensible: And now my spirit
Burns hot within me.
Achil. Keep it warm and fiery.
Pho. And fast, be counselled.
Ptol. I will, though I perish.
Pho. Go in: We'll tell you all, and then we'll execute. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter CLEOPATRA, ARSINOE, *and* EROS.

Ars. You are so impatient!
Cleo. Have I not cause?
Women of common beauties, and low births,
When they are slighted, are allowed their angers:
Why should not I, a princess, make him know
The baseness of his usage?
Ars. Yes, it is fit:
But then again, you know, what man——
Cleo. He is no man!
The shadow of a greatness hangs upon him,
And not the virtue: He is no conqueror,
Has suffered under the base dross of nature;
Poorly delivered up his power to wealth,
The god of bed-rid men, taught his eyes treason;
Against the truth of love he has raised rebellion,
Defied his holy flames.
Eros. He will fall back again,
And satisfy your grace.
Cleo. Had I been old,
Or blasted in my bud, he might have shewed
Some shadow of dislike: But, to prefer
The lustre of a little trash, Arsinoe,
And the poor glow-worm light of some faint jewels,
Before the life of love, and soul of beauty,
Oh, how it vexes me! He is no soldier;
All honourable soldiers are love's servants;
He is a merchant, a mere wandering merchant,
Servile to gain: He trades for poor commodities,
And makes his conquests, thefts! Some fortunate captains,
That quarter with him, and are truly valiant,
Have flung the name of happy Cæsar on him;
Himself ne'er won it: He is so base and covetous,
He'll sell his sword for gold!
Ars. This is too bitter.
Cleo. Oh, I could curse myself, that was so foolish,
So fondly childish, to believe his tongue,
His promising tongue, ere I could catch his temper.
I had trash enough to have cloyed his eyes withal,
(His covetous eyes) such as I scorn to tread on,
Richer than ever he saw yet, and more tempting;
Had I known he had stooped at that, I had saved mine honour,
I had been happy still! But let him take it,
And let him brag how poorly I am rewarded;
Let him go conquer still weak wretched ladies:
Love has his angry quiver too, his deadly,
And, when he finds scorn, armed at the strongest.
I am a fool to fret thus for a fool,
An old blind fool too! I lose my health; I will not,
I will not cry; I will not honour him
With tears diviner than the gods he worships;
I will not take the pains to curse a poor thing!
Eros. Do not; you shall not need.
Cleo. 'Would I were prisoner
To one I hate, that I might anger him!
I will love any man, to break the heart of him!
Any, that has the heart and will to kill him!
Ars. Take some fair truce.
Cleo. I will go study mischief,
And put a look on, armed with all my cunnings,
Shall meet him like a basilisk, and strike him!
Love, put destroying flames into mine eyes,
Into my smiles deceits, that I may torture him,
That I may make him love to death, and laugh at him!

Enter APPOLODORUS.

Apol. Cæsar commends his service to you grace.
Cleo. His service? what is his service?
Eros. Pray you be patient:
The noble Cæsar loves still.
Cleo. What is his will?
Apol. He craves access unto your highness.
Cleo. No;
Say, no; I will have none to trouble m
Ars. Good sister!
Cleo. None, I say; I will be private.
'Would thou hadst flung me into Nilus, keepe

When first thou gavest consent, to bring my body
To this unthankful Cæsar!
Apol. 'Twas your will, madam,
Nay more, your charge upon me, as I honoured you.
You know what danger I endured.
Cleo. Take this, [*Giving a jewel.*
And carry it to that lordly Cæsar sent thee;
There's a new love, a handsome one, a rich one,
One that will hug his mind: Bid him make love to it;
Tell the ambitious broker, this will suffer——

Enter CÆSAR.

Apol. He enters.
Cleo. How!
Cæsar. I do not use to wait, lady;
Where I am, all the doors are free and open.
Cleo. I guess so, by your rudeness.
Cæsar. You are not angry?
Things of your tender mould should be most gentle.
Why do you frown? Good Gods, what a set anger
Have you forced into your face? Come, I must temper you.
What a coy smile was there, and a disdainful!
How like an ominous flash it broke out from you!
Defend me, Love! Sweet, who has angered you?
Cleo. Shew him a glass! That false face has betrayed me,
That base heart wronged me!
Cæsar. Be more sweetly angry.
I wronged you, fair?
Cleo. Away with your foul flatteries;
They are too gross! But that I dare be angry,
And with as great a god as Cæsar is,
To shew how poorly I respect his memory,
I would not speak to you.
Cæsar. Pray you undo this riddle,
And tell me how I have vexed you?
Cleo. Let me think first,
Whether I may put on a patience,
That will with honour suffer me. Know, I hate you!
Let that begin the story: Now, I'll tell you.
Cæsar. But do it milder: In a noble lady
Softness of spirit, and a sober nature,
That moves like summer winds, cool, and blows sweetness,
Shews blessed, like herself.
Cleo. And that great blessedness
You reaped of me: Till you taught my nature,
Like a rude storm, to talk aloud, and thunder,
Sleep was not gentler than my soul, and stiller.
You had the spring of my affections,
And my fair fruits I gave you leave to taste of;
You must expect the winter of mine anger.
You flung me off, before the court disgraced me,
When in the pride I appeared of all my beauty,
Appeared your mistress; took into your eyes
The common strumpet, love of hated lucre,
Courted with covetous heart the slave of nature,
Gave all your thoughts to gold, that men of glory,
And minds adorned with noble love, would kick at!
Soldiers of royal mark scorn such base purchase;
Beauty and honour are the marks they shoot at.
I spake to you then, I courted you, and wooed you,
Called you 'dear Cæsar,' hung about you tenderly,
Was proud to appear your friend——
Cæsar. You have mistaken me.
Cleo. But neither eye, nor favour, not a smile,
Was I blessed back withal, but shook off rudely;
And, as you had been sold to sordid infamy,
You fell before the images of treasure,
And in your soul you worshipped: I stood slighted,
Forgotten and condemned; my soft embraces,
And those sweet kisses you called Elysium,
As letters writ in sand, no more remembered
The name and glory of your Cleopatra
Laughed at, and made a story to your captains!
Shall I endure?
Cæsar. You are deceived in all this;
Upon my life you are; 'tis your much tenderness.
Cleo. No, no; I love not that way; you are cozened:
I love with as much ambition as a conqueror;
And, where I love, will triumph!
Cæsar. So you shall;
My heart shall be the chariot, that shall bear you;
All, I have won, shall wait upon you.—By the gods,
The bravery of this woman's mind has fired me!—
Dear mistress, shall I but this night——
Cleo. How, Cæsar?
Have I let slip a second vanity,
That gives thee hope?
Cæsar. You shall be absolute,
And reign alone as queen; you shall be any thing!
Cleo. Make me a maid again, and then I'll hear thee;
Examine all thy art of war to do that,
And, if thou findest it possible, I'll love thee:
'Till when, farewell, unthankful!
Cæsar. Stay!
Cleo. I will not.
Cæsar. I command!
Cleo. Command, and go without, sir.
I do command thee, be my slave for ever,
And vex, while I laugh at thee.
Cæsar. Thus low, beauty——
Cleo. It is too late; when I have found thee absolute,
The man, that fame reports thee, and to me,
May-be I shall think better. Farewell, conqueror! [*Exit.*
Cæsar. She mocks me too! I will enjoy her beauty;
I will not be denied; I'll force my longing!
Love is best pleased, when roundly we compel him;
And, as he is imperious, so will I be.

Stay, fool, and be advised; that dulls the appetite,
Takes off the strength and sweetness of delight.
By heaven she is a miracle! I must use
A handsome way to win——How now? What fear
Dwells in your faces? you look all distracted.

Enter SCEVA, ANTONY, *and* DOLABELLA.

Sce. If it be fear, 'tis fear of your undoing,
Not of ourselves; fear of your poor declining;
Our lives and deaths are equal benefits,
And we make louder prayers to die nobly,
Than to live high and wantonly. Whilst you are secure here,
And offer hecatombs of lazy kisses
To the lewd god of love and cowardice,
And most lasciviously die in delights,
You are begirt with the fierce Alexandrians.
Dol. The spawn of Egypt flow about your palace,
Armed all, and ready to assault.
Ant. Led on
By the false and base Photinus, and his ministers.
No stirring out, no peeping through a loop-hole,
But straight saluted with an armed dart.
Sce. No parley; they are deaf to all but danger.
They swear they'll flay us, and then dry our quarters;
A rasher of a salt lover is such a shoeing-horn!
Can you kiss away this conspiracy, and set us free?
Or will the giant god of love fight for you?
Will his fierce warlike bow kill a cock-sparrow?
Bring out the lady! she can quell this mutiny,
And with her powerful looks strike awe into them;
She can destroy and build again the city;
Your goddesses have mighty gifts! Shew them her fair form.
They are not above a hundred thousand, sir,
A mist, a mist! that, when her eyes break out,
Her powerful radiant eyes, and shake their flashes,
Will fly before her heats!
Cæsar. Begirt with villains?
Sce. They come to play you and your love a hunts-up.
You were told what this same whoreson wenching long ago would come to:
You are taken napping now! Has not a soldier
A time to kiss his friend, and a time to consider,
But he must lie still digging like a pioneer,
Making of mines, and burying of his honour there?
'Twere good you'd think——
Dol. And time too; or you'll find else
A harder task than courting a coy beauty.
Ant. Look out, and then believe.
Sce. No, no, hang danger;
Take me provoking broth, and then go to her,
Go to your love, and let her feel your valour.
When the sword is in your throat, sir,
You may cry, 'Cæsar!' and see, if that will help you.
Cæsar. I'll be myself again, and meet their furies,
Meet, and consume their mischiefs. Make some shift, Sceva,
To recover the fleet, and bring me up two legions,
And you shall see me, how I'll break like thunder
Amongst these beds of slimy eels, and scatter them.
Sce. Now you speak sense, I'll put my life to the hazard.
Before I go, no more of this warm lady!
She'll spoil your sword-hand.
Cæsar. Go. Come, let us to counsel,
How to prevent, and then to execute. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter Soldiers.

1 *Sold.* Did you see this penitence?
2 *Sold.* Yes, I saw, and heard it.
3 *Sold.* And I too looked upon him, and observed it;
He is the strangest Septimius now——
1 *Sold.* I heard he was altered,
And had given away his gold to honest uses,
Cried monstrously.
2 *Sold.* He cries abundantly;
He is blind almost with weeping.
3 *Sold.* 'Tis most wonderful,
That a hard-hearted man, and an old soldier,
Should have so much kind moisture. When his mother died,
He laughed aloud, and made the wickedest ballads!
1 *Sold.* 'Tis like enough: he never loved his parents;
Nor can I blame him, for they never loved him.
His mother dreamed, before she was delivered,
That she was brought a-bed with a buzzard, and ever after
She whistled him up to the world. His brave clothes, too,
He has flung away, and goes like one of us now;
Walks with his hands in his pockets, poor and sorrowful,
And gives the best instructions!
2 *Sold.* And tells stories
Of honest and good people, that were honoured,
And how they were remembered; and runs mad
If he but hear of an ungrateful person,
A bloody or betraying man.
3 *Sold.* If it be possible,
That an arch-villain may ever be recovered,
This penitent rascal will put hard. 'Twere worth our labour
To see him once again.

Enter SEPTIMIUS.

1 *Sold.* He spares us that labour,
For here he comes.
Sept. Bless ye, my honest friends,

Bless ye from base unworthy men! Come not near me,
For *I* am yet too taking for your company.
1 *Sold.* Did I not tell ye?
2 *Sold.* What book is that?
1 *Sold.* No doubt,
Some excellent salve for a sore heart. Are you Septimius, that base knave, that betrayed Pompey?
Sept. I was, and am; unless your honest thoughts
Will look upon my penitence, and save me,
I must be ever villain. Oh, good soldiers,
You, that have Roman hearts, take heed of falsehood;
Take heed of blood; take heed of foul ingratitude!
The gods have scarce a mercy for those mischiefs.
Take heed of pride; it was that, that brought me to it.
2 *Sold.* This fellow would make a rare speech at the gallows.
3 *Sold.* 'Tis very fit he were hanged to edify us.
Sept. Let all your thoughts be humble and obedient;
Love your commanders, honour them, that feed ye;
Pray, that ye may be strong in honesty,
As in the use of arms; labour, and diligently,
To keep your hearts from ease, and her base issues,
Pride and ambitious wantonness; those spoiled me:
Rather lose all your limbs, than the least honesty;
You are never lame indeed, till loss of credit
Benumb ye through; scars, and those maims of honour,
Are memorable crutches, that shall bear,
When you are dead, your noble names to eternity!
1 *Sold.* I cry.
2 *Sold.* And so do I.
3 *Sold.* An excellent villain!
1 *Sold.* A more sweet pious knave, I never heard yet.
2 *Sold.* He was happy he was rascal, to come to this.

Enter ACHOREUS.

Who is this? a priest?
Sept. Oh, stay, most holy sir!
And, by the gods of Egypt, I conjure ye,
Isis, and great Osiris, pity me,
Pity a loaden man! and tell me truly,
With what most humble sacrifice I may
Wash off my sin, and appease the powers, that hate me?
Take from my heart those thousand thousand furies,
That restless gnaw upon my life, and save me!
Orestes' bloody hands fell on his mother,
Yet at the holy altar he was pardoned.
Achor. Orestes out of madness did his murder,
And therefore he found grace: Thou, worst of all men,
Out of cold blood, and hope of gain, base lucre,
Slewest thine own feeder! Come not near the altar,
Nor with thy reeking hands pollute the sacrifice;
Thou art marked for shame eternal! [*Exit.*
Sept. Look all on me,
And let me be a story, left to time,
Of blood and infamy! How base and ugly
Ingratitude appears, with all her profits!
How monstrous my hoped grace at court! Good soldiers,
Let neither flattery, nor the witching sound
Of high and soft preferment, touch your goodness:
To be valiant, old, and honest, oh, what blessedness!
1 *Sold.* Dost thou want any thing?
Sept. Nothing but your prayers.
2 *Sold.* Be thus, and let the blind priest do his worst;
We've gods as well as they, and they will hear us.
3 *Sold.* Come, cry no more: Thou hast wept out twenty Pompeys.

Enter PHOTINUS *and* ACHILLAS.

Pho. So penitent?
Achil. It seems so.
Pho. Yet for all this
We must employ him.
1 *Sold.* These are the armed soldier-leaders:
Away, and let's to the fort; we shall be snapt else. [*Exeunt.*
Pho. How now? Why thus? What cause of this dejection?
Achil. Why dost thou weep?
Sept. Pray leave me; you have ruined me,
You have made me a famous villain!
Pho. Does that touch thee?
Achil. He will be hard to win.
Pho. He must be won, or we shall want our right hand.
This fellow dares, and knows, and must be heartened.
Art thou so poor to blench at what thou hast done?
Is conscience a comrade for an old soldier?
Achil. It is not that; it may be some disgrace,
That he takes heavily, and would be cherished.
Septimius ever scorned to shew such weakness.
Sept. Let me alone; I am not for your purpose;
I am now a new man.
Pho. We have new affairs for thee;
Those, that will raise thy head.
Sept. I would it were off,
And in your bellies, for the love you bear me!
I'll be no more knave; I have stings enough
Already in my breast.
Pho. Thou shalt be noble;
And who dares think thee, that thou art not honest?

Achil. Thou shalt command in chief all our strong forces;
And if thou servest an use, must not all justify it?
Sept. I am rogue enough.
Pho. Thou wilt be more and baser;
A poor rogue's all rogues, open to all shames;
Nothing to shadow him. Dost thou think crying
Can keep thee from the censure of the multitude?
Or to be kneeling at the altar, save thee?
'Tis poor and servile! Wert thou thine own sacrifice,
'Twould seem so low, people would spit the fire out.
Achil. Keep thyself glorious still, though ne'er so stained,
And that will lessen it, if not work it out.
To go complaining thus, and thus repenting,
Like a poor girl that had betrayed her maidenhead——
Sept. I'll stop mine ears.
Achil. Will shew so in a soldier,
So simply and so ridiculously, so tamely——
Pho. If people would believe thee, it were some honesty;
And for thy penitence would not laugh at thee,
(As sure they will) and beat thee, for thy poverty;
If they'd allow thy foolery, there were some hope.
Sept. My foolery?
Pho. Nay, more than that, thy misery,
Thy monstrous misery.
Achil. He begins to hearken.——
Thy misery so great, men will not bury thee.
Sept. That this were true!
Pho. Why does this conquering Cæsar
Labour through the world's deep seas of toils and troubles,
Dangers, and desperate hopes? to repent afterwards?
Why does he slaughter thousands in a battle,
And whip his country with the sword? to cry for it?
Thou killedst great Pompey: He'll kill all his kindred,
And justify it; nay, raise up trophies to it.
When thou hearest him repent (he is held most holy too),
And cry for doing daily bloody murders,
Take thou example, and go ask forgiveness;
Call up the thing, thou namest thy conscience,
And let it work; then 'twill seem well, Septimius.
Sept. He does all this.
Achil. Yes, and is honoured for it;
Nay, called the honoured Cæsar: So mayst thou be;
Thou wert born as near a crown as he.
Sept. He was poor.
Pho. And desperate bloody tricks got him this credit.
Sept. I am afraid you will once more——
Pho. Help to raise thee.
Off with thy pining black; it dulls a soldier,
And put on resolution like a man:
A noble fate waits on thee.
Sept. I now feel
Myself returning rascal speedily.
Oh, that I had the power——
Achil. Thou shalt have all;
And do all through thy power. Men shall admire thee,
And the vices of Septimius shall turn virtues.
Sept. Off, off! thou must off; off, my cowardice!
Puling repentance, off!
Pho. Now thou speakest nobly.
Sept. Off, my dejected looks, and welcome, impudence!
My daring shall be deity, to save me.
Give me instructions, and put action on me,
A glorious cause upon my sword's point, gentlemen,
And let my wit and valour work. You will raise me,
And make me out-dare all my miseries.
Pho. All this, and all thy wishes.
Sept. Use me, then.
Womanish fear, farewell! I'll never melt more.
Lead on to some great thing, to wake my spirit!
I cut the cedar Pompey, and I'll fell
This huge oak Cæsar, too.
Pho. Now thou singest sweetly,
And Ptolomy shall crown thee for thy service.
Achil. He's well wrought; put him on apace, before cooling. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, *and* DOLABELLA.

Ant. THE tumult still encreases.
Cæsar. Oh, my fortune!
My lustful folly rather! But 'tis well,
And worthily I'm made a bondman's prey,
That (after all my glorious victories,
In which I passed so many seas of dangers,
When all the elements conspired against me)
Would yield up the dominion of this head
To any mortal power; so blind and stupid,
To trust these base Egyptians, that proclaimed
Their perjuries in noble Pompey's death,
And yet that could not warn me!
Dol. Be still Cæsar,
Who ever loved to exercise his fate,
Where danger looked most dreadful.
Ant. If you fall,
Fall not alone; let the king and his sister

Be buried in your ruins: On my life,
They both are guilty! Reason may assure you,
Photinus nor Achillas durst attempt you,
Or shake one dart, or sword, aimed at your safety,
Without their warrant.
Cæsar. For the young king, I know not
How he may be misled; but for his sister,
Unequalled Cleopatra, 'twere a kind
Of blasphemy to doubt her: Ugly treason
Durst never dwell in such a glorious building;
Nor can so clear and great a spirit as hers is
Admit of falsehood.
Ant. Let us seize on him then;
And leave her to her fortune.
Dol. If he have power,
Use it to your security, and let
His honesty acquit him; if he be false,
It is too great an honour he should die
By your victorious hand.
Cæsar. He comes, and I
Shall do as I find cause.

Enter PTOLOMY, ACHOREUS, *and* APOLLODORUS.

Ptol. Let not great Cæsar
Impute the breach of hospitality
To me, my guest, to me! I am contemned,
And my rebellious subjects lift their hands
Against my head; and 'would they aimed no further,
Provided, that I fell a sacrifice
To gain you safety! That this is not feigned,
The boldness of my innocence may confirm you:
Had I been privy to their bloody plot,
I now had led them on, and given fair gloss
To their bad cause, by being present with them;
But I; that yet taste of the punishment
In being false to Pompey, will not make
A second fault to Cæsar, uncompelled:
With such as have not yet shook off obedience,
I yield myself to you, and will take part
In all your dangers.
Cæsar. This pleads your excuse,
And I receive it.
Achor. If they have any touch
Of justice, or religion, I will use
The authority of our gods, to call them back
From their bad purpose.
Apol. This part of the palace
Is yet defensible; we may make it good
Till your powers rescue us.
Cæsar. Cæsar besieged?
Oh, stain to my great actions! 'Twas my custom,
An army routed, as my feet had wings,
To be first in the chase; nor walls, nor bulwarks
Could guard those, that escaped the battle's fury,
From this strong arm; and I to be enclosed!
My heart! my heart! But 'tis necessity,
To which the gods must yield, and I obey,
Till I redeem it by some glorious way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter PHOTINUS, ACHILLAS, SEPTIMIUS, *and Soldiers.*

Pho. There's no retiring now; we are broke in;
The deed past hope of pardon. If we prosper,
'Twill be stiled lawful, and we shall give laws
To these, that now command us: Stop not at
Or loyalty, or duty; bold ambition
To dare, and power to do, gave the first difference
Between the king and subject. Cæsar's motto,
Aut Cæsar aut nihil, each of us must claim,
And use it as our own.
Achil. The deed is bloody,
If we conclude in Ptolomy's death.
Pho. The better;
The globe of empire must be so manured.
Sept. Rome, that from Romulus first took her name,
Had her walls watered with a crimson shower,
Drained from a brother's heart; nor was she raised
To this prodigious height, that overlooks
Three full parts of the earth, that pay her tribute,
But by enlarging of her narrow bounds,
By the sack of neighbour cities, not made hers
'Till they were cemented with the blood of those,
That did possess them: Cæsar, Ptolomy,
Now I am steeled, to me are empty names,
Esteemed as Pompey's was.
Pho. Well said, Septimius!
Thou now art right again.
Achil. But what course take we
For the princess Cleopatra?
Pho. Let her live
A while, to make us sport; she shall authorize
Our undertakings to the ignorant people,
As if what we do were by her command:
But, our triumvirate government once confirmed,
She bears her brother company: That's my province;
Leave me to work her.
Achil. I will undertake
For Ptolomy.
Sept. Cæsar shall be my task;
And as in Pompey I began a name,
I'll perfect it in Cæsar!

Enter above, CÆSAR, PTOLOMY, ACHOREUS, APOLLODORUS, ANTONY, *and* DOLABELLA.

Pho. 'Tis resolved then;
We'll force our passage.
Achil. See, they do appear,
As they desired a parley.
Pho. I am proud yet
I have brought them to capitulate.
Ptol. Now, Photinus?
Pho. Now, Ptolomy?
Ptol. No addition?
Pho. We are equal,
Though Cæsar's name were put into the scale,

In which our worth is weighed.
Cæsar. Presumptuous villain!
Upon what grounds hast thou presumed to raise
Thy servile hand against the king? or me,
That have a greater name?
Pho. On those, by which
Thou didst presume to pass the Rubicon
Against the laws of Rome; and, at the name
Of traitor, smile, as thou didst, when Marcellus,
The consul, with the senate's full consent,
Pronounced thee for an enemy to thy country:
Yet thou went'st on, and thy rebellious cause
Was crowned with fair success. Why should we fear, then?
Think on that, Cæsar!
Cæsar. Oh, the gods! be braved thus?
And be compelled to bear this from a slave,
That would not brook great Pompey his superior!
Achil. Thy glories now have touched the highest point,
And must descend.
Pho. Despair, and think we stand
The champions of Rome, to wreak her wrongs,
Upon whose liberty thou hast set thy foot.
Sept. And that the ghosts of all those noble Romans,
That by thy sword fell in this civil war,
Expect revenge.
Ant. Darest thou speak, and remember
There was a Pompey?
Pho. There's no hope to escape us:
If that, against the odds we have upon you,
You dare come forth and fight, receive the honour
To die like Romans; if ye faint, resolve
To starve like wretches! I disdain to change
Another syllable with you.
Ant. Let us die nobly;
[*Exeunt Pho. Achil. Sept.*
And rather fall upon each other's sword,
Than come into these villains' hands.
Cæsar. That fortune,
Which to this hour hath been a friend to Cæsar,
Though for a while she cloathe her brow with frowns,
Will smile again upon me: Who will pay her
Or sacrifice, or vows, if she forsake
Her best of works in me? or suffer him,
Whom with a strong hand she hath led triumphant
Through the whole western world, and Rome acknowledged
Her sovereign lord, to end ingloriously
A life admired by all? The threatened danger
Must, by a way more horrid, be avoided,
And I will run the hazard. Fire the palace,
And the rich magazines, that neighbour it,
In which the wealth of Egypt is contained!
Start not; it shall be so; that while the people
Labour in quenching the ensuing flames,
Like Cæsar, with this handful of my friends,
Through fire, and swords, I force a passage to
My conquering legions. King, if thou darest, follow,
Where Cæsar leads; or live, or die, a freeman!
If not, stay here a bondman to thy slave,
And, dead, be thought unworthy of a grave!
]*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SEPTIMIUS.

Sept. I feel my resolution melts again,
And that I am not knave alone, but fool,
In all my purposes. This devil Photinus
Employs me as a property, and, grown useless,
Will shake me off again: He told me so,
When I killed Pompey; nor can I hope better,
When Cæsar is dispatched. Services done
For such as only study their own ends,
Too great to be rewarded, are returned
With deadly hate: I learned this principle
In his own school. Yet still he fools me; well;
And yet he trusts me: Since I in my nature
Was fashioned to be false, wherefore should I,
That killed my general, and a Roman, one,
To whom I owed all nourishments of life,
Be true to an Egyptian? To save Cæsar,
And turn Photinus' plots on his own head,
(As it is in my power) redeem my credit,
And live, to lie, and swear again in fashion,
Oh, 'twere a master-piece! Ha! curse me! Cæsar?
How has he got off?

Enter CÆSAR, PTOLOMY, ANTONY, DOLABELLA, ACHOREUS, APOLLODORUS, *and soldiers.*

Cæsar. The fire has took,
And shews the city like a second Troy;
The navy too is scorched; the people greedy
To save their wealth and houses, while their soldiers
Make spoil of all: Only Achillas' troops
Make good their guard; break through them, we are safe.
I'll lead you like a thunder-bolt!
Sept. Stay, Cæsar.
Cæsar. Who's this? the dog Septimius?
Ant. Cut his throat.
Dol. You barked but now; fawn you so soon?
Sept. Oh, hear me!
What I'll deliver is for Cæsar's safety,
For all your good.
Ant. Good from a mouth like thine,
That never belched but blasphemy and treason,
On festival days!
Sept. I am an altered man,
Altered indeed; and I will give you cause
To say I am a Roman.
Dol. Rogue, I grant thee.
Sept. Trust me, I'll make the passage smooth and easy,
For your escape.
Ant. I'll trust the devil sooner,
And make a safer bargain.
Sept. I am trusted
With all Photinus' secrets.

Ant. There's no doubt then,
Thou wilt be false.
Sept. Still to be true to you.
Dol. And very likely.
Cæsar. Be brief; the means?
Sept. Thus, Cæsar:
To me alone, but bound by terrible oaths
Not to discover it, he hath revealed
A dismal vault, whose dreadful mouth does open
A mile beyond the city: In this cave
Lie but two hours concealed.
Ant. If you believe him,
He'll bury us alive.
Dol. I'll fly in the air first.
Sept. Then in the dead of night, I'll bring you back
Into a private room, where you shall find
Photinus, and Achillas, and the rest
Of their commanders, close at counsel.
Cæsar. Good;
What follows?
Sept. Fall me fairly on their throats:
Their heads cut off and shorn, the multitude
Will easily disperse.
Cæsar. Oh, devil! away with him!
Nor true to friend nor enemy? Cæsar scorns
To find his safety, or revenge his wrongs,
So base a way; or owe the means of life
To such a leprous traitor! I have towered
For victory, like a falcon in the clouds,
Not digged for it, like a mole. Our swords, and cause,
Make way for us: And that it may appear
We took a noble course, and hate base treason,
Some soldiers, that would merit Cæsar's favour,
Hang him on yonder turret, and then follow
The lane, this sword makes for you. [*Exit.*
1 *Sold.* Here is a belt;
Though I die for it, I'll use it.
2 *Sold.* 'Tis too good
To truss a cur in.
Sept. Save me! here is gold.
1 *Sold.* If Rome
Were offered for thy ransom, it could not help thee.
1 *Sold.* Goad him on with thy sword!
Thou dost deserve a worser end; and may
All such conclude so, that their friends betray!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter severally, ARSINOE, EROS, *and* CLEOPATRA.

Ars. We are lost!
Eros. Undone!
Ars. Confusion, fire and swords,
And fury in the soldiers' face more horrid,
Circle us round!
Eros. The king's command they laugh at,
And jeer at Cæsar's threats.
Ars. My brother seized on
By the Roman, as thought guilty of the tumult,
And forced to bear him company, as marked out
For his protection, or revenge.
Eros. They have broke
Into my cabinet; my trunks are ransacked.
Ars. I've lost my jewels too; but that's the least:
The barbarous rascals, against all humanity
Or sense of pity, have killed my little dog,
And broke my monkey's chain.
Eros. They rifled me:
But that I could endure, and tire them too,
Would they proceed no further.
Ars. Oh, my sister!
Eros. My queen, my mistress!
Ars. Can you stand unmoved, when
The earthquake of rebellion shakes the city,
And the court trembles?
Cleo. Yes, Arsinoe,
And with a masculine constancy deride
Fortune's worst malice, as a servant to
My virtues, not a mistress: Then we forsake
The strong fort of ourselves, when we once yield,
Or shrink at her assaults; I am still myself,
And though disrobed of sovereignty, and ravished
Of ceremonious duty, that attends it;
Nay, grant they had slaved my body, my free mind,
Like to the palm-tree walling fruitful Nile,
Shall grow up straighter, and enlarge itself,
Spite of the envious weight, that loads it with.
Think of thy birth, Arsinoe; common burdens
Fit common shoulders: Teach the multitude,
By suffering nobly what they fear to touch at,
The greatness of thy mind does soar a pitch,
Their dim eyes, darkened by their narrow souls,
Cannot arrive at.
Ars. I am new created,
And owe this second being to you, best sister;
For now I feel you have infused into me
Part of your fortitude.
Eros. I still am fearful:
I dare not tell a lie: You, that were born
Daughters and sisters unto kings, may nourish
Great thoughts, which I, that am your humble handmaid,
Must not presume to rival.
Cleo. Yet, my Eros,
Though thou hast profited nothing by observing
The whole course of my life, learn in my death,
Though not to equal, yet to imitate,
Thy fearless mistress.

Enter PHOTINUS.

Eros. Oh, a man in arms!
His weapon drawn too!
Cleo. Though upon the point
Death sat, I'll meet it, and out-dare the danger.
Pho. Keep the watch strong; and guard the passage sure,
That leads into the sea.
Cleo. What sea of rudeness
Breaks in upon us? or what subject's breath

Dare raise a storm, when we command a calm?
Are duty and obedience fled to heaven,
And, in their room, ambition and pride
Sent into Egypt? That face speaks thee Photinus,
A thing, thy mother brought into the world
My brother's and my slave: But thy behaviour,
Opposed to that, an insolent intruder
Upon that sovereignty, thou shouldst bow to!
If in the gulph of base ingratitude,
All loyalty to Ptolomy the king
Be swallowed up, remember who I am,
Whose daughter, and whose sister; or, suppose
That is forgot too, let the name of Cæsar
(Which nations quake at) stop thy desperate madness
From running headlong on to thy confusion.
Throw from thee quickly those rebellious arms,
And let me read submission in thine eyes;
Thy wrongs to us we will not only pardon,
But be a ready advocate to plead for thee
To Cæsar and my brother.

Pho. Plead my pardon!
To you I bow; but scorn as much to stoop thus
To Ptolomy, to Cæsar, nay the gods,
As to put off the figure of a man,
And change my essence with a sensual beast:
All my designs, my counsels, and dark ends,
Were aimed to purchase you.

Cleo. How durst thou, being
The scorn of baseness, nourish such a thought!

Pho. They, that have power, are royal; and those base,
That live at the devotion of another.
What birth gave Ptolomy, or fortune Cæsar,
By engines fashioned in this Protean anvil,
I have made mine; and only stoop at you,
Whom I would still preserve free, to command me.
For Cæsar's frowns, they are below my thoughts;
And, but in these fair eyes I still have read
The story of a monarchy supreme,
To which all hearts, with mine, gladly pay tribute,
Photinus' name had long since been as great
As Ptolomy's e'er was, or Cæsar's is.
This made me, as a weaker tie, to unloose
The knot of loyalty, that chained my freedom,
And slight the fear, that Cæsar's threats might cause;
That I and they might see no sun appear,
But Cleopatra, in the Egyptian sphere.

Cleo. Oh, giant-like ambition, married to
Cymerian darkness! Inconsiderate fool?
Can there be gods, and hear this, and no thunder
Ram thee into the earth!

Pho. They are asleep,
And cannot hear thee: Or, with open eyes
Did Jove look on us, I would laugh and swear
That his artillery is cloyed by me:
Or, if that they have power to hurt, his bolts
Are in my hand.

Cleo. Most impious!

Pho. I wil tame
That haughty courage, and make it stoop too.

Cleo. Never!
I was born to command, and I will die so.

Enter ACHILLAS, *and Soldiers, with the body of Ptolomy.*

Pho. The king dead? This is a fair entrance to
Our future happiness.

Ars. Oh, dear brother!

Cleo. Weep not, Arsinoe, (common women do so)
Nor lose a tear for him; it cannot help him;
But study to die nobly.
Pho. Cæsar fled?
'Tis deadly aconite to my cold heart;
It choaks my vital spirits! Where was your care?
Did the guards sleep?

Achil. He roused them with his sword;
(We talk of Mars, but I am sure his courage
Admits of no comparison but itself!)
And, as inspired by him, his following friends,
With such a confidence as young eaglets prey,
Under the large wing of their fiercer dam,
Brake through our troops, and scattered them. He went on,
But still pursued by us: When, on the sudden,
He turned his head, and from his eyes flew terror,
Which struck in us no less fear and amazement,
Than if we had encountered with the lightning,
Hurled from Jove's cloudy brow.

Cleo. 'Twas like my Cæsar!

Achil. We fallen back, he made on; and, as our fear
Had parted from us with his dreadful looks,
Again we followed: But, got near the sea,
On which his navy anchored, in one hand
Holding a scroll he had above the waves,
And in the other grasping fast his sword,
As it had been a trident forged by Vulcan
To calm the raging ocean, he made away,
As if he had been Neptune; his friends, like
So many Tritons followed, their bold shouts
Yielding a chearful music. We showered darts
Upon them, but in vain; they reached their ships:
And in their safety we are sunk; for Cæsar
Prepares for war.

Pho. How fell the king?

Achil. Unable
To follow Cæsar, he was trod to death
By the pursuers, and with him the priest
Of Isis, good Achoreus.

Ars. May the earth
Lie gently on their ashes!

Pho. I feel now,
That there are powers above us; and that 'tis not
Within the searching policies of man
To alter their decrees.

Cleo. I laugh at thee!
Where are thy threats now, fool? thy scoffs and scorns
Against the gods? I see calamity

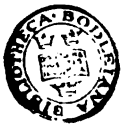
Is the best mistress of religion,
And can convert an atheist. [*Shout within.*
Pha. Oh, they come!
Mountains fall on me! Oh, for him to die,
That placed his heaven on earth, is an assurance
Of his descent to hell! Where shall I hide me?
The greatest daring to a man dishonest,
Is but a bastard courage, ever fainting. [*Exit.*

Enter CÆSAR, SCEVA, ANTONY, *and* DOLABELLA.

Cæsar. Look on your Cæsar! banish fear, my fairest;
You now are safe!
Sce. By Venus, not a kiss
'Till our work be done! The traitors once dispatched,
To it, and we'll cry aim.
Cæsar. I will be speedy.
[*Exeunt Cæsar and train.*
Cleo. Farewell again!—Arsinoe! How now, Eros?
Ever faint-hearted?
Eros. But that I am assured
Your excellency can command the general,
I fear the soldiers.
Cleo. He is all honour;
Nor do I now repent me of my favours,
Nor can I think nature e'er made a woman,
That in her prime deserved him.

Enter CÆSAR, SCEVA, ANTONY, DOLABELLA, *and Soldiers, with the heads.*

Ant. He's come back.
Cæsar. Pursue no further; curb the soldiers' fury!
See, beauteous mistress, their accursed heads,
That did conspire against us.
Sce. Furies plague them!
They had too fair an end, to die like soldiers:
Pompey fell by the sword; the cross or halter
Should have dispatched them.
Cæsar. All's but death, good Sceva;
Be therefore satisfied. And now, my dearest,
Look upon Cæsar, as he still appeared,
A conqueror! And, this unfortunate king
Entombed with honour, we'll to Rome, where Cæsar
Will shew he can give kingdoms; for the senate,
Thy brother dead, shall willingly decree
The crown of Egypt, that was his, to thee.
[*Exeunt omnes.*



BONDUCA.

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CARATACH, *general of the Britons, cousin to Bonduca.*
NENNIUS, *a great soldier, a British commander.*
HENGO, *a brave boy, nephew to Caratach.*
SUETONIUS, *general to the Roman army in Britain.*
PENIUS, *a brave Roman commander, but stubborn to the general.*
JUNIUS, *a Roman captain, in love with Bonduca's daughter.*
PETILLIUS, *another Roman captain.*
DEMETRIUS, DECIUS, } *Roman commanders.*
REGULUS, DRUSIUS, MACER, CURIUS, } *Roman officers.*
JUDAS, *a corporal, a cowardly hungry knave.*
Herald.
Druids.
Soldiers.

WOMEN.

BONDUCA, *queen of the Iceni, a brave virago.*
Her two daughters, by Prasutagus.

Scene,—Britain.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter BONDUCA, *Daughters*, HENGO, NENNIUS, *and Soldiers.*

Bond. THE hardy Romans? Oh, ye gods of Britain,
The rust of arms, the blushing shame of soldiers!
Are these the men, that conquer by inheritance?
The fortune-makers? these the Julians,

Enter CARATACH.

That with the sun measure the end of nature,
Making the world but one Rome, and one Cæsar?
Shame, how they flee! Cæsar's soft soul dwells in them;
Their mothers got them sleeping, Pleasure nursed them;
Their bodies sweat with sweet oils, love's allurements,
Not lusty arms. Dare they send these to seek us,
These Roman girls? is Britain grown so wanton?
Twice we have beat them, Nennius, scattered them;
And through their big-boned Germans, on whose pikes
The honour of their actions sits in triumph,
Made themes for songs to shame them: And a woman,
A woman beat them, Nennius; a weak woman,
A woman, beat these Romans!
Car. So it seems;
A man would shame to talk so.
Bond. Who's that?
Car. I.
Bond. Cousin, do you grieve my fortunes?
Car. No, Bonduca;
If I grieve, it is the bearing of your fortunes:
You put too much wind to your sail; discretion
And hardy valour are the twins of honour,
And, nursed together, make a conqueror;
Divided, but a talker. 'Tis a truth,
That Rome has fled before us twice, and routed;
A truth we ought to crown the gods for, lady,
And not our tongues; a truth is none of ours,
Nor in our ends, more than the noble bearing;
For then it leaves to be a virtue, lady,
And we, that have been victors, beat ourselves,
When we insult upon our honour's subject.
Bond. My valiant cousin, is it foul to say
What liberty and honour bid us do,
And what the gods allow us?

Car. No, Bonduca;
So what we say exceed not what we do.
You call the Romans 'fearful, fleeing Romans,
'And Roman girls, the lees of tainted pleasures:'
Does this become a doer? are they such?
Bond. They are no more.
Car. Where is your conquest then?
Why are your altars crowned with wreaths of flowers?
The beasts with gilt horns waiting for the fire?
The holy Druides composing songs
Of everlasting life to victory?
Why are these triumphs, lady? for a May-game?
For hunting a poor herd of wretched Romans?
Is it no more? Shut up your temples, Britons,
And let the husbandman redeem his heifers,
Put out our holy fires, no timbrel ring,
Let's home and sleep; for such great overthrows
A candle burns too bright a sacrifice,
A glow-worm's tail too full of flame. Oh, Nennius,
Thou hadst a noble uncle, knew a Roman,
And how to speak him, how to give him weight
In both his fortunes.
Bond. By the gods, I think
You doat upon these Romans, Caratach!
Car. Witness these wounds, I do; they were fairly given:
I love an enemy; I was born a soldier;
And he that in the head of his troop defies me,
Beading my manly body with his sword,
I make a mistress. Yellow-tressed Hymen
Ne'er tied a longing virgin with more joy,
Than I am married to that man, that wounds me:
And are not all these Roman? Ten struck battles
I sucked these honoured scars from, and all Roman;
Ten years of bitter nights and heavy marches,
(When many a frozen storm sung through my cuirass,
And made it doubtful, whether that or I
Were the more stubborn metal) have I wrought through,
And all to try these Romans. Ten times a-night
I have swam the rivers, when the stars of Rome
Shot at me as I floated, and the billows
Tumbled their watry ruins on my shoulders,
Charging my battered sides with troops of agues;
And still to try these Romans, whom I found
(And, if I lie, my wounds be henceforth backward,
And be you witness, gods, and all my dangers)
As ready, and as full of that I brought,
(Which was not fear, nor flight) as valiant,
As vigilant, as wise, to do and suffer,
Ever advanced as forward as the Britons,
Their sleeps as short, their hopes as high as ours,
Ay, and as subtle, lady. 'Tis dishonour,
And, followed, will be impudence, Bonduca,
And grow to no belief, to taint these Romans.
Have not I seen the Britons———
Bond. What?
Car. Disheartened,
Run, run, Bonduca! not the quick rack swifter;
The virgin from the hated ravisher
Not half so fearful; not a flight drawn home,
A round stone from a sling, a lover's wish,
E'er made that haste, that they have. By the gods,
I've seen these Britons, that you magnify,
Run as they would have out-run time, and roaring,
Basely for mercy roaring; the light shadows,
That in a thought scur o'er the fields of corn,
Halted on crutches to them.
Bond. Oh, ye powers,
What scandals do I suffer!
Car. Yes, Bonduca,
I've seen thee run too; and thee, Nennius;
Yea, run apace, both; then, when Penius
(The Roman girl!) cut through your armed carts,
And drove them headlong on ye, down the hill;
Then, when he hunted ye like Britain foxes,
More by the scent than sight; then did I see
These valiant and approved men of Britain,
Like boding owls, creep into tods of ivy,
And hoot their fears to one another nightly.
Nen. And what did you then, Caratach?
Car. I fled too,
But not so fast; your jewel had been lost then,
Young Hengo there; he trasht me, Nennius:
For, when your fears out-run him, then stept I,
And in the head of all the Roman fury
Took him, and, with my tough belt, to my back
I buckled him; behind him, my sure shield;
And then I followed. If I say I fought
Five times in bringing off this bud of Britain,
I lie not, Nennius. Neither had you heard
Me speak this, or ever seen the child more,
But that the son of virtue, Penius,
Seeing me steer through all these storms of danger,
My helm still in my hand (my sword), my prow
Turned to my foe (my face), he cried out nobly,
'Go, Briton, bear thy lion's whelp off safely;
Thy manly sword has ransomed thee; grow strong,
And let me meet thee once again in arms;
Then, if thou standest, thou art mine.' I took his offer,
And here I am to honour him.
Bond. Oh, cousin,
From what a flight of honour hast thou checked me!
What wouldst thou make me, Caratach?
Car. See, lady,
The noble use of others in our losses.
Does this afflict you? Had the Romans cried this,
And, as we have done theirs, sung out these fortunes,
Railed on our base condition, hooted at us,
Made marks as far as the earth was ours, to shew us
Nothing but sea could stop our flights, despised us,
And held it equal, whether banquetting

Or beating of the Britons were more business,
It would have galled you.
Bond. Let me think we conquered.
Car. Do; but so think, as we may be conquered;
And, where we have found virtue, though in those,
That came to make us slaves, let's cherish it.
There's not a blow we gave, since Julius landed,
That was of strength and worth, but like records,
They file to after-ages. Our registers
The Romans are, for noble deeds of honour;
And shall we beard their mentions with upbraidings?
Bond. No more; I see myself. Thou hast made me, cousin,
More than my fortunes durst; for they abused me,
And wound me up so high, I swelled with glory:
Thy temperance has cured that tympany,
And given me health again, nay more, discretion.
Shall we have peace? for now I love these Romans.
Car. Thy love and hate are both unwise ones, lady.
Bond. Your reason?
Nen. Is not peace the end of arms?
Car. Not where the cause implies a general conquest:
Had we a difference with some petty isle,
Or with our neighbours, lady, for our landmarks,
The taking in of some rebellious lord,
Or making head against commotions,
After a day of blood, peace might be argued;
But where we grapple for the ground we live on,
The liberty we hold as dear as life,
The gods we worship, and next those, our honours,
And with those swords, that know no end of battle:
Those men, beside themselves, allow no neighbour;
Those minds, that where the day is, claim inheritance,
And where the sun makes ripe the fruits, their harvest,
And where they march, but measure out more ground
To add to Rome, and here in the bowels on us;
It must not be. No, as they are our foes,
And those, that must be so, untill we tire them,
Let's use the peace of honour, that's fair dealing,
But in our hands our swords. That hardy Roman,
That hopes to graft himself into my stock,
Must first begin his kindred under-ground,
And be allied in ashes.
Bond. Caratach,
As thou hast nobly spoken, shall be done;
And Hengo to thy charge I here deliver:
The Romans shall have worthy wars.
Car. They shall:
And, little sir, when your young bones grow stiffer,
And when I see you able in a morning
To beat a dozen boys, and then to breakfast,
I'll tie you to a sword.
Hengo. And what then, uncle?
Car. Then you must kill, sir, the next valiant Roman,
That calls you knave.
Hengo. And must I kill but one?
Car. An hundred, boy, I hope.
Hengo. I hope five hundred.
Car. That's a noble boy! Come, worthy lady,
Let us to our several charges, and henceforth
Allow an enemy both weight and worth.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter JUNIUS *and* PETILLIUS.

Pet. What ail'st thou, man? dost thou want meat?
Jun. No.
Pet. Clothes?
Jun. Neither. For heaven's love, leave me!
Pet. Drink?
Jun. You tire me.
Pet. Come, it is drink; I know it is drink.
Jun. 'Tis no drink.
Pet. I say, it is drink; for what affliction
Can light so heavy on a soldier,
To dry him up as thou art, but no drink?
Thou shalt have drink.
Jun. Prithee, Petillius——
Pet. And, by mine honour, much drink, valiant drink:
Never tell me, thou shalt have drink. I see,
Like a true friend, into thy wants; it is drink;
And, when I leave thee to a desolation,
Especially of that dry nature, hang me.
Jun. Why do you do this to me?
Pet. For I see,
Although your modesty would fain conceal it,
Which sits as sweetly on a soldier
As an old side-saddle——
Jun. What do you see?
Pet. I see as fair as day, that thou wantest drink.
Did I not find thee gaping, like an oyster
For a new tide? Thy very thoughts lie bare,
Like a low ebb; thy soul, that rid in sack,
Lies moored for want of liquor. Do but see
Into thyself; for, by the gods, I do;
For all thy body's chapped and cracked like timber,
For want of moisture: What is it thou wantest there, Junius,
An if it be not drinking?
Jun. You have too much of it.
Pet. No, it shall never be said in our country,
Thou died of the chin-cough. Hear, thou noble Roman,
The son of her that loves a soldier,
Hear what I promised for thee! thus I said:
Lady, I take thy son to my companion;
Lady, I love thy son, thy son loves war,

The war loves danger, danger drink, drink discipline,
Which is society and lechery;
These two beget commanders: Fear not, lady;
Thy son shall lead.
Jun. 'Tis a strange thing, Petillius,
That so ridiculous and loose a mirth
Can master your affections.
Pet. Any mirth,
And any way, of any subject, Junius,
Is better than unmanly mustiness.
What harm is in drink? in a good wholesome wench?
I do beseech you, sir, what error? Yet
It cannot out of my head handsomely,
But thou wouldst fain be drunk: come, no more fooling;
The general has new wine, new come over.
Jun. He must have new acquaintance for it too,
For I will none, I thank ye.
Pet. 'None, I thank you?'
A short and touchy answer! 'None, I thank you?'
You do not scorn it, do you?
Jun. Gods defend you, sir!
I owe him still more honour.
Pet. 'None, I thank you?'
No company, no drink, no wench, 'I thank you?'
You shall be worse entreated, sir.
Jun. Petillius,
As thou art honest, leave me!
Pet. 'None, I thank you?'
A modest and a decent resolution,
And well put on. Yes; I will leave you, Junius,
And leave you to the boys, that very shortly
Shall all salute you, by your new sirname,
Of Junius 'None I thank you." I would starve now,
Hang, drown, despair, deserve the forks, lie open
To all the dangerous passes of a wench,
Bound to believe her tears, wed her aches,
Ere I would own thy follies. I have found you,
Your lays, and out-leaps, Junius, haunts, and lodges;
I have viewed you, and I have found you, by my skill,
To be a fool of the first head, Junius,
And I will hunt you: You are in love, I know it;
You are an ass, and all the camp shall know it;
A peevish idle boy, your dame shall know it;
A wronger of my care, yourself shall know it.

Enter JUDAS *and four Soldiers.*

Judas. A bean? a princely diet, a full banquet,
To what we compass.
1 *Sold.* Fight like hogs for acorns?
2. *Sold.* Venture our lives for pig-nuts?
Pet. What ail these rascals?
3 *Sold.* If this hold, we are starved.
Judas. For my part, friends,
Which is but twenty beans a day (a hard world
For officers, and men of action!),
And those so clipt by master mouse, and rotten—
(For understand them French beans, where the fruits
Are ripened like the people, in old tubs)
For mine own part, I say, I am starved already,
Not worth another bean, consumed to nothing,
Nothing but flesh and bones left, miserable:
Now, if this musty provender can prick me
To honourable matters of atchievement, gentlemen,
Why, there is the point.
4 *Sold.* I'll fight no more.
Pet. You'll hang then!
A sovereign help for hunger. Ye eating rascals,
Whose gods are beef and brewis! whose brave angers
Do execution upon these, and chibbals!
Ye dog's heads in the porridge-pot! ye fight no more?
Does Rome depend upon your resolution
For eating mouldy pye-crust?
3 *Sold.* Would we had it!
Judas. I may do service, captain.
Pet. In a fish-market.
You, corporal Curry-comb, what will your fighting
Profit the commonwealth? do you hope to triumph?
Or dare your vamping valour, goodman Cobler,
Clap a new sole to the kingdom? 'Sdeath, ye dog-whelps,
You fight, or not fight?
Judas. Captain!
Pet. Out, ye flesh-flies!
Nothing but noise and nastiness!
Judas. Give us meat,
Whereby we may do.
Pet. Whereby hangs your valour?
Judas. Good bits afford good blows.
Pet. A good position;
How long is it since thou eatest last? Wipe thy mouth,
And then tell truth.
Judas. I have not eat to the purpose——
Pet. 'To the purpose!' what is that? half a cow and garlic?
Ye rogues, my company eat turf, and talk not;
Timber they can digest, and fight upon it;
Old mats, and mud with spoons, rare meats. Your shoes, slaves;
Dare ye cry out for hunger, and those extant?
Suck your sword-hilts, ye slaves; if ye be valiant,
Honour will make them marchpane. 'To the purpose?'
A grievous penance! Dost thou see that gentleman,
That melancholy monsieur!
Jun. Pray you, Petillius!
Pet. He has not eat these three weeks.
2 *Sold.* He has drunk the more then.
3 *Sold.* And that is all one.
Pet. Nor drunk nor slept these two months.
Judas. Captain, we do beseech you, as poor soldiers,

Men, that have seen good days, whose mortal stomachs
May sometime feel afflictions—— [*To Junius.*
Jun. This, Petillius,
Is not so nobly done.
Pet. 'Tis common profit;
Urge him to the point, he'll find you out a food,
That needs no teeth nor stomach; a strange furmity
Will feed you up as fat as hens in the foreheads,
And make ye fight like fichoks; to him.
Judas. Captain——
Jun. Do you long to have your throats cut?
Pet. See what metal
It makes in him: Two meals more of this melancholy,
And there lies Caratach.
Judas. We do beseech you——
2 *Sold.* Humbly beseech your valour——
Jun. Am I only
Become your sport, Petillius?
Judas. But to render
In way of general good, in preservation——
Jun. Out of my thoughts, ye slaves!
4 *Sold.* Or rather pity——
3 *Sold.* Your warlike remedy against the maw-worms.
Judas. Or notable receipt to live by nothing.
Pet. Out with your table-books!
Jun. Is this true friendship?
And must my killing griefs make other's May-games?
Stand from my sword's point, slaves! your poor starved spirits
Can make me no oblations; else, oh, love,
Thou proudly-blind destruction! I would send thee
Whole hetacombs of hearts, to bleed my sorrows.
Judas. Alas, he lives by love, sir. [*Exit Junius.*
Pet. So he does, sir;
And cannot you do so too? All my company
Are now in love; ne'er think of meat, nor talk
Of what provant is: *Ay me's!* and hearty *hey hoes!*
Are sallads fit for soldiers. Live by meat?
By larding up your bodies? 'tis lewd, and lazy,
And shews ye merely mortal, dull, and drives ye
To fight like camels, with baskets at your noses.
Get ye in love! handsomely
Fall but in love now, as ye see example,
And follow it but with all your thoughts, *probatum,*
There is so much charge saved, and your hunger's ended. [*Drum afar off.*
Away! I hear the general. Get ye in love all,
Up to the ears in love, that I may hear
No more of these rude murmurings; and discreetly
Carry your stomachs, or I prophesy
A pickled rope will choke ye. Jog, and talk not! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SUETONIUS, DEMETRIUS, DECIUS, *drum and colours.*

Suet. Demetrius, is the messenger dispatched
To Penius, to command him to bring up
The Volans regiment?
Dem. He is there by this time.
Suet. And are the horse well viewed, we brought from Mona?
Dec. The troops are full and lusty.
Suet. Good Petillius,
Look to those eating rogues, that bawl for victuals,
And stop their throats a day or two: Provision
Waits but the wind to reach us.
Pet. Sir, already
I have been tampering with their stomachs, which I find
As deaf as adders to delays: Your clemency
Hath made their murmurs, mutinies; nay rebellions;
Now, an they want but mustard, they are in uproars!
No oil but Candy, Lusitanian figs,
And wine from Lesbos, now can satisfy them;
The British waters are grown dull and muddy,
The fruit disgustful; Orontes must be sought for,
And apples from the happy isles; the truth is,
They are more curious now, in having nothing,
Than if the sea and land turned up their treasures.
This lost the colonies, and gave Bonduca
(With shame we must record it) time and strength
To look into our fortunes; great discretion
To follow offered victory; and last, full pride
To brave us to our teeth, and scorn our ruins.
Suet. Nay, chide not, good Petillius! I confess
My will to conquer Mona, and long stay
To execute that will, let in these losses:
All shall be right again, and as a pine
Rent from Oeta by a sweeping tempest,
Jointed again, and made a mast, defies
Those angry winds, that split him; so will I,
Pieced to my never-failing strength and fortune,
Steer through these swelling dangers, plow their prides up,
And bear like thunder through their loudest tempests.
They keep the field still?
Dem. Confident and full.
Pet. In such a number, one would swear they grew:
The hills are wooded with their partizans,
And all the vallies overgrown with darts,
As moors are with rank rushes; no ground left us
To charge upon, no room to strike. Say fortune
And our endeavours bring us into them,
They are so infinite, so ever-springing,
We shall be killed with killing; of desperate women,

That neither fear or shame e'er found, the devil
Has ranked amongst them multitudes; say the men fail,
They'll poison us with their petticoats; say they fail,
They have priests enough to pray us into nothing.
Suet. These are imaginations, dreams of nothing;
The man, that doubts or fears——
Dec. I am free of both.
Dem. The self-same I.
Pet. And I as free as any;
As careless of my flesh, of that we call life,
So I may lose it nobly, as indifferent
As if it were my diet. Yet, noble general,
It was a wisdom learned from you, I learned it,
And worthy of a soldier's care, most worthy,
To weigh with most deliberate circumstance
The ends of accidents, above their offers;
How to go on and get; to save a Roman,
Whose one life is more worth in way of doing,
Than millions of these painted wasps; how, viewing,
To find advantage out; how, found, to follow it
With counsel and discretion, lest mere fortune
Should claim the victory.
Suet. 'Tis true, Petillius,
And worthily remembered: The rule is certain,
Their uses no less excellent; but where time
Cuts off occasions, danger, time and all
Tend to a present peril, 'tis required
Our swords and manhoods be best counsellors,
Our expeditions, precedents. To win is nothing,
Where Reason, Time, and Counsel are our camp-masters;
But there to bear the field, then to be conquerors,
Where pale destruction takes us, takes us beaten,
In wants and mutinies, ourselves but handfulls,
And to ourselves our own fears, needs a new way,
A sudden and a desperate execution:
Here, how to save, is loss; to be wise, dangerous;
Only a present well-united strength,
And minds made up for all attempts, dispatch it:
Disputing and delay here cool the courage;
Necessity gives time for doubts; (things infinite,
According to the spirit they are preached to:)
Rewards like them, and names for after-ages,
Must steel the soldier, his own shame help to arm him:
And having forced his spirit, ere he cools,
Fling him upon his enemies; sudden and swift,
Like tigers amongst foxes, we must fight for it:
Fury must be our fortune; shame, we have lost,
Spurs ever in our sides to prick us forward:
There is no other wisdom nor discretion
Due to this day of ruin, but destruction;
The soldier's order first, and then his anger.
Dem. No doubt they dare redeem all.
Suet. Then no doubt
The day must needs be ours. That the proud woman
Is infinite in number better likes me,
Than if we dealt with squadrons; half her army
Shall choke themselves, their own swords dig their graves.
I'll tell ye all my fears; one single valour,
The virtues of the valiant Caratach,
More doubts me than all Britain: He's a soldier
So forged out, and so tempered for great fortunes,
So much man thrust into him, so old in dangers,
So fortunate in all attempts, that his mere name
Fights in a thousand men, himself in millions,
To make him Roman: But no more. Petillius,
How stands your charge?
Pet. Ready for all employments,
To be commanded too, sir.
Suet. 'Tis well governed;
To-morrow we'll draw out, and view the cohorts:
In the mean time, all apply their offices.
Where's Junius?
Pet. In his cabin, sick of the mumps, sir.
Suet. How?
Pet. In love, indeed in love, most lamentably loving,
To the tune of Queen Dido.
Dec. Alas, poor gentleman!
Suet. 'Twill make him fight the nobler. With what lady?
I'll be a spokesman for him.
Pet. You'll scant speed, sir.
Suet. Who is it?
Pet. The devil's dam, Bonduca's daughter,
Her youngest, cracked in the ring.
Suet. I'm sorry for him:
But sure his own discretion will reclaim him;
He must deserve our anger else. Good captains,
Apply yourselves in all the pleasing forms
Ye can, unto the soldiers; fire their spirits,
And set them fit to run this action;
Mine own provisions shall be shared amongst them,
'Till more come in; tell them, if now they conquer,
The fat of all the kingdom lies before them.
Their shames forgot, their honours infinite,
And want for ever banished. Two days hence,
Our fortunes, and our swords, and gods be for us!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter PENIUS, REGULUS, MACER, *and* DRUSIUS.

Pen. I MUST come?
Macer. So the general commands, sir.
Pen. I *must* bring up my regiment?
Macer. Believe, sir,
I bring no lie.
Pen. But, did he say I *must* come?
Macer. So delivered.

Pen. How long is it, Regulus, since I commanded
In Britain here?
Reg. About five years, great Penius.
Pen. The general, some five months! Are all my actions
So poor and lost, my services so barren,
That I'm remembered in no nobler language
But *must* come up?
Macer. I do beseech you, sir,
Weigh but the time's estate.
Pen. Yes, good lieutenant,
I do, and his that sways it. *Must* come up?
Am I turned bare centurion? *Must*, and *shall*,
Fit embassies to court my honour?
Macer. Sir——
Pen. Set me to lead a handful of my men
Against an hundred thousand barbarous slaves,
That have marched nanie by name with Rome's best doers?
Serve them up some other meat; I'll bring no food
To stop the jaws of all those hungry wolves;
My regiment's mine own. I *must*, my language?

Enter CURIUS.

Cur. Penius, where lies the host?
Pen. Where fate may find them.
Cur. Are they ingirt?
Pen. The battle's lost.
Cur. So soon?
Pen. No; but 'tis lost, because it must be won;
The Britons must be victors. Whoever saw
A troop of bloody vultures hovering
About a few corrupted carcasses,
Let him behold the silly Roman host,
Girded with millions of fierce Britain's swains,
With deaths as many as they have had hopes;
And then go thither, he that loves his shame!
I scorn my life, yet dare not lose my name.
Cur. Do not you hold it a most famous end,
When both our names and lives are sacrificed
For Rome's encrease?
Pen. Yes, Curius; but mark this too:
What glory is there, or what lasting fame
Can be to Rome or us, what full example,
When one is smothered with a multitude,
And crowded in amongst a nameless press?
Honour got out of flint, and on their heads
Whose virtues, like the sun, exhaled all vapours,
Must not be lost in mists and fogs of people,
Noteless, and out of name, both rude and naked:
Nor can Rome task us with impossibilities,
Or bid us fight against a flood; we serve her,
That she may proudly say she has good soldiers,
Not slaves to choke all hazards. Who but fools,
That make no difference betwixt certain dying,
And dying well, would fling their fames and fortunes
Into this Britain gulf, this quicksand ruin,
That, sinking, swallows us? what noble hand
Can find a subject fit for blood there? or what sword
Room for his execution? what sir to tool us,
But poisoned with their blasting breaths and curses,
Where we lie buried quick above the ground,
And are with labouring sweat, and breathless pain,
Killed like to slaves, and cannot kill again?
Drus. Penius, mark antient wars, and know, that then
A captain weighed an hundred thousand men.
Pen. Drusius, mark antient wisdom, and you'll find then,
He gave the overthrow, that saved his men.
I must not go.
Reg. The soldiers are desirous,
Their eagles all drawn out, sir.
Pen. Who drew up? Regulus?
Ha? speak! did you? whose bold will durst attempt this?
Drawn out? why, who commands, sir? on whose warrant
Durst they advance?
Reg. I keep mine own obedience.
Drus. 'Tis like the general cause, their love of honour,
Relieving of their wants——
Pen. Without my knowledge?
Am I no more? my place but at their pleasures?
Come, who did this?
Drus. By heaven, sir, I am ignorant.
[*Drum softly within, then enter Soldiers, with drum and colours.*
Pen. What! am I grown a shadow?—Hark! they march.
I'll know, and will be myself. Stand! Disobedience?
He, that advances one foot higher, dies for it.
Run through the regiment, upon your duties,
And charge them, on command, beat back again;
By heaven, I'll tithe them all else!
Reg. We'll do our best. [*Exe. Drus. and Reg.*
Pen. Back! cease your bawling thrums there!
I'll beat the tubs about your brains else. Back!
Do I speak with less fear than thunder to ye?
Must I stand to beseech ye? Home, home!—Ha!
D'ye stare upon me? Are those minds I moulded,
Those honest valiant tempers I was proud
To be a fellow to, those great discretions
Made your names feared and honoured, turned to wildfires?
Oh, gods, to disobedience! Command, farewell!
And ye be witness with me, all things sacred,
I have no share in these mens' shames! March, soldiers,
And seek your own sad ruins; your old Penius
Dares not behold your murders.
1 *Sold.* Captain!
2 *Sold.* Captain!
3 *Sold.* Dear, honoured captain!
Pen. Too, too dear-loved soldiers,
Which made ye weary of me, and heaven yet knows,
Though in your mutinies, I dare not hate you;

Take your own wills! 'tis fit your long experience
Should now know how to rule yourselves; I wrong ye,
In wishing ye to save your lives and credits,
To keep your necks whole from the axe hangs o'er ye:
Alas, I much dishonoured ye; go, seek the Britons,
And say ye come to glut their sacrifices;
But do not say I sent ye. What ye have been,
How excellent in all parts, good, and governed,
Is only left of my command, for story;
What now ye are, for pity. Fare ye well!

Enter DRUSIUS *and* REGULUS.

Drus. Oh, turn again, great Penius! see the soldier
In all points apt for duty.
Reg. See his sorrow
For his disobedience, which he says was haste,
And haste, he thought, to please you with. See, captain,
The toughness of his courage turned to water;
See how his manly heart melts.
Pen. Go; beat homeward;
There learn to eat your little with obedience;
And henceforth strive to do as I direct ye.
Macer. My answer, sir. [*Exeunt soldiers.*
Pen. Tell the great general,
My companies are no faggots to fill breaches;
Myself no man that *must*, or *shall*, can carry:
Bid him be wise, and where he is, he's safe then;
And when he finds out possibilities,
He may command me. Commend me to the captains.
Macer. All this I shall deliver.
Pen. Farewell, Macer! [*Exit.*
Cur. Pray gods this breed no mischief!
Reg. It must needs,
If stout Suetonius win; for then his anger,
Besides the soldiers' loss of due and honour,
Will break together on him.
Drus. He's a brave fellow;
And but a little hide his haughtiness,
(Which is but sometimes neither, on some causes)
He shews the worthiest Roman this day living.
You may, good Curius, to the general
Make all things seem the best.
Cur. I shall endeavour.
Pray for our fortunes, gentlemen; if we fall,
This one farewell serves for a funeral.
The gods make sharp our swords, and steel our hearts!
Reg. We dare, alas, but cannot fight our parts.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter JUNIUS, PETILLIUS, *and a Herald.*

Pet. Let him go on. Stay; now he talks.
Jun. Why,
Why should I love mine enemy? what's beauty?
Of what strange violence, that, like the plague,
It works upon our spirits? Blind they feign him;
I'm sure, I find it so——
Pet. A dog shall lead you.
Jun. His fond affections blinder——
Pet. Hold you there still?
Jun. It takes away my sleep——
Pet. Alas, poor chicken!
Jun. My company, content, almost my fashion——
Pet. Yes, and your weight too, if you follow it.
Jun. 'Tis sure the plague, for no man dare come near me
Without an antidote; 'tis far worse, hell.——
Pet. Thou'rt damned without redemption then.
Jun. The way to it
Strewed with fair western smiles, and April blushes,
Led by the brightest constellations; eyes,
And sweet proportions, envying heaven; but from thence
No way to guide, no path, no wisdom brings us.
Pet. Yes, a smart water, Junius.
Jun. Do I fool?
Know all this, and fool still? Do I know further,
That, when we have enjoyed our ends, we lose them,
And all our appetites are but as dreams
We laugh at in our ages?——
Pet. Sweet philosopher!
Jun. Do I know on still, and yet know nothing? Mercy, gods!
Why am I thus ridiculous?
Pet. Motley on thee!
Thou art an arrant ass.
Jun. Can red and white,
An eye, a nose, a cheek——
Pet. But one cheek, Junius?
An half-faced mistress!
Jun. With a little trim,
That wanton fools call fashion, thus abuse me?
Take me beyond my reason? Why should not I
Doat on my horse well trapt, my sword well hatched?
They are as handsome things, to me more useful,
And possible to rule too. Did I but love,
Yet 'twere excusable, my youth would bear it;
But to love there, and that no time can give me,
Mine honour dare not ask (she has been ravished),
My nature must not know (she hates our nation),
Thus to dispose my spirit!
Pet. Stay a little; he will declaim again.
Jun. I will not love! I am a man, have reason,
And I will use it; I'll no more tormenting,
Nor whining for a wench; there are a thousand——
Pet. Hold thee there, boy!
Jun. A thousand will entreat me.
Pet. Ten thousand, Junius.
Jun. I am young and lusty,
And to my fashion valiant. I will be man again.

Pet. Now mark the working!
The devil and the spirit tug for it: Twenty pound
Upon the devil's head!
Jun. I must be wretched!
Pet. I knew I'd won.
Jun. Nor have I so much power
To shun my fortune.
Pet. I will hunt thy fortune
With all the shapes imagination breeds, [*Music.*
But I will fright thy devil. Stay, he sings now.
[*Song, by Junius, and Petillius after him, in mockage.*
Jun. Must I be thus abused?
Pet. Yes, marry must you.
Let's follow him close: Oh, there he is; now read it.
Herald [*reading*]. "It is the general's command, that all sick persons, old and unable, retire within the trenches; he, that fears, has liberty to leave the field: Fools, boys, and cowards must not come near the regiments, for fear of their infections; especially those cowards, they call lovers."
Jun. Ha?
Pet. Read on.
Herald [*Reading*]. "If any common soldier love an enemy, he's whipped and made a slave: If any captain, cast, with loss of honours, flung out of the army, and made unable ever after to bear the name of a soldier."
Jun. The pox consume ye all, rogues! [*Exit.*
Pet. Let this work;
He has something now to chew upon. He's gone;
Come, shake no more.
Herald. Well, sir, you may command me,
But not to do the like again for Europe;
I would have given my life for a bent two-pence.
If I e'er read to lovers, whilst I live, again,
Or come within their confines——
Pet. There's your payment,
And keep this private.
Herald. I am schooled for talking. [*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Pet. How now, Demetrius? are we drawn?
Dem. 'Tis doing;
Your company stands fair. But pray you, where's Junius?
Half his command are wanting, with some forty,
That Decius leads.
Pet. Hunting for victuals.
Upon my life, free-booting rogues! their stomachs
Are, like a widow's, never satisfied.
Dem. I wonder how they dare stir, knowing the enemy
Master of all the country.
Pet. Resolute hungers
Know neither fears nor faiths; they tread on ladders,
Ropes, gallows, and overdo all dangers.
Dem. They may be hanged though.
Pet. There's their joyful supper.
And no doubt they are at it.
Dem. But, for heaven's sake,
How does young Junius?
Pet. Drawing on, poor gentleman.
Dem. What, to his end?
Pet. To the end of all flesh, woman.
Dem. This love has made him a stout soldier.
Pet. Oh, a great one,
Fit to command young goslings. But what news?
Dem. I think the messenger's come back from Penius
By this time; let's go know.
Pet. What will you say now
If he deny to come, and take exceptions
At some half syllable, or sound delivered
With an ill accent, or some style left out?
Dem. I cannot think he dare.
Pet. He dare speak treason,
Dare say what no man dares believe, dares do——
But that's all one: I'll lay you my black armour
To twenty crowns, he comes not.
Dem. Done.
Pet. You'll pay?
Dem. I will.
Pet. Then keep thine old use, Penius!
Be stubborn and vainglorious, and I thank thee.
Come, let's go pray for six hours; most of us
I fear will trouble heaven no more: Two good blows
Struck home at two commanders of the Britons,
And my part's done.
Dem. I do not think of dying.
Pet. 'Tis possible we may live; But, Demetrius,
With what strange legs, and arms, and eyes, and noses,
Let carpenters and copper-smiths consider.
If I can keep my heart whole, and my windpipe,
That I may drink yet like a soldier——
Dem. Come, let's have better thoughts; mine's on your armour.
Pet. Mine's in your purse, sir; let's go try the wager! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter JUDAS *and his four companions (halters about their necks),* BONDUCA, *her daughters, and* NENNIUS *following.*

Bond. Come, hang them presently.
Nen. What made your rogueships
Harrying for victuals here? Are we your friends?
Or do you come for spies? Tell me directly,
Would you not willingly be hanged now? Do not ye long for it?
Judas. What say ye? shall we hang in this vein? Hang we must,
And 'tis as good to dispatch it merrily.
1 *Sold.* Any way,
So it be handsome.
3 *Sold.* I had as lieve 'twere toothsome too:
But all agree, and I'll not stick out, boys.

4 *Sold.* Let us hang pleasantly.
Judas. Then pleasantly be it:
Captain, the truth is, we had as lieve hang
With meat in our mouths, as ask your pardon empty.
Bond. These are brave hungers.
What say you to a leg of beef now, sirrah?
Judas. Bring me acquainted with it, and I'll tell ye.
Bond. Torment them, wenches, (I must back) then hang them. [*Exit.*
Judas. We humbly thank your Grace!
1 *Daugh.* The rogues laugh at us.
2 *Daugh.* These are the merry Romans, the brave madcaps:
'Tis ten to one we'll cool your resolutions.
Bring out the whips.
Judas. 'Would your good ladyships
Would exercise them too!
4 *Sold.* Surely, ladies,
We'll shew you a strange patience.
Nen. Hang them, rascals!
They'll talk thus on the wheel.

Enter CARATACH.

Car. Now, what's the matter?
What are these fellows? what's the crime committed,
That they wear necklaces?
Nen. They are Roman rogues,
Taken a-foraging.
Car. Is that all, Nennius?
Judas. 'Would I were fairly hanged! This is the devil,
The kill-cow Caratach.
Car. And you would hang them?
Nen. Are they not enemies?
1 *Daugh.* Are they not our tormentors?
Car. Tormentors? flea-traps!
Pluck off your halters, fellows.
Nen. Take heed, Caratach;
Taint not your wisdom.
Car. Wisdom, Nennius?
Why, who shall fight against us, make our honours,
And give a glorious day into our hands,
If we dispatch our foes thus? What's their offence?
Stealing a loaf or two to keep out hunger?
A piece of greasy bacon, or a pudding?
Do these deserve the gallows? They are hungry.
Poor hungry knaves, no meat at home left, starved:
Art thou not hungry?
Judas. Monstrous hungry.
Car. He looks
Like hunger's self. Get them some victuals,
And wine to cheer their hearts; quick! Hang up poor pilchers?
2 *Sold.* This is the bravest captain———
Nen. Caratach,
I'll leave you to your will.
Car. I'll answer all, sir.
2 *Daugh.* Let's up and view his entertainment of them!
I am glad they are shifted any way; their tongues else
Would still have murdered us.
1 *Daugh.* Let's up and see it! [*Exeunt.*

Enter HENGO.

Car. Sit down, poor knaves! Why, where's this wine and victuals?
Who waits there?
Serv. [*within.*] Sir, 'tis coming.
Hengo. Who are these, uncle?
Car. They are Romans, boy.
Hengo. Are these they,
That vex my aunt so? can these fight? they look
Like empty scabbards all, no mettle in them;
Like men of clouts, set to keep crows from orchards:
Why, I dare fight with these.
Car. That's my good chicken!—
And how d'ye? how d'ye feel your stomachs?
Judas. Wondrous apt, sir;
As shall appear, when time calls.
Car. That's well; down with it.
A little grace well serve your turns. Eat softly!
You'll choke, ye knaves, else. Give them wine!
Judas. Not yet, sir;
We're even a little busy.
Hengo. Can that fellow
Do any thing but eat? Thou fellow!
Judas. Away, boy;
Away; this is no boy's play.
Hengo. By heaven, uncle,
If his valour lie in his teeth, he is the most valiant.
Car. I am glad to hear you talk, sir.
Hengo. Good uncle, tell me,
What's the price of a couple of crammed Romans?
Car. Some twenty Britons, boy; these are good soldiers.
Hengo. Do not the cowards eat hard too?
Car. No more, boy.
Come, I'll sit with you too. Sit down by me, boy.
Judas. Pray bring your dish then.
Car. Hearty knaves! more meat there.
1 *Sold.* That's a good hearing.
Car. Stay now, and pledge me.
Judas. This little piece, sir.
Car. By heaven, square eaters!
More meat, I say! Upon my conscience,
The poor rogues have not eat this month! how terribly
They charge upon their victuals! Dare ye fight thus?
Judas. Believe it, sir, like devils.
Car. Well said, Famine!
Here's to thy general.
Judas. Most excellent captain,
I will now pledge thee.
Car. And tomorrow-night, say to him,
His head is mine.
Judas. I can assure you, captain,
He will not give it for this washing.

Car. Well said. [*Daughters above.*
1 *Daugh.* Here's a strange entertainment: How the thieves drink!
2 *Daugh.* Danger is dry; they looked for colder liquor.
Car. Fill them more wine; give them full bowls. Which of you all now,
In recompense of this good, dare but give me
A sound knock in the battle?
Judas. Delicate captain,
To do thee a sufficient recompense,
I'll knock thy brains out.
Car. Do it.
Hengo. Thou darest as well
Be damned! thou knock his brains out? thou skin of man?
Uncle, I will not hear this.
Judas. Tie up your whelp.
Hengo. Thou kill my uncle? 'Would I had but a sword
For thy sake, thou dried dog!
Car. What a mettle
This little vermin carries!
Hengo. Kill mine uncle?
Car. He shall not, child.
Hengo. He cannot; he is a rogue,
An only eating rogue! kill my sweet uncle?
Oh, that I were a man!
Judas. By this wine, which I
Will drink to captain Junius, who loves
The queen's most excellent majesty's little daughter
Most sweetly, and most fearfully, I'll do it.
Hengo. Uncle, I'll kill him with a great pin.
Car. No more, boy!
I'll pledge thy captain. To ye all, good fellows!
2 *Daugh.* In love with me? that love shall cost your lives all.
Come, sister, and advise me; I have here
A way to make an easy conquest of them,
If fortune favour me. [*Exeunt daughters.*
Car. Let's see you sweat,
Tomorrow, blood and spirit, boys; this wine
Turned to stern valour.
1 *Sold.* Hark you, Judas;
If he should hang us after all this?
Judas. Let him:
I'll hang like a gentleman, and a Roman.
Car. Take away there;
They have enough.
Judas. Captain, we think you heartily
For your good cheer; and if we meet tomorrow,
One of us pays for it.
Car. Get them guides; their wine
Has over-mastered them.

Enter second Daughter and a Servant.

2 *Daugh.* That hungry fellow
With the red beard there, give it him, and this,
To see it well delivered.
Car. Farewell, knaves!
Speak nobly of us; keep your words to-morrow,

Enter a Guide.

And do something worthy your meat. Go, guide them,
And see them fairly onward. [*Exit.*
Judas. Meaning me, sir?
Serv. The same.
The youngest daughter to the queen entreats you
To give this privately to captain Junius;
This for your pains.
Judas. I rest her humble servant;
Commend me to thy lady. Keep your files, boys.
Serv. I must instruct you further.
Judas. Keep your files there!
Order, sweet friends; faces about now.
Guide. Here, sir;
Here lies your way.
Judas. Bless the founders, I say!
Fairly, good soldiers, fairly! march now; close, boys! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter SUETONIUS, PETILLIUS, DEMETRIUS, DECIUS, *and* MACER.

Suet. Bid me be wise, and keep me where I am,
And so be safe? not come, because commanded?
Was it not thus?
Macer. It was, sir.
Pet. What now think you?
Suet. *Must come* so heinous to him, so distasteful?
Pet. Give me my money.
Dem. I confess 'tis due, sir,
And presently I'll pay it.
Suet. His obedience
So blind at his years and experience,
It cannot find where to be tendered?
Macer. Sir,
The regiment was willing, and advanced too,
The captains at all points steeled up; their preparations
Full of resolve and confidence; youth and fire,
Like the fair breaking of a glorious day,
Gilded their phalanx; when the angry Penius
Stept, like a stormy cloud, betwixt them and hopes.
Suet. And stopped their resolutions?
Macer. True; his reason
To them was odds, and odds so infinite,
Discretion durst not look upon.
Suet. Well, Penius,
I cannot think thee coward yet; and treacherous
I dare not think; thou hast lopt a limb off from me;
And let it be thy glory, thou was stubborn,
Thy wisdom, that thou left'st thy general naked!
Yet, ere the sun set, I shall make thee see
All valour dwells not in thee, all command
In one experience. Thou wilt too late repent this,
And wish 'I *must* come up' had been thy blessing.
Pet. Let's force him.

Suet. No, by no means; he's a torrent
We cannot easily stem.
Pet. I think, a traitor.
Suet. No ill words! let his own shame first revile him.
That wine I have, see it, Demetrius,
Distributed amongst the soldiers,
To make them high and lusty; when that's done,
Petillius, give the word through, that the eagles
May presently advance; no man discover,
Upon his life, the enemies' full strength,
But make it of no value. Decius,
Are your starved people yet come home?
Dec. I hope so.
Suet. Keep them in more obedience: This is no time
To chide, I could be angry else, and say more to you;
But come, let's order all. Whose sword is sharpest,
And valour equal to his sword this day,
Shall be my saint.
Pet. We shall be holy all, then. [*Exeunt.*

Manet DECIUS. *Enter* JUDAS *and his company.*

Judas. Captain, captain, I've brought them off again;
The drunkenmest slaves!
Dec. Pox confound your rogueships!
I'll call the general, and have ye hanged all.
Judas. Pray who will you command, then?
Dec. For you, sirrah,
That are the ringleader to these devices,
Whose maw is never crammed, I'll have an engine—
Judas. A wench, sweet captain.
Dec. Sweet Judas, even the forks,
Where you shall have two lictors, with two whips,
Hammer your hide.
Judas. Captain, good words, fair words,
Sweet words, good captain; if you like not us,
Farewell! we have employment.
Dec. Where hast thou been?
Judas. There, where you dare not be, with all your valour.
Dec. Where's that?
Judas. With the best good fellow living.
1 *Sold.* The king of all good fellows.
Dec. Who's that?
Judas. Caratach.
Shake now, and say, we have done something worthy!
Mark me, with Caratach; by this Heaven, Caratach!
Do you as much now, an you dare. Sweet Caratach!
You talk of a good fellow, of true drinking;
Well, go thy ways, old Caratach! Besides the drink, captain,
The bravest running banquet of black puddings,
Pieces of glorious beef——
Dec. How escaped ye hanging?
Judas. Hanging's a dog's death, we are gentlemen;
And I say still, old Caratach!
Dec. Belike, then,
You are turned rebels all.
Judas. We are Roman boys all,
And boys of mettle. I must do that, captain,
This day, this very day——
Dec. Away, ye rascal!
Judas. Fair words, I say again!
Dec. What must you do, sir?
Judas. I must do that my heart-strings yearn to do;
But my word's past.
Dec. What is it?
Judas. Why, kill Caratach.
That's all he asked us for our entertainment.
Dec. More than you'll pay.
Judas. Would I had sold myself
Unto the skin, I had not promised it!
For such another Caratach——
Dec. Come, fool,
Have you done your country service?
Judas. I've brought that
To captain Junius——
Dec. How!
Judas. I think will do all;
I cannot tell; I think so.
Dec. How! to Junius?
I'll more enquire of this. You'll fight now?
Judas. Promise,
Take heed of promise, captain!
Dec. Away, and rank them.
Judas. But, hark you, captain; there is wine distributing;
I would fain know what share I have.
Dec. Be gone;
You have too much.
Judas. Captain, no wine, no fighting:
There's one called Caratach, that has wine.
Dec. Well, sir,
If you'll be ruled now, and do well——
Judas. Do excellent.
Dec. You shall have wine, or any thing. Go file;
I'll see you have your share. Drag out your dormice,
And stow them somewhere, where they may sleep handsomely;
They'll hear a hunts-up shortly.
Judas. Now I love thee:
But no more forks nor whips!
Dec. Deserve them not then.
Up with your men; I'll meet you presently;
And get them sober quickly.
Judas. Arm, arm, bullies!
All's right again and straight; and, which is more,
More wine, more wine. Awake, ye men of Memphis!
Be sober and discreet; we've much to do, boys.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Prepare there for the sacrifice! the queen comes.

Music. Enter in solemnity the Druids singing, the second daughter strewing flowers; then BONDUCA, CARATACH, NENNIUS, *and others.*

Bond. Ye powerful gods of Britain, hear our prayers!
Hear us, ye great revengers! and this day
Take pity from our swords, doubt from our valours,
Double the sad remembrance of our wrongs
In every breast! the vengeance due to those
Make infinite and endless! On our pikes
This day pale terror sit, horrors and ruins
Upon our executions; claps of thunder
Hang on our armed carts; and before our troops
Despair and death; shame beyond these attend them!
Rise from the dust, ye relicks of the dead,
Whose noble deeds our holy Druids sing!
Oh, rise, ye valiant bones! let not base earth
Oppress your honours, whilst the pride of Rome
Treads on your stocks, and wipes out all your stories!

Nen. Thou great Tiranes, whom our sacred priests,
Armed with dreadful thunder, place on high
Above the rest of the immortal gods,
Send thy consuming fires and deadly bolts,
And shoot them home; stick in each Roman heart
A fear fit for confusion; blast their spirits,
Dwell in them to destruction; through their phalanx
Strike as thou strikest a proud tree; shake their bodies,
Make their strengths totter, and their topless fortunes
Unroot, and reel to ruin!

1 *Daugh.* Oh, thou god,
Thou feared god, if ever to thy justice
Insulting wrongs, and ravishments of women,
(Women derived from thee) their shames, the sufferings
Of those that daily filled thy sacrifice
With virgin incense, have access, now hear me!
Now snatch thy thunder up, now on these Romans,
Despisers of thy power, of us defacers;
Revenge thyself; take to thy killing anger,
To make thy great work full, the justice spoken,
An utter rooting, from this blessed isle,
Of what Rome is, or has been!

Bond. Give more incense!
The gods are deaf and drowsy, no happy flame
Rises to raise our thoughts. Pour on.

2 *Daugh.* See, Heaven,
And all you powers that guide us, see and shame,
We kneel so long for pity! O'er your altars,
Since 'tis no light oblation, that you look for,
No incense-offering, will I hang mine eyes;
And as I wear these stones with hourly weeping,
So will I melt your powers into compassion.
This tear for Prosutagus, my brave father;
(Ye gods, now think on Rome!) this for my mother,
And all her miseries; yet see, and save us!
But now ye must be open-eyed. See, heaven,
Oh, see thy showers stolen from thee; our dishonours,
[*A smoke from the altar.*
Oh, sister, our dishonours! Can ye be gods,
And these sins smothered?

Bond. The fire takes.

Car. It does so,
But no flame rises. Cease your fretful prayers,
Your whinings, and your tame petitions!
The gods love courage armed with confidence,
And prayers fit to pull them down: Weak tears
And troubled hearts, the dull twins of cold spirits,
They sit and smile at. Hear how I salute them:
Divine Andate! thou, who holdst the reins
Of furious battles, and disordered war,
And proudly roll'st thy swarty chariot-wheels
Over the heaps of wounds and carcasses,
Sailing through seas of blood; thou sure-steeled sternness,
Give us this day good hearts, good enemies,
Good blows of both sides, wounds, that fear or flight
Can claim no share in; steel us both with angers
And warlike executions, fit thy viewing;
Let Rome put on her best strength, and thy Britain,
Thy little Britain, but as great in fortune,
Meet her as strong as she, as proud, as daring!
And then look on, thou red-eyed god! who does best,
Reward with honour; who despair makes fly,
Unarm for ever, and brand with infamy!
Grant this, divine Andate! 'tis but justice;
And my first blow, thus, on thy holy altar
I sacrifice unto thee. [*A flame rises.*

Bond. It flames out. [*Music.*

Car. Now sing, ye Druids. [*Song.*

Bond. It is out again.

Car. He has given us leave to fight yet; we ask no more;
The rest hangs on our resolutions:
Tempt him no more.

Bond. I would know further, cousin.

Car. His hidden meaning dwells in our endeavours,
Our valours are our best gods. Chear the soldier,
And let him eat.

Mes. He is at it, sir.
Cur. Away then;
When he has done, let us march. Come, fear not, lady;
This day the Roman gains no more ground here,
But what his body lies in.
Bond. Now I am confident. [*Exeunt. Recorders.*

SCENE II.

Enter JUNIUS, CURIUS, *and* DECIUS.

Dec. We dare not hazard it; beside our lives,
It forfeits all our understandings.
Jun. Gentlemen,
Can ye forsake me in so just a service,
A service for the commonwealth, for honour?
Read but the letter; you may love too.
Dec. Read it.
If there be any safety in the circumstance,
Or likelihood 'tis love, we will not fail you:
Read it, good Curius.
Cur. Willingly.
Jun. Now mark it.
Cur. [*reading.*] "Health to thy heart, my honoured Junius,
All thy love requited! I am thine,
Thine everlastingly; thy love has won me;
And led it breed no doubt, our new acquaintance
Compels this; 'tis the gods' decree to bless us.
The times are dangerous to meet, yet fail not;
By all the love thou bear'st me I conjure thee,
Without distrust of danger, to come to me!
For I have purposed a delivery
Both of myself and fortune this blessed day
Into thy hands, if thou thinkest good. To shew thee
How infinite my love is, even my mother
Shall be thy prisoner, the day yours without hazard;
For I beheld your danger like a lover,
A just affecter of thy faith: Thy goodness,
I know, will use us nobly; and our marriage,
If not redeem, yet lessen Rome's ambition:
I'm weary of these miseries. Use my mother
(If you intend to take her) with all honour;
And let this disobedience to my parent
Be laid on love, not me. Bring with thee, Junius,
Some spirits resolved to fetch me off, the noblest;
Five will serve the turn, just at the joining
Of both the battles; we will be weakly guarded,
And for a guide, within this hour, shall reach thee
A faithful friend of mine. The gods, my Junius,
Keep thee, and me to serve thee! Young Bonvica."
Cur. This letter carries much belief, and most objections
Answered, we must have doubted.
Dec. Is that fellow
Come to you for a guide yet?
Jun. Yes.
Dec. And examined?
Jun. Far more than that; he has felt tortures, yet
He vows he knows no more than this truth.
Dec. Strange!
Cur. If she mean what she writes, as it may be probable,
'Twill be the happiest vantage we can lean to.
Jun. I'll pawn my soul she means truth.
Dec. Think an hour more;
Then if your confidence grow stronger on you,
We'll set in with you.
Jun. Nobly done! I thank ye.
Ye know the time.
Cur. We will be either ready
To give you present counsel, or join with you.

Enter SUETONIUS, PETILLIUS, DEMETRIUS, *and* MACER.

Jun. No more, as ye are gentlemen. The general!
Suet. Draw out apace; the enemy waits for us.
Are ye all ready?
Jun. All our troops attend, sir.
Suet. I am glad to hear you say so, Junius;
I hope you are dispossessed.
Jun. I hope so too, sir.
Suet. Continue so. And, gentlemen, to you now!
To bid you fight is needless; ye are Romans;
The name will fight itself: To tell ye who
You go to fight against, his power, and nature,
But loss of time; ye know it, know it poor,
And oft have made it so: To tell ye further,
His body shews more dreadful than it has done,
To him that fears, less possible to deal with,
Is but to stick more honour on your actions,
Load ye with virtuous names, and to your memories
Tie never-dying time and fortune constant.
Go on in full assurance! draw your swords
As daring and as confident as justice;
The gods of Rome fight for ye; loud Fame calls ye,
Pitched on the topless Apennine, where the snow dwells,
And blows to all the under-world, all nations,
The seas and unfrequented deserts; wakens
The ruined monuments; and there, where nothing
But eternal death and sleep is, informs again
The dead bones with your virtues. Go on, I say:
Valiant and wise rule heaven, and all the great
Aspects! attend them, do but blow upon
This enemy, who, but that we want foes,
Cannot deserve that name; and, like a mist,
A lazy fog, before your burning valours
You'll find him fly to nothing. This is all;
We have swords, and are the sons of ancient Romans,
Heirs to their endless valours; fight and conquer!
Dec. Dem. It is done.
Pet. That man, that loves not this day,
And hugs not in his arms the noble danger,
May he die fameless and forgot!

Suet. Sufficient!
Up to your troops, and let your drums beat thunder;
March close and sudden, like a tempest: All executions [*March.*
Done without sparkling of the body; keep your phalanx
Sure lined, and pieced together, your pikes forward,
And so march like a moving fort. Ere this day run,
We shall have ground to add to Rome, well won.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter CARATACH *and* NENNIUS.

Nen. The Roman is advanced; from yon hill's brow
We may behold him, Caratach. [*A march.*
Car. Let us thither;
[*Drums within at one place afar off.*
I see the dust fly. Now I see the body.
Observe them, Nennius; by heaven, a handsome body,
And, of a few, strongly and wisely jointed!
Suetonius is a soldier.
Nen. As I take it,
That is he, that gallops by the regiments,
Viewing their preparations.
Car. Very likely;
He shews no less than general. See how bravely
The body moves, and in the head how proudly
The captains stick like plumes; he come apace on.
Good Nennius, go, and bid my stout lieutenant
Bring on the first square body to oppose them,
And, as he charges, open to enclose them;
The queen move next with her's, and wheel about,
To gain their backs, in which I'll lead the vanguard.
We shall have bloody crowns this day, I see by it.
Haste thee, good Nennius; I'll follow instantly.
[*Exit Nennius.*
How close they march, as if they grew together,
[*March.*
No place but lined alike, sure from oppression!
They will not change this figure; we must charge them,
And charge them home at both ends, van and rear; [*Drums in another place afar off.*
They never totter else. I hear our music,
And must attend it: Hold, good sword, but this day,
And bite hard, where I hound thee! and hereafter
I'll make a relic of thee, for young soldiers
To come like pilgrims to, and kiss for conquests.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter JUNIUS, CURIUS, *and* DECIUS.

Jun. Now is the time; the fellow stays.
Dec. What think ye?
Cur. I think it is true.
Jun. Alas, if it were a question,
If any doubt or hazard fell into it,
Do ye think mine own discretion so self-blind,
My care of ye so naked, to run headlong?
Dec. Let us take Petillius with us!
Jun. By no means;
He is never wise but to himself, nor courteous,
But where the end is his own: we are strong enough,
If not too many. Behind yonder hill,
The fellow tells me, she attends, weak guarded,
Her mother and her sister.
Cur. I would venture.
Jun. We shall not strike five blows for it. Weigh the good,
The general good may come.
Dec. Away! I'll with ye;
But with what doubt——
Jun. Fear not; my soul for all!
[*Exeunt. Alarms, drums and trumpets in several places afar off, as at a main battle.*

SCENE V.

Enter DRUSIUS *and* PENIUS *above.*

Drus. Here you may see them all, sir; from this hill
The country shews off level.
Pen. Gods defend me,
What multitudes they are, what infinites!
The Roman power shews like a little star,
Hedged with a double halo.—Now the knell rings:
[*Loud shouts.*
Hark, how they shout to the battle! how the air
Totters and reels, and rends apieces, Drusius,
With the huge-vollied clamours!
Drus. Now they charge
(Oh, gods!) of all sides, fearfully.
Pen. Little Rome,
Stand but this growing hydra one short hour,
And thou hast out-done Hercules!
Drus. The dust
Hides them; we cannot see what follows.
Pen. They are gone,
Gone, swallowed, Drusius; this eternal sun
Shall never see them march more.
Drus. Oh, turn this way,
And see a model of the field! some forty,
Against four hundred!
Pen. Well fought, bravely followed!
Oh, nobly charged again, charged home too Drusius,
They seem to carry it. Now they charge all;
[*Loud shouts.*
Close, close, I say! they follow it. Ye gods,
Can there be more in men? more daring spirits
Still they make good their fortunes. Now they are gone too,
For ever gone! see, Drusius, at their backs
A fearful ambush rises. Farewell, valours,

Excellent valours! oh, Rome, where is thy wisdom?
Drus. They are gone indeed, sir.
Pen. Look out toward the army;
I am heavy with these slaughters.
Drus. 'Tis the same still,
Covered with dust and fury. [*They retire.*

Enter the two Daughters, with JUNIUS, CURIUS, DECIUS, *Soldiers, and Servants.*

2 *Daugh.* Bring them in;
Tie them, and then unarm them.
1 *Daugh.* Valiant Romans,
Ye are welcome to your loves!
2 *Daugh.* Your death, fools!
Dec. We deserve them;
And, women, do your worst.
1 *Daugh.* Ye need not beg it.
2 *Daugh.* Which is kind Junius?
Serv. This.
2 *Daugh.* Are you my sweetheart?
It looks ill on it! How long is it, pretty soul,
Since you and I first loved? Had we not reason
To doat extremely upon one another?
How does my love? This is not he; my chicken
Could prate finely, sing a love-song.
Jun. Monster———
2 *Daugh.* Oh, now it courts!
Jun. Armed with more malice
Than he, that got thee, has, the devil.
2 *Daugh.* Good!
Proceed, sweet chick.
Jun. I hate thee; that is my last.
2 *Daugh.* Nay, an you love me, forward!—
No? Come, sister,
Let us prick our answers on our arrows' points,
And make them laugh a little. Ye damned lechers,
Ye proud improvident fools, have we now caught ye?
Are ye in the noose? Since ye are such loving creatures,
We'll be your Cupids: Do ye see these arrows?
We'll send them to your wanton livers, goats.
1 *Daugh.* Oh, how I'll trample on your hearts, ye villains,
Ambitious salt-itch slaves, Rome's master-sins!
2 *Daugh.* Dogs,
Thieves, honour's hangmen, do ye grin? Perdition
Take me for ever, if, in my fell anger,
I do not out-do all example.

Enter CARATACH.

Car. Where,
Where are the ladies? Ye keep noble quarter!
Your mother thinks you dead or taken, upon which
She will not move her battle.—Sure these faces
I have beheld and known; they are Roman leaders!
How came they here?
2 *Daugh.* A trick, sir, that we used;
A certain policy conducted them
Unto our snare: We have done you no small service.
These used as we intend, we are for the battle.
Car. As you intend? Taken by treachery?
1 *Daugh.* Is it not allowed?
Car. Those, that should gild our conquest,
Make up a battle worthy of our winning,
Catched up by craft?
2 *Daugh.* By any means that's lawful.
Car. A woman's wisdom in our triumphs? Out!
Out, out, ye sluts, ye follies! From our swords
Filch our revenges basely?—Arm again, gentlemen!
Soldiers, I charge ye help them.
Dispatch there!
1 *Daugh.* I will not off thus!
Car. He that stirs to execute,
Or she, though it be yourselves, by him that got me,
Shall quickly feel mine anger! One great day given us,
Not to be snatched out of our hands but basely,
And must we shame the gods from whence we have it,
With setting snares for soldiers? I'll run away first,
Be hooted at, and children call me coward,
Before I set up stales for victories.
Give them their swords.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, Gods!
Car. Bear off the women
Unto their mother!
2 *Daugh.* One shot, gentle uncle!
Car. Bear them off, I say.
1 *Daugh.* The devil take this fortune!
Car. Learn to spin, [*Exeunt Daughters.*
And curse your knotted hemp!—Go, gentlemen,
Safely go off, up to your troops; be wiser;
There thank me like tall soldiers: I shall seek ye.
[*Exit.*
Cur. A noble worth!
Dec. Well, Junius?
Jun. Pray ye, no more!
Cur. He blushes; do not load him.
Dec. Where is your love now?
[*Drums loud again.*
Jun. Puff! there it flies. Come, let us redeem our follies.
[*Exeunt Junius, Curius, and Decius.*

DRUSIUS *and* PENIUS *come forward.*

Drus. Awake, sir; yet the Roman body's whole;
I see them clear again.
Pen. Whole? it is impossible;
Drusius, they must be lost.
Drus. By heaven, they are whole, sir,
And in brave doing; see, they wheel about,
To gain more ground.
Pen. But see there, Drusius, see,
See that huge battle moving from the mountains!
Their gilt coats shine like dragon's scales, their march

Like a rough tumbling storm; see them, and view them,
And then see Rome no more. Say they fail, look,
Look where the armed carts stand; a new army!
Look how they hang like falling rocks! as murdering
Death rides in triumph, Drusius, fell Destruction
Lashes his fiery horse, and round about him
His many thousand ways to let out souls.
Move me again, when they charge, when the mountain
Melts under their hot wheels, and from their axletrees
Huge claps of thunder plough the ground before them!
'Till then, I'll dream what Rome was. [*They retire.*

Enter SUETONIUS, PETILLIUS, DEMETRIUS, *and* MACER.

Suet. Oh, bravely fought!
Honour till now ne'er shewed her golden face
In the field: Like lions, gentlemen, you have held
Your heads up this day. Where is young Junius, Curius, and Decius?
Pet. Gone to heaven, I think, sir.
Suet. Their worths go with them! Breathe a while. How do ye?
Pet. Well; some few scurvy wounds; my heart's whole yet.
Dem. Would they would give us more ground!
Suet. Give? we'll have it.
Pet. Have it, and hold it too, despite the devil.

Enter JUNIUS, DECIUS, *and* CURIUS.

Jun. Lead up to the head, and line sure! The queen's battle
Begins to charge like wildfire. Where's the general?
Suet. Oh, they are living yet. Come, my brave soldiers,
Come, let me pour Rome's blessing on ye: Live,
Live, and lead armies all! Ye bleed hard.
Jun. Best;
We shall appear the sterner to the foe.
Dec. More wounds, more honour.
Pet. Lose no time.
Suet. Away then;
And stand this shock, ye have stood the world.
Pet. We'll grow to it.
Is not this better now than lousy loving?
Jun. I am myself, Petillius.
Pet. 'Tis I love thee. [*Exeunt Romans.*

Enter BONDUCA, CARATACH, *Daughters, and* NENNIUS.

Car. Charge them in the flanks! Oh, you have played the fool,
The fool extremely, the mad fool!
Bond. Why, cousin?
Car. The woman fool! Why did you give the word
Unto the carts to charge down, and our people,
In gross before the enemy? We pay for it;
Our own swords cut our throats! Why, pox on it!
Why do you offer to command? The devil,
The devil, and his dam too! who bid you
Meddle in men's affairs?
Bond. I'll help all.
Car. Home, [*Exeunt Queen, &c.*
Home and spin, woman, spin, go spin! you trifle.
Open before there, or all's ruined!—How? [*Shouts within.*
Now comes the tempest on ourselves, by heaven!
Within. Victoria!
Car. Oh, woman, scurvy woman, beastly woman!
[*Exeunt omnes præter Drusius and Penius.*
Drus. Victoria, victoria!
Pen. How is that, Drusius!
Drus. They win, they win, they win! Oh, look, look, look, sir,
For Heaven's sake, look! The Britons fly, the Britons fly! Victoria!

Enter SUETONIUS, *Soldiers, and Captains.*

Suet. Soft, soft, pursue it soft, excellent soldiers!
Close, my brave fellows, honourable Romans!
Oh, cool thy mettle, Junius; they are ours,
The world cannot redeem them: Stern Petillius,
Govern the conquest nobly. Soft, good soldiers! [*Exeunt.*

Enter BONDUCA, *Daughters, and Britons.*

Bond. Shame! whither fly ye, ye unlucky Britons?
Will ye creep into your mothers' wombs again?
Back, cowards!
Hares, fearful hares, doves in your angers! leave me?
Leave your queen desolate? her hapless children,

Enter CARATACH *and* HENGO.

To Roman rape again, and fury?
Car. Fly, ye buzzards!
Ye've wings enough, ye fear! Get thee gone, woman, [*Loud shout within.*
Shame tread upon thy heels! All's lost, all's lost!
Hark,
Hark how the Romans ring our knells! [*Ex. Bond. &c.*
Hengo. Good uncle,
Let me go too.
Car. No, boy; thy fortune's mine;
I must not leave thee. Get behind me; shake not;

Enter PETILLIUS, JUNIUS, *and* DECIUS.

I'll breech you, if you do, boy.—Come, brave Romans!
All is not lost yet.
Jun. Now I'll thank thee, Caratach. [*Fight. Drums*
Car. Thou art a soldier; strike home, home! have at you!

Pen. His blows fall like huge sledges on an anvil.
Dec. I'm weary.
Pet. So am I.
Cæ. Send more swords to me.
Jun. Let's sit and rest. [*Sit down.*
Drus. What think you now?
Pen. Oh, Drusius,
I've lost mine honour, lost my name, lost all
That was my light: These are true Romans, and I
A Briton coward, a base coward! Guide me,
Where nothing is but desolation,
That I may never more behold the face
Of man, or mankind know me! Oh, blind fortune,
Hast thou abused me thus!
Drus. Good sir, be comforted;
It was your wisdom ruled you. Pray you go home;
Your day is yet to come, when this great fortune
Shall be but foil unto it. [*Retreat.*

Pen. Fool, fool, coward!
[*Exeunt Penius and Drusius.*

Enter SUETONIUS, DEMETRIUS, *Soldiers, drum and colours.*

Suet. Draw in, draw in!—Well have you fought, and worthy
Rome's noble recompense. Look to your wounds;
The ground is cold and hurtful. The proud queen
Has got a fort, and there she and her daughters
Defy us once again: To-morrow morning
We'll seek her out, and make her know our fortunes
Stop at no stubborn walls. Come, sons of honour,
True virtue's heirs, thus hatched with Britain blood,
Let's march to rest, and set in gules like suns.
Beat a soft march, and each one ease his neighbours! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter PETILLIUS, JUNIUS, DECIUS, *and* DEMETRIUS, *singing.*

Pet. *Smooth was his cheek,*
Dec. *And his chin it was sleek,*
Jun. *With, whoop, he has done wooing!*
Dem. *Junius was this captain's name,*
A lad for a lass's viewing.
Pet. *Full black his eye, and plump his thigh,*
Dec. *Made up for love's pursuing.*
Dem. *Smooth was his cheek,*
Pet. *And his chin it was sleek,*
Jun. *With, whoop, he has done wooing!*

Pet. Oh, my vexed thief, art thou come home again?
Are thy brains perfect?
Jun. Sound as bells.
Pet. Thy back-worm
Quiet, and cast his sting, boy?
Jun. Dead, Petillius,
Dead to all folly, and now my anger only——
Pet. Why, that's well said; hang Cupid and his quiver,
A drunken brawling boy! Thy honoured saint
Be thy ten shillings, Junius; there's the money,
And there's the ware; square dealing: Thus but sweats thee
Like a nesh nag, and makes thee look pin-buttocked;
The other runs thee whining up and down
Like a pig in a storm, fills thy brains full of ballads,
And shews thee like a long lent, thy brave body
Turned to a tail of green fish without butter.

Dec. When thou lovest next, love a good cup of wine,
A mistress for a king! she leaps to kiss thee,
Her red and white's her own, she makes good blood,
Takes none away.
Jun. I am counselled;
And henceforth, when I doat again——
Dem. Take heed;
Ye had almost paid for it.
Pet. Love no more great ladies;
Thou canst not step amiss then; there's no delight in them:
All's in the whistling of their snatcht-up silks;
They're only made for handsome view, not handling.
Jun. Thou speakest truly:
The wars shall be my mistress now.
Pet. Well chosen!
For she's a bouncing lass; she'll kiss thee at night, boy,
And break thy pate in the morning.
Jun. Yesterday
I found those favours infinite.
Dem. Wench good enough,
But that she talks too loud.
Pet. She talks to the purpose,
Which never woman did yet. She'll hold grappling,
And he that lays on best is her best servant;
All other loves are mere catching of dottrels.
Here comes the general.

Enter SUETONIUS, CURIUS, *and* MACER.

Suet. I'm glad I've found ye:
Are those come in yet, that pursued bold Caratach?

Pet. Not yet, sir, for I think they mean to lodge him;
Take him I know they dare not, 'twill be dangerous.
Suet. Then haste, Petillius, haste to Penius:
I fear the strong conceit of what disgrace
He has pulled upon himself, will be his ruin;
I fear his soldiers' fury too: Haste presently;
I would not lose him for all Britain. Give him, Petillius——
Pet. That, that shall choke him. [*Aside.*
Suet. All the noble counsel,
His fault forgiven too, his place, his honour——
Pet. For me, I think, as handsome—— [*Aside.*
Suet. All the comfort;
And tell the soldier, 'twas on our command
He drew not to the battle.
Pet. I conceive, sir,
And will do that shall cure all.
Suet. Bring him with you
Before the queen's fort, and his forces with him;
There you shall find us following of our conquest.
Make haste!
Pet. The best I may. [*Exit.*
Suet. And, noble gentlemen,
Up to your companies! we'll presently
Upon the queen's pursuit. There's nothing done
'Till she be seized; without her, nothing won.
[*Exeunt. Short flourish.*

SCENE II.

Enter CARATACH *and* HENGO.

Car. How does my boy?
Hengo. I would do well; my heart's well;
I do not fear.
Car. My good boy!
Hengo. I know, uncle,
We must all die; my little brother died,
I saw him die, and he died smiling; sure
There's no great pain in it, uncle. But pray tell me,
Whither must we go when we're dead?
Car. Strange questions!—
Why, to the blessedest place, boy—Ever sweetness
And happiness dwell there.
Hengo. Will you come to me?
Car. Yes, my sweet boy.
Hengo. Mine aunt too, and my cousins?
Car. All, my good child.
Hengo. No Romans, uncle?
Car. No, boy.
Hengo. I should be loth to meet them there.
Car. No ill men,
That live by violence, and strong oppression,
Come thither; 'tis for those the gods love, good men.
Hengo. Why, then, I care not when I go, for surely
I am persuaded they love me: I never
Blasphemed them, uncle, nor transgressed my parents;
I always said my prayers.
Car. Thou shalt go then,
Indeed thou shalt.
Hengo. When they please.
Car. That's my good boy!
Art thou weary, Hengo?
Hengo. Weary, uncle?
I've heard you say you've marched all day in armour.
Car. I have, boy.
Hengo. Am not I your kinsman?
Car. Yes.
Hengo. And am not I as fully allied unto you
In those brave things, as blood?
Car. Thou art too tender.
Hengo. To go upon my legs? they were made to bear me.
I can play twenty mile a-day; I see no reason,
But, to preserve my country and myself,
I should march forty.
Car. What wouldst thou be, living
To wear a man's strength?
Hengo. Why, a Caratach,
A Roman-hater, a scourge sent from heaven
To whip these proud thieves from our kingdom.
Hark, [*Drum.*
Hark, uncle, hark! I hear a drum.

Enter JUDAS *and his people to the door.*

Judas. Beat softly,
Softly, I say; they're here. Who dare charge?
1 *Sold.* He,
That dares be knocked on the head: I'll not come near him.
Judas. Retire again, and watch then. How he stares!
He has eyes would kill a dragon. Mark the boy well;
If we could take or kill him—A pox on ye,
How fierce ye look! See, how he broods the boy?
The devil dwells in his scabbard. Back, I say!
Apace, apace! he has found us. [*They retire.*
Car. Do ye hunt us?
Hengo. Uncle, good uncle, see! the thin starved rascal,
The eating Roman, see where he thrids the thickets:
Kill him, dear uncle, kill him! one good blow
To knock his brains into his breech; strike his head off.
Car. Do ye make us foxes?
Here, hold my charging-staff, and keep the place, boy!
I am at bay, and like a bull I'll bear me.
Stand, stand, ye rogues, ye squirrels! [*Exit.*
Hengo. Now he pays them;
Oh, that I had a man's strength!

Enter JUDAS, *&c.*

Judas. Here's the boy;
Mine own, I thank my fortune.
Hengo. Uncle, uncle!
Famine is fallen upon me, uncle.
Judas. Come, sir,
Yield willingly, (your uncle's out of hearing)
I'll tickle your young tail else.
Hengo. I defy thee,
Thou mock-made man of mat? Charge home, sirrah!
Hang thee, base slave, thou shakest.
Judas. Upon my conscience,
The boy will beat me! how it looks, how bravely,
How confident the worm is! a scabbed boy
To handle me thus!—Yield, or I cut thy head off.
Hengo. Thou darest not cut my finger; here 'tis, touch it.
Judas. The boy speaks sword and buckler! Prithee yield, boy;
Come, here's an apple, yield.
Hengo. By Heaven, he fears me!
I'll give you sharper language: When, ye coward,
When come ye up?
Judas. If he should beat me——
Hengo. When, sir?
I long to kill thee! Come, thou canst not escape me;
I've twenty ways to charge thee, twenty deaths
Attend my bloody staff.
Judas. Sure, 'tis the devil,
A dwarf devil in a doublet!
Hengo. I have killed
A captain, sirrah, a brave captain, and when I've done,
I've kicked him thus. Look here; see how I charge
This staff!
Judas. Most certain this boy will cut my throat yet.

Enter two Soldiers running.

1 *Sold.* Flee, flee! he kills us.
2 *Sold.* He comes, he comes!
Judas. The devil take the hindmost! [*Exeunt Judas, &c.*
Hengo. Run, run, ye rogues, ye precious rogues, ye rank rogues!
A comes, a comes, a comes, a comes! that's 1 2, boys!
What a brave cry they make!

Enter CARATACH, *with a head.*

Car. How does my chicken?
Hengo. 'Faith, uncle, grown a soldier, a great soldier;
For, by the virtue of your charging-staff,
And a strange fighting face I put upon it,
I've out-braved Hunger.
Car. That's my boy, my sweet boy!
Here, here's a Roman's head for thee.
Hengo. Good provision!
Before I starve, my sweet-faced gentleman,
I'll try your favour.
Car. A right complete soldier!
Come, chicken, let's go seek some place of strength
(The country's full of scouts) to rest a while in;
Thou wilt not else be able to endure
The journey to my country. Fruits and water
Must be your food a while, boy.
Hengo. Any thing;
I can eat moss, nay, I can live on anger,
To vex these Romans. Let's be wary, uncle.
Car. I warrant thee; come cheerfully.
Hengo. And boldly! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter PENIUS, DRUSIUS, *and* REGULUS.

Reg. The soldier shall not grieve you.
Pen. Pray ye forsake me;
Look not upon me, as ye love your honours!
I am so cold a coward, my infection
Will choke your virtues like a damp else.
Drus. Dear captain!
Reg. Most honoured sir!
Pen. Most hated, most abhorred!
Say so, and then ye know me, nay, ye please me.
Oh, my dear credit, my dear credit!
Reg. Sure
His mind is dangerous.
Drus. The good gods cure it!
Pen. My honour got through fire, through stubborn breaches,
Through battles, that have been as hard to win as heaven,
Through Death himself, in all his horrid trims,
Is gone for ever, ever, ever, gentlemen!
And now I'm left to scornful tales and laughters,
To hootings at, pointing with fingers, 'That's he,
'That's the brave gentleman forsook the battle,
'The most wise Penius, the disputing coward.'
Oh, my good sword, break from my side, and kill me;
Cut out the coward from my heart!
Reg. You are none.
Pen. He lies, that says so; by heaven, he lies, lies basely,
Baser than I have done! Come, soldiers, seek me;
I have robbed ye of your virtues! Justice seek me;
I have broke my fair obedience! Last, Shame take me,
Take me, and swallow me, make ballads of me,
Shame, endless shame! and, pray, do you forsake me!
Drus. What shall we do?
Pen. Good gentlemen, forsake me;
You were not wont to be commanded. Friends, pray do it,
And do not fear; for, as I am a coward,
I will not hurt myself, (when that mind takes me,
I'll call to you, and ask your help) I dare not.
Throws himself upon the ground.

Enter PETILLIUS.

Pet. Good-morrow, gentlemen! Where's the tribune?
Reg. There.
Drus. Whence come you, good Petillius?
Pet. From the general.
Drus. With what, for Heaven's sake?
Pet. With good counsel, Drusius,
And love, to comfort him.
Drus. Good Regulus,
Step to the soldier and allay his anger;
For he is wild as winter. [*Exeunt Drus. and Reg.*
Pet. Oh, are you there? have at you!—Sure he's dead,
It cannot be he dare out-live this fortune;
He must die, 'tis most necessary; men expect it,
And thought of life in him goes beyond coward.
Forsake the field so basely? Fy upon it!
So poorly to betray his worth, so coldly
To cut all credit from the soldier? Sure
If this man mean to live, (as I should think it
Beyond belief) he must retire, where never
The name of Rome, the voice of arms, or honour,
Was known or heard of yet. He's certain dead,
Or strongly means it; he's no soldier else,
No Roman in him; all he has done but outside,
Fought either drunk or desperate. Now he rises.
How does lord Penius?
Pen. As you see.
Pet. I'm glad on't;
Continue so still. The lord general,
The valiant general, great Suetonius——
Pen. No more of me is spoken; my name is perished.
Pet. He that commanded fortune and the day,
By his own valour and discretion,
(When, as some say, Penius refused to come,
But I believe them not) sent me to see you.
Pen. Ye are welcome; and pray see me, see me well;
You shall not see me long.
Pet. I hope so, Penius.—
The gods defend, sir!
Pen. See me and understand me: This is he,
Left to fill up your triumph; he, that basely
Whistled his honour off to the wind, that coldly
Shrunk in his politic head, when Rome, like reapers,
Sweat blood and spirit for a glorious harvest,
And bound it up, and brought it off; that fool,
That, having gold and copper offered him,
Refused the wealth, and took the waste; that soldier,
That being courted by loud Fame and Fortune,
Labour in one hand that propounds us gods,
And, in the other, Glory that creates us,
Yet durst doubt and be damned!
Pet. It was an error.
Pen. A foul one, and a black one.
Pet. Yet the blackest
May be washed white again.
Pen. Never.
Pet. Your leave, sir;
And I beseech you note me, for I love you,
And bring along all comfort: Are we gods,
Allied to no infirmities? are our natures
More than men's natures? When we slip a little
Out of the way of virtue, are we lost?
Is there no medicine called sweet mercy?
Pen. None, Petillius;
There is no mercy in mankind can reach me,
Nor is it fit it should; I've sinned beyond it.
Pet. Forgiveness meets with all faults.
Pen. 'Tis all faults,
All sins I can commit, to be forgiven;
'Tis loss of whole man in me, my discretion,
To be so stupid, to arrive at pardon!
Pet. Oh, but the general——
Pen. He is a brave gentleman,
A valiant, and a loving; and, I dare say,
He would, as far as honour durst direct him,
Make even with my fault; but 'tis not honest,
Nor in his power: examples, that may nourish
Neglect and disobedience in whole bodies,
And totter the estates and faiths of armies,
Must not be played withal; nor out of pity
Make a general forget his duty;
Nor dare I hope more from him than is worthy.
Pet. What would you do?
Pen. Die.
Pet. So would sullen children,
Women that want their wills, slaves disobedient,
That fear the law. Die? Fy, great captain! you
A man to rule men, to have thousand lives
Under your regiment, and let your passion
Betray your reason? I bring you all forgiveness,
The noblest kind commends, your place, your honour——
Pen. Prithee no more; tis foolish. Didst not thou
(By Heaven, thou didst; I overheard thee, there,
There where thou standest now) deliver me for rascal,
Poor, dead, cold coward, miserable, wretched,
If I outlive this ruin?
Pet. I?
Pen. And thou didst it nobly,
Like a true man, a soldier; and I thank thee,
I thank thee, good Petillius, thus I thank thee!
Pet. Since you are so justly made up, let me tell you,
'Tis fit you die indeed.
Pen. Oh, how thou lovest me!
Pet. For say he had forgiven you, say the people's whispers
Were tame again, the time run out for wonder,
What must your own command think, from whose swords
You have taken off the edges, from whose valours
The due and recompense of arms; nay, made it doubtful
Whether they knew obedience! must not these kill you?

Say they are won to pardon you, by mere miracle
Brought to forgive you, what old valiant soldier,
What man that loves to fight, and fight for Rome,
Will ever follow you more! Dare you know these ventures?
If so, I bring you comfort; dare you take it?
Pen. No, no, Petillius, no.
Pet. If your mind serve you,
You may live still; but how? yet pardon me:
You may out-wear all too; but when? and certain
There is a mercy for each fault, if tamely
A man will take it upon conditions.
Pen. No, by no means: I am only thinking now, sir,
(For I am resolved to go) of a most base death,
Fitting the baseness of my fault. I'll hang.
Pet. You shall not; you are a gentleman I honour;
I would else flatter you, and force you live,
Which is far baser. Hanging? 'tis a dog's death,
An end for slaves.
Pen. The fitter for my baseness.
Pet. Besides, the man, that is hanged, preaches his end,
And sits a sign for all the world to gape at.
Pen. That is true; I'll take a fitter: poison.
Pet. No,
'Tis equal ill; the death of rats and women,
Lovers, and lazy boys, that fear correction;
Die like a man.
Pen. Why, my sword, then.
Pet. Ay, if your sword be sharp, sir,
There is nothing under heaven that's like your sword;
Your sword is a death indeed!
Pen. It shall be sharp, sir.
Pet. Why, Mithridates was an arrant ass
To die by poison, if all Bosphorus
Could lend him swords: Your sword must do the deed;
'Tis shame to die choaked, fame to die and bleed.
Pen. Thou hast confirmed me; and, my good Petillius,
Tell me no more I may live.
Pet. 'Twas my commission;
But now I see you in a nobler way,
A way to make all even.
Pen. Farewell, captain!
Be a good man, and fight well; be obedient;
Command thyself, and then thy men. Why shakest thou?
Pet. I do not, sir.
Pen. I would thou hadst, Petillius!
I could find something to forsake the world with,
Worthy the man that dies: a kind of earthquake
Through all stern valours but mine own.
Pet. I feel now
A kind of trembling in me.
Pen. Keep it still;
As thou lovest virtue, keep it.
Pet. And, brave captain,

The great and honoured Penius!——
Pen. That again!
Oh, how it heightens me! again, Petillius!
Pet. Most excellent commander!——
Pen. Those were mine,
Mine, only mine!
Pet. They are still.
Pen. Then, to keep them
From ever falling more, have at ye! Heavens,
Ye everlasting powers, I'm yours: The work is done, [*Kills himself.*
That neither fire, nor age, nor melting envy,
Shall ever conquer. Carry my last words
To the great general: kiss his hands, and say,
My soul I give to Heaven, my fault to justice,
Which I have done upon myself; my virtue,
If ever there was any in poor Penius,
Made more, and happier, light on him!—I faint—
And where there is a foe, I wish him fortune.
I die. Lie lightly on my ashes, gentle earth! [*Dies.*
Pet. And on my sin! Farewell, great Penius!
The soldier is in fury; now I'm glad [*Noise within.*
'Tis done before he comes. This way for me,
The way of toil; for thee, the way of honour! [*Exit.*

Enter DRUSIUS *and* REGULUS, *with soldiers.*

Sold. Kill him, kill him, kill him!
Drus. What will ye do?
Reg. Good soldiers, honest soldiers——
Sold. Kill him, kill him, kill him!
Drus. Kill us first; we command too.
Reg. Valiant soldiers,
Consider but whose life ye seek.—Oh, Drusius,
Bid him be gone; he dies else.—Shall Rome say,
Ye most approved soldiers, her dear children
Devoured the fathers of the fight? shall rage
And stubborn fury guide those swords to slaughter,
To slaughter of their own, to civil ruin?
Drus. Oh, let them in; all's done, all's ended, Regulus;
Penius has found his last eclipse. Come, soldiers,
Come, and behold your miseries; come bravely,
Full of your mutinous and bloody angers,
And here bestow your darts. Oh, only Roman!
Oh, father of the wars!
Reg. Why stand ye stupid?
Where be your killing furies? whose sword now
Shall first be sheathed in Penius? Do ye weep?
Howl out, ye wretches! ye have cause; howl ever!
Who shall now lead ye fortunate? whose valour
Preserve ye to the glory of your country?
Who shall march out before ye, coyed and courted
By all the mistresses of war, Care, Counsel,
Quick-eyed Experience, and Victory twined to him?
Who shall beget ye deeds beyond inheritance
To speak your names, and keep your honours living,

When children fail, and Time, that takes all with him,
Build houses for ye to oblivion?
Drus. Oh, ye poor desperate fools, no more now soldiers,
Go home, and hang your arms up; let rust rot them;
And humble your stern valours to soft prayers!
For ye have sunk the frame of all your virtues;
The sun, that warmed your bloods, is set for ever.
I'll kiss thy honoured cheek. Farewell, great Penius,
Thou thunderbolt, farewell!—Take up the body:
To-morrow, mourning, to the camp convey it,
There to receive due ceremonies. That eye
That blinds itself with weeping, gets most glory.
[*Exeunt with a dead march.*

Enter SUETONIS, JUNIUS, DECIUS, DEMETRIUS, CURIUS, *and Soldiers:* BONDUCA, *two Daughters, and* NENNIUS *above. Drum and colours.*

Suet. Bring up the catapults, and shake the wall;
We will not be outbraved thus.
Nen. Shake the earth,
Ye cannot shake our souls. Bring up your rams,
And with their armed heads make the fort totter,
Ye do but rock us into death. [*Exit Nen.*
Jun. See, sir,
See the Icenian queen in all her glory,
From the strong battlements proudly appearing,
As if she meant to give us lashes!
Dec. Yield, queen.
Bond. I am unacquainted with that language, Roman.
Suet. Yield, honoured lady, and expect our mercy;
We love thy nobleness. [*Exit Decius.*
Bond. I thank ye! ye say well;
But mercy and love are sins in Rome and hell.
Suet. You cannot escape our strength; you must yield, lady;
You must adore and fear the power of Rome.
Bond. If Rome be earthly, why should any knee
With bending adoration worship her?
She's vicious; and, your partial selves confess,
Aspires the height of all impiety;
Therefore 'tis fitter I should reverence
The thatched houses, where the Britons dwell
In careless mirth; where the blessed household gods
See nought but chaste and simple purity.
'Tis not high power that makes a place divine,
Nor that the men from gods derive their line;
But sacred thoughts, in holy bosoms stored,
Make people noble, and the place adored.
Suet. Beat the wall deeper!
Bond. Beat it to the centre,
We will not sink one thought.
Suet, I'll make ye.
Bond. No.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, mother, these are fearful hours; speak gently
To these fierce men, they will afford ye pity.

Enter PETILLIUS, *who whispers* SUETONIUS.

Bond. Pity? Thou fearful girl, 'tis for those wretches,
That misery makes tame. Wouldst thou live less?
Wast not thou born a princess? Can my blood,
And thy brave father's spirit, suffer in thee
So base a separation from thyself,
As mercy from these tyrants? Say they had mercy,
The devil a relenting conscience,
The lives of kings rest in their diadems,
Which to their bodies lively souls do give,
And, ceasing to be kings, they cease to live.
Shew such another fear, and, by the gods,
I'll fling thee to their fury.
Suet. He is dead then?
Pet. I think so certainly; yet all my means, sir,
Even to the hazard of my life——
Suet. No more:
We must not seem to mourn here.

Enter DECIUS.

Dec. There is a breach made;
Is it your will we charge, sir?
Suet. Once more, mercy,
Mercy to all that yield!
Bond. I scorn to answer;
Speak to him, girl, and hear thy sister.
1 *Daugh.* General,
Hear me, and mark me well, and look upon me,
Directly in my face, my woman's face,
Whose only beauty is the hate it bears ye;
See with thy narrowest eyes, thy sharpest wishes,
Into my soul, and see what there inhabits;
See if one fear, one shadow of a terror,
One paleness dare appear but from my anger,
To lay hold on your mercies. No, ye fools,
Poor Fortune's fools, we were not born for triumphs,
To follow your gay sports, and fill your slaves
With hoots and acclamations.
Pet. Brave behaviour!
1 *Daugh.* The children of as great as Rome, as noble,
Our names before her, and our deeds her envy,
Must we gild o'er your conquest, make your state,
That is not fairly strong, but fortunate?
No, no, ye Romans! We have ways to escape ye,
To make ye poor again, indeed our prisoners,
And stick our triumphs full.
Pet. 'Sdeath, I shall love her.
1 *Daugh.* To torture ye with suffering, like our slaves;
To make ye curse our patience, wish the world
Were lost again, to win us only, and esteem
The end of all ambitions.
Bond. Do ye wonder?
We'll make our monuments in spite of fortune;
In spite of all your eagles' wings, we'll work
A pitch above ye; and from our heart we'll stoop

As fearless of your bloody soars, and fortunate,
As if we preyed on heartless doves.
Suet. Strange stiffness!
Decius, go charge the breach. [*Exit Decius.*
Bond. Charge it home, Roman;
We shall deceive thee else. Where's Nennius?

Enter NENNIUS.

Nen. They have made a mighty breach.
Bond. Stick in thy body,
And make it good but half an hour.
Nen. I'll do it.
1 *Daugh.* And then be sure to die.
Nen. It shall go hard else.
Bond. Farewell, with all my heart! We shall meet yonder,
Where few of these must come.
Nen. Gods take thee, lady! [*Exit Nennius.*
Bond. Bring up the swords, and poison.

Enter one with swords and a great cup.

2 *Daugh.* Oh, my fortune!
Bond. How, how?
2 *Daugh.* Good mother, nothing to offend you.
Bond. Here, wench;
Behold us, Romans!
Suet. Mercy yet.
Bond. No talking!
Puff! there goes all your pity. Come, short prayers,
And let us dispatch the business! You begin;
Shrink not, I'll see you do it.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, gentle mother!
Oh, Romans! Oh, my heart! I dare not.
Suet. Woman, woman,
Unnatural woman!
2 *Daugh.* Oh, persuade her, Romans!
Alas, I'm young, and would live. Noble mother,
Can ye kill that, ye gave life?- Are my years
Fit for destruction?
Suet. Yield, and be a queen still,
A mother, and a friend.
Bond. Ye talk! Come, hold it,
And put it home.
1 *Daugh.* Fy, sister, fy!
What would you live to be?
2 *Daugh.* Mercy!
Suet. Hear her, thou wretched woman!
2 *Daugh.* Mercy, mother!
Oh, whither will you send me? I was once
Your darling, your delight.
Bond. Oh, gods! fear in my family?
Do it, and nobly.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, do not frown, then.
1 *Daugh.* Do it, worthy sister;
'Tis nothing; 'tis a pleasure: We'll go with you.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, if I knew but whither!
1 *Daugh.* To the blessed;
Where we shall meet our father——
Suet. Woman!
Bond. Talk not.
1 *Daugh.* Where nothing but true joy is——
Bond. That's a good wench!
Mine own sweet girl! put it close to thee.
2 *Daugh.* Oh, [*Stabs herself.*
Comfort me still, for heaven's sake.
1 *Daugh.* Where eternal
Our youths are, and our beauties; where no wars come.
2 *Daugh.* A long farewell to this world! [*Dies.*
Bond. Good; I'll help thee.
1 *Daugh.* The next is mine. Shew me a Roman lady, [*Stabs herself.*
In all your stories, dare do this for her honour;
They are cowards, eat coals like compelled cats:
Your great saint, Lucrece,
Died not for honour.
Pet. By heaven,
I am in love! I would give an hundred pound now
But to lie with this woman's behaviour. Oh, the devil!
1 *Daugh.* Ye shall see my example: All your Rome,
If I were proud and loved ambition,
If I were greedy, all the wealth ye conquer——
Bond. Make haste.
1 *Daugh.* I will—could not entice to live,
But two short hours, this frailty. Would ye learn
How to die bravely, Romans, to fling off
This case of flesh, lose all your cares for ever?
Live, as we have done, well, and fear the gods;
Hunt honour, and not nations, with your swords;
Keep your minds humble, your devotions high;
So shall ye learn the noblest part to die. [*Dies.*
Bond. I come, wench.—To ye all, Fate's hangmen, you,
That ease the aged destinies, and cut
The threads of kingdoms as they draw them! here,
Here is a draught would ask no less than Cæsar
To pledge it for the glory's sake!
Cur. Great lady!
Suet. Make up your own conditions.
Bond. So we will.
Suet. Stay!
Dem. Stay!
Suet. Be any thing.
Bond. A saint, Suetonius,
When thou shalt fear, and die like a slave. Ye fools,
Ye should have tied up death first, when ye conquered:
Ye sweat for us in vain else: See him here, [*Drinks.*
He's ours; and still our friend; laughs at your pities;
And we command him with as easy reins
As do our enemies.—I feel the poison.—
Poor vanquished Romans, with what matchless tortures
Could I now rack ye! But I pity ye,
Desiring to die quiet: Nay, so much
I hate to prosecute my victory,
That I will give ye counsel ere I die:

If you will keep your laws and empire whole,
Place in your Roman flesh a Briton soul. [*Dies.*

Enter DECIUS.

Suet. Desperate and strange!
Dec. 'Tis won, sir, and the Britons
All put to the sword.
Suet. Give her fair funeral;
She was truly noble, and a queen.
Pet. Pox take it,
A love-mange grown upon me? What a spirit!
Jun. I am glad of this! I have found you.
Pet. In my belly,
Oh, how it tumbles!
Jun. Ye good gods, I thank ye! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CARATACH *upon a rock, and* HENGO *by him sleeping.*

Car. Thus we afflicted Britons climb for safeties,
And to avoid our dangers, seek destructions;
Thus we awake to sorrows. Oh, thou woman,
Thou agent for adversities, what curses
This day belong to thy improvidence!
To Britain, by thy means, what sad millions
Of widows' weeping eyes! The strong man's valour
Thou hast betrayed to fury, the child's fortune
To fear, and want of friends, whose pieties
Might wipe his mournings off, and build his sorrows
A house of rest by his blessed ancestors:
The virgins thou hast robbed of all their wishes,
Blasted their blowing hopes, turned their songs,
Their mirthful marriage-songs, to funerals;
The land thou hast left a wilderness of wretches.
The boy begins to stir; thy safety made,
'Would my soul were in Heaven!
Hengo. Oh, noble uncle,
Look out; I dreamed we were betrayed.
Car. No harm, boy; [*A soft dead march within.*
'Tis but thy emptiness that breeds these fancies:
Thou shalt have meat anon.
Hengo. A little, uncle,
And I shall hold out bravely.—What are those,
(Look, uncle, look!) those multitudes that march there!
They come upon us stealing by.
Car. I see them;
And prithee be not fearful.
Hengo. Now you hate me;
Would I were dead!
Car. Thou knowest I love thee dearly.
Hengo. Did I ever shrink yet, uncle? Were I a man now,
I should be angry with you.

Enter DRUSIUS, REGULUS, *and Soldiers, with* PENIUS's *hearse, drums, and colours.*

Car. My sweet chicken!—
See, they have reached us; and, as it seems, they bear
Some soldier's body, by their solemn gestures,
And sad solemnities; it well appears, too,
To be of eminence.—Most worthy soldiers,
Let me entreat your knowledge to inform me
What noble body that is, which you bear
With such a sad and ceremonious grief,
As if ye meant to woo the world and nature,
To be in love with death! Most honourable,
Excellent Romans, by your ancient valours,
As ye love fame, resolve me!
Sold. 'Tis the body
Of the great captain Penius, by himself
Made cold and spiritless.
Car. Oh, stay, ye Romans,
By the religion, which ye owe those gods,
That lead ye on to victories! by those glories,
Which made even pride a virtue in ye!
Drus. Stay.
What is thy will, Caratach?
Car. Set down the body,
The body of the noblest of all Romans;
As ye expect an offering at your graves
From your friends' sorrows, set it down awhile,
That with your griefs an enemy may mingle,
(A noble enemy, that loves a soldier)
And lend a tear to virtue! Even your foes,
Your wild foes, as you called us, are yet stored
With fair affections, our hearts fresh, our spirits,
Though sometime stubborn, yet when virtue dies,
Soft and relenting as a virgin's prayers:
Oh, set it down!
Drus. Set down the body, soldiers.
Car. Thou hallowed relic, thou rich diamond,
Cut with thine own dust; thou, for whose wide fame
The world appears too narrow, man's all thoughts,
Had they all tongues, too silent: thus I bow
To thy most honoured ashes! Though an enemy,
Yet friend to all thy worths, sleep peaceably;
Happiness crown thy soul, and in thy earth
Some laurel fix his seat, there grow and flourish,
And make thy grave an everlasting triumph!
Farewell all glorious wars, now thou art gone,
And honest arms, adieu! All noble battles,
Maintained in thirst of honour, not of blood,
Farewell for ever!
Hengo. Was this Roman, uncle,
So good a man?
Car. Thou never knewest thy father.
Hengo. He died before I was born.
Car. This worthy Roman
Was such another piece of endless honour,

Such a brave soul dwelt in him; their proportions
And faces were not much unlike, boy. Excellent nature!
See how it works into his eyes! mine own boy!
Hengo. The multitudes of these men, and their fortunes,
Could never make me fear yet; one man's goodness——
Car. Oh, now thou pleasest me; weep still, my child,
As if thou sawest me dead! with such a flux
Or flood of sorrow; still thou pleasest me.
And, worthy soldiers, pray receive these pledges,
These hatchments of our griefs, and grace us so much
To place them on his hearse. Now, if ye please,
Bear off the noble burden: raise his pile
High as Olympus, making heaven to wonder,
To see a star upon earth outshining theirs:
And ever-loved, ever-living be
Thy honoured and most sacred memory!
Dru. Thou hast done honestly, good Caratach;
And when thou diest, a thousand virtuous Romans
Shall sing thy soul to heaven. Now march on, soldiers. [*Exeunt. A dead march.*
Car. Now dry thine eyes, my boy.
Hengo. Are they all gone?
I could have wept this hour yet.
Car. Come, take cheer,
And raise thy spirit, child; if but this day
Thou canst bear out thy faintness, the night coming,
I'll fashion our escape.
Hengo. Pray fear not me;
Indeed I am very hearty.
Car. Be so still;
His mischiefs lessen, that controuls his ill.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter PETILLIUS.

Pet. What do I ail, in the name of heaven? I did but see her
And see her die; she stinks by this time strongly,
Abominably stinks. She was a woman,
A thing I never cared for; but to die so,
So confidently, bravely, strongly—Oh, the devil,
I have the bots! by heaven, she scorned us strangely,
All we could do, or durst do: threatened us
With such a noble anger, and so governed
With such a fiery spirit—The plain bots!
A pox upon the bots, the love-bots! Hang me,
Hang me even out of the way, directly hang me!
Oh, penny papers, and most painful penners
Of bountiful new ballads, what a subject,
What a sweet subject for your silver sounds,
Is crept upon ye!

Enter JUNIUS.

Jun. Here he is; have at him! [*Sings.*

She set the sword unto her breast,
Great pity it was to see,
That three drops of her life-warm blood,
Run trickling down her knee.

Art thou there, bonny boy? And, in faith, how dost thou?
Pet. Well, gramercy; how dost thou? He has found me,
Scented me out; the shame the devil owed me,
He has kept his day with. And what news, Junius?
Jun. It was an old tale ten thousand times told,

Of a young lady was turned into mould,
Her life it was lovely, her death it was bold.

Pet. A cruel rogue! now he has drawn pursuit on me,
He hunts me like a devil. No more singing!
Thou hast got a cold: Come, let us go drink some sack, boy.
Jun. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Pet. Why dost thou laugh?
What mare's nest hast thou found?
Jun. Ha, ha, ha!
I cannot laugh alone: Decius! Demetrius!
Curius! oh, my sides! ha, ha, ha, ha!
The strangest jest!
Pet. Prithee no more.
Jun. The admirablest fooling!
Pet. Thou art the prettiest fellow!
Jun. Sirs!
Pet. Why, Junius,
Prithee away, sweet Junius!
Jun. Let me sing then.
Pet. Whoa, here's a stir now! Sing a song of sixpence!
By heaven, if—prithee—pox on't, Junius!
Jun. I must either sing or laugh.
Pet. And what's your reason?
Jun. What's that to you?
Pet. And I must whistle.
Jun. Do so.
Oh, I hear them coming.
Pet. I have a little business.
Jun. Thou shalt not go, believe it: What! a gentleman
Of thy sweet conversation?
Pet. Captain Junius,
Sweet captain, let me go with all celerity!
Things are not always one; and do not question,
Nor jeer, nor gibe: None of your doleful ditties,
Nor your sweet conversation: you will find then
I may be angered.
Jun. By no means, Petillius;
Anger a man that never knew passion?
'Tis most impossible: A noble captain,
A wise and generous gentleman?

Pet. Tom Puppy,
Leave this way to abuse me: I have found you,
But, for your mother's sake, I will forgive you.
Your subtle understanding may discover,
As you think, some trim toy to make you merry,
Some straw to tickle you; but do not trust to it;
You are a young man, and may do well; be sober,
Carry yourself discreetly.

Enter DECIUS, DEMETRIUS, *and* CURIUS.

Jun. Yes, forsooth.
Dem. How does the brave Petillius?
Jun. Monstrous merry.
We two were talking what a kind of thing
I was, when I was in love; what a strange monster
For little boys and girls to wonder at;
How like a fool I looked!
Dec. So they do all,
Like great dull slavering fools.
Jun. Petillius saw too.
Pet. No more of this; it is scurvy; peace!
Jun. How nastily,
Indeed how beastly, all I did became me!
How I forgot to blow my nose! There he stands,
An honest and a wise man; if himself
(I dare avouch it boldly, for I know it)
Should find himself in love——
Pet. I am angry.
Jun. Surely
His wise self would hang his beastly self;
His understanding self so maul his ass self——
Dec. He is bound to do it; for he knows the follies,
The poverties, and baseness, that belong to it;
He has read upon the reformations long.
Pet. He has so.
Jun. 'Tis true, and he must do it: Nor is it fit, indeed,
Any such coward———
Pet. You'll leave prating?
Jun. Should dare
Come near the regiments, especially
Those curious puppies (for believe there are such)
That only love behaviour: Those are dog-whelps,
Dwindle away because a woman dies well;
Commit with passions only; fornicate
With the free spirit merely. You, Petillius,
For you have long observed the world——
Pet. Dost thou hear?
I'll beat thee damnably within these three hours!
Go pray; may be I'll kill thee. Farewell, jackdaws!
Dec. What a strange thing he is grown!
[*Exit Pet.*
Jun. I am glad he is so;
And stranger he shall be before I leave him.
Cur. Is it possible her mere death——
Jun. I observed him,
And found him taken, infinitely taken,
With her bravery; I have followed him,
And seen him kiss his sword since, court his scabbard,
Call *dying* dainty dear, her *brave wind* mistress;
Casting a thousand ways to give those forms,
That he might lie with them, and get old armours.
He had got me on the hip once; it shall go hard, friends,
But he shall find his own coin.

Enter MACER.

Dec. How now, Macer?
Is Judas yet come in?

Enter JUDAS.

Macer. Yes, and has lost
Most of his men too. Here he is.
Cur. What news?
Judas. I've lodged him; rouse him, he that dares!
Dem. Where, Judas?
Judas. On a steep rock in the woods, the boy too with him;
And there he swears he'll keep his Christmas, gentlemen,
But he will come away with full conditions,
Bravely, and like a Briton. He paid part of us;
Yet I think we fought bravely: For mine own part,
I was four several times at half-sword with him,
Twice stood his partizan; but the plain truth is,
He's a mere devil, and no man. In the end, he swinged us,
And swinged us soundly too: He fights by witchcraft;
Yet, for all that, I saw him lodged.
Jun. Take more men,
And scout him round. Macer, march you along.
What victuals has he?
Judas. Not a piece of biscuit,
Not so much as will stop a tooth, nor water,
More than they make themselves: They lie
Just like a brace of bear whelps, close, and crafty,
Sucking their fingers for their food.
Dec. Cut off, then,
All hope of that way; take sufficient forces.
Jun. But use no foul play, on your lives! that man,
That does him mischief by deceit, I'll kill him.
Macer. He shall have fair play; he deserves it.
Judas. Hark ye!
What should I do there then? You are brave captains,
Most valiant men: Go up yourselves; use virtue,
See what will come on't; pray the gentleman
To come down, and be taken. Ye all know him,
I think ye've felt him too! There ye shall find him,
His sword by his side, plumbs of a pound weight by him,
Will make your chops ache! You'll find it a more labour
To win him living, than climbing of a crow's nest.

Dec. Away, and compass him; we shall come up,
I'm sure, within these two hours. Watch him close.
Macer. He shall flee through the air, if he escape us.
Jun. What's this loud lamentation?
[*Sad noise within.*
Macer. The dead body
Of the great Penius is new come to the camp, sir.
Dec. Dead?
Macer. By himself, they say.
Jun. I feared that fortune.
Car. Peace guide him up to heaven!
Jun. Away, good Macer.
[*Exe. Macer and Judas.*

Enter SUETONIUS, DRUSIUS, REGULUS, *and* PETILLIUS.

Suet. If thou be'st guilty,
Some sullen plague, thou hatest most, light upon thee!
The regiment return on Junius;
He well deserves it.
Pet. So!
Suet. Draw out three companies,
(Yours, Decius, Junius, and thou, Petillius)
And make up instantly to Caratach;
He's in the wood before ye: We shall follow,
After due ceremony done to the dead,
The noble dead. Come, let's go burn the body.
[*Exeunt all but Petillius.*
Pet. The regiment given from me? disgraced openly?
In love too with a trifle to abuse me?
A merry world, a fine world! served seven years
To be an ass of both sides? sweet Petillius,
You have brought your hogs to a fine market! you are wise, sir,
Your honourable brain-pan full of crotchets,
An understanding gentleman; your projects
Cast with assurance ever! Wouldst not thou now
Be banged about the pate, Petillius!
Answer to that, sweet soldier! surely, surely,
I think you would; pulled by the nose, kicked? hang thee,
Thou art the arrantest rascal! Trust thy wisdom
With any thing of weight? the wind with feathers!
Out, you blind puppy! you command? you govern?
Dig for a groat a-day, or serve a swine-herd,
Too noble for thy nature too!—I must up;
But what I shall do there, let time discover.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter MACER *and* JUDAS, *with meat and a bottle.*

Macer. Hang it on the side of the rock, as though the Britons
Stole hither to relieve him: Who first ventures
To fetch it off, is ours. I cannot see him.
Judas. He lies close in a hole above, I know it,
Gnawing upon his anger. Ha! no; 'tis not he.
Macer. 'Tis but the shaking of the boughs
Judas. Pox shake them!
I'm sure they shake me soundly.—There!
Macer. 'Tis nothing.
Judas. Make no noise; if he stir, a deadly tempest
Of huge stones falls upon us. 'Tis done! away, close!
[*Exeunt.*

Enter CARATACH.

Car. Sleep still, sleep sweetly, child; 'tis all thou feedest on.
No gentle Briton near, no valiant charity,
To bring thee food? Poor knave, thou art sick, extreme sick,
Almost grown wild for meat; and yet thy goodness
Will not confess, nor shew it. All the woods
Are double lined with soldiers; no way left us
To make a noble escape. I'll sit down by thee,
And, when thou wakest, either get meat to save thee,
Or lose my life in the purchase; good gods comfort thee!

SCENE IV.

Enter JUNIUS, DECIUS, PETILLIUS, *and Guide.*

Guide. You are not far off now, sir.
Jun. Draw the companies
The closest way through the woods; we'll keep on this way.
Guide. I will, sir: Half a furlong more you'll come
Within the sight of the rock. Keep on the left side;
You'll be discovered else: I'll lodge your companies
In the wild vines beyond ye.
Dec. Do you mark him?
Jun. Yes, and am sorry for him.
Pet. Junius,
Pray let me speak two words with you.
Jun. Walk afore;
I'll overtake you straight.
Dec. I will. [*Exit.*
Jun. Now, captain?
Pet. You have oft told me, you have loved me, Junius.
Jun. Most sure I told you truth then.
Pet. And that your love
Should not deny me any honest thing.
Jun. It shall not.
Pet. Dare you swear it?
I have forgot all passages between us
That have been ill, forgiven too; forget you.
Jun. What would this man have?—By the gods, I do, sir,
So it be fit to grant you.
Pet. 'Tis most honest.

Jun. Why, then I'll do it.
Pet. Kill me.
Jun. How!
Pet. Pray kill me.
Jun. Kill you?
Pet. Ay, kill me quickly, suddenly;
Now kill me.
Jun. On what reason? You amaze me!
Pet. If you do love me, kill me; ask me not why:
I would be killed, and by you.
Jun. Mercy on me!
What ails this man? Petillius!
Pet. Pray you dispatch me;
You are not safe, whilst I live: I am dangerous,
Troubled extremely, even to mischief, Junius,
An enemy to all good men. Fear not; 'tis justice;
I shall kill you else.
Jun. Tell me but the cause,
And I will do it.
Pet. I am disgraced, my service
Slighted and unrewarded by the general,
My hopes left wild and naked; besides these,
I am grown ridiculous, an ass, a folly,
I dare not trust myself with: Prithee, kill me!
Jun. All these may be redeemed as easily
As you would heal your finger.
Pet. Nay——
Jun. Stay, I'll do it;
You shall not need your anger. But first, Petillius,
You shall unarm yourself; I dare not trust
A man so bent to mischief.
Pet. There's my sword,
And do it handsomely.
Jun. Yes, I will kill you,
Believe that certain; but first I'll lay before you
The most extreme fool you have played in this,
The honour purposed for you, the great honour
The general intended you.
Pet. How?
Jun. And then I'll kill you,
Because you shall die miserable. Know, sir,
The regiment was given me, but 'till time
Called you to do some worthy deed, might stop
The peoples' ill thoughts of you for lord Penius,
I mean his death. How soon this time's come to you,
And hasted by Suetonius! Go, says he,
Junius and Decius, and go thou, Petillius,
(Distinctly, *thou, Petillius*) and draw up,
To take stout Caratach; there's the deed purposed,
A deed to take off all faults, of all natures:
And thou, Petillius, mark it! there's the honour;
And that done, all made even.
Pet. Stay!
Jun. No, I'll kill you.
He knew thee absolute, and full in soldier,
Daring beyond all dangers, found thee out
According to the boldness of thy spirit,
A subject, such a subject——

Pet. Hark you, Junius!
I will live now.
Jun. By no means—wooed thy worth,
Held thee by the chin up, as thou sunkest, and shewed thee
How honour held her arms out. Come, make ready,
Since you will die an ass.
Pet. Thou wilt not kill me?
Jun. By heaven, but I will, sir. I'll have no man dangerous
Live to destroy me afterward. Besides, you have gotten
Honour enough; let young men rise now. Nay,
I do perceive too by the general, (which is
One main cause you shall die, however he carry it)
Such a strong doting on you, that I fear
You shall command in chief; how are we paid then?
Come, if you'll pray, dispatch it.
Pet. Is there no way?
Jun. Not any way to live.
Pet. I will do any thing,
Redeem myself at any price: Good Junius,
Let me but die upon the rock, but offer
My life up like a soldier!
Jun. You will seek then
To out-do every man.
Pet. Believe it, Junius,
You shall go stroke by stroke with me.
Jun. You'll leave off too,
As you are noble, and a soldier,
For ever these mad fancies?
Pet. Dare you trust me?
By all that is good and honest——
Jun. There's your sword then;
And now, come on, a new man: Virtue guide thee! [*Exeunt.*

Enter CARATACH *and* HENGO, *on the rock.*

Car. Courage, my boy! I have found meat: Look, Hengo,
Look where some blessed Briton, to preserve thee,
Has hung a little food and drink: Cheer up, boy;
Do not forsake me now!
Hengo. Oh, uncle, uncle,
I feel I cannot stay long; yet I'll fetch it,
To keep your noble life. Uncle, I am heart-whole,
And would live.
Car. Thou shalt, long, I hope.
Hengo. But my head, uncle!
Methinks the rock goes round.

Enter MACER *and* JUDAS.

Macer. Mark them well, Judas.
Judas. Peace, as you love your life!
Hengo. Do not you hear
The noise of bells?
Car. Of bells, boy? 'Tis thy fancy;
Alas, thy body's full of wind.

Hengo. Methinks, sir,
They ring a strange sad knell, a preparation
To some near funeral of state: Nay, weep not,
Mine own sweet uncle! you will kill me sooner.
Car. Oh, my poor chicken!
Hengo. Fy! faint-hearted, uncle?
Come, tie me in your belt, and let me down.
Car. I'll go myself, boy.
Hengo. No, as you love me, uncle!
I will not eat it, if I do not fetch it;
The danger only I desire; pray tie me.
Car. I will, and all my care hang over thee!
Come, child,
My valiant child!
Hengo. Let me down apace, uncle,
And you shall see how like a daw I'll whip it
From all their policies; for 'tis most certain
A Roman train: And you must hold me sure too.
You'll spoil all else. When I have brought it, uncle,
We'll be as merry——
Car. Go, in the name of Heaven, boy!
Hengo. Quick, quick, quick, uncle! I have it. Oh!
Car. What ail'st thou! [*Judas shoots Hengo.*
Hengo. Oh, my best uncle, I am slain!
Car. I see you, [*Car. kills Judas with a stone.*
And heaven direct my hand!—Destruction
Go with thy coward soul! How dost thou boy?
Oh, villain, pocky villain!
Hengo. Oh, uncle, uncle,
Oh, how it pricks me—am I preserved for this?—
Extremely pricks me!
Car. Coward, rascal coward!
Dogs eat thy flesh!
Hengo. Oh, I bleed hard; I faint too; out upon it,
How sick I am! The lean rogue, uncle!
Car. Look, boy;
I have laid him sure enough.
Hengo. Have you knocked his brains out?
Car. I warrant thee for stirring more: Cheer up, child.
Hengo. Hold my sides hard; stop, stop; oh, wretched fortune,
Must we part thus? Still I grow sicker, uncle.
Car. Heaven look upon this noble child!
Hengo. I once hoped
I should have lived to have met these bloody Romans
At my sword's point, to have revenged my father,
To have beaten them. Oh, hold me hard! But, uncle——
Car. Thou shalt live still, I hope, boy. Shall I draw it?
Hengo. You draw away my soul, then; I would live
A little longer, (spare me, Heavens!) but only
To thank you for your tender love! Good uncle,
Good noble uncle, weep not!
Car. Oh, my chicken,
My dear boy, what shall I lose?
Hengo. Why, a child,
That must have died however; had this escaped me,
Fever or famine———I was born to die, sir.
Car. But thus unblown, my boy?
Hengo. I go the straighter
My journey to the gods. Sure I shall know you,
When you come, uncle?
Car. Yes, boy.
Hengo. And I hope
We shall enjoy together that great blessedness,
You told me off.
Car. Most certain, child.
Hengo. I grow cold;
Mine eyes are going.
Car. Lift them up!
Hengo. Pray for me;
And, noble uncle, when my bones are ashes,
Think of your little nephew! Mercy!
Car. Mercy!
You blessed angels, take him!
Hengo. Kiss me! so.
Farewell, farewell! [*Dies.*
Car. Farewell the hopes of Britain!
Thou royal graft, farewell for ever! Time and death,
You have done your worst. Fortune, now see, now proudly
Pluck off thy veil, and view thy triumph: Look,
Look what thou hast brought this land to. Oh, fair flower,
How lovely yet thy ruins shew, how sweetly
Even death embraces thee! The peace of heaven,
The fellowship of all great souls, be with thee!

Enter PETILLIUS *and* JUNIUS *on the rock.*

Ha! Dare ye, Romans? Ye shall win me bravely.
Thou art mine! [*Fight.*
Jun. Not yet, sir.
Car. Breathe ye, ye poor Romans,
And come up all, with all your antient valours;
Like a rough wind I'll shake your souls, and send them—

Enter SUETONIUS, *and all the Roman captains.*

Suet. Yield thee, bold Caratach! By all the gods,
As I am soldier, as I envy thee,
I'll use thee like thyself, thou valiant Briton.
Pet. Brave soldier, yield, thou stock of arms and honour,
Thou filler of the world with fame and glory!
Jun. Most worthy man, we'll woo thee, be thy prisoners.
Suet. Excellent Briton, do me but that honour,
That more to me than conquest, that true happiness,
To be my friend!
Car. Oh, Romans, see what here is!
Had this boy lived———
Suet. For fame's sake, for thy sword's sake,
As thou desirest to build thy virtues greater!
By all that's excellent in man, and honest———
Car. I do believe. Ye've made me a brave foe;
Make me a noble friend, and from your goodness,
Give this boy honourable earth to lie in!

Suet. He shall have fitting funeral.
Car. I yield then;
Not to your blows, but your brave courtesies.
Pet. Thus we conduct, then, to the arms of peace,
The wonder of the world!
Suet. Thus I embrace thee; [*Flourish.*
And let it be no flattery, that I tell thee,
Thou art the only soldier!
Car. How to thank ye,
I must hereafter find upon your usage.
I am for Rome?
Suet. You must.
Car. Then Rome shall know
The man, that makes her spring of glory grow.
Suet. Petillius, you have shewn much worth this day,
Redeemed much error; you have my love again;
Preserve it. Junius, with you I make him
Equal in the regiment.
Jun. The elder and the nobler;
I will give place, sir.
Suet. You shew a friend's soul.
March on, and through the camp, in every tongue,
The virtues of great Caratach be sung! [*Exeunt.*

THE

RIVAL QUEENS;

OR,

THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

BY

NATHANIEL LEE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
CLYTUS, *master of the horse.*
LYSIMACHUS, *prince of the blood.*
HEPHESTION, *Alexander's favourite.*
CASSANDER, *son of Antipater,* } *conspirators.*
POLYPERCHON, *commander of the Phalanx,* } *conspirators.*
PHILIP, *brother to Cassander,* } *conspirators.*
THESSALUS *the Median,* } *conspirators.*
PERDICCAS, } *great commanders.*
EUMENES, } *great commanders.*
MELEAGER, } *great commanders.*
ARISTANDER, *a soothsayer.*

WOMEN.

SYSIGAMBIS, *mother of the royal family.*
STATIRA, *daughter of Darius, married to Alexander.*
ROXANA, *daughter of Cohortanus, first wife of Alexander.*
PARISATIS, *sister to Statira, in love with Lysimachus.*
Attendants, Slaves, Ghost, Dancers, Guards.

Scene,—Babylon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter HEPHESTION, LYSIMACHUS, *fighting;* CLYTUS *parting them.*

Cly. WHAT, are you madmen? ha!—Put up, I say——
Then, mischief's in the bosom of you both.
Lys. I have his sword.
Cly. But must not have his life.
Lys. Must not, old Clytus?
Cly. Mad Lysimachus, you must not.
Heph. Coward flesh! O feeble arm!
He dallied with my point, and when I thrust,
He frowned and smiled, and foiled me like a fencer.
O reverend Clytus, father of the war,
Most famous guard of Alexander's life,
Take pity on my youth, and lend a sword:
Lysimachus is brave, and will but scorn me;
Kill me, or let me fight with him again.
Lys. There, take thy sword, and since thou art resolved
For death, thou hast the noblest from my hand.

Cly. Stay thee, Lysimachus; Hephestion, hold;
I bar you both, my body interposed.
Now let me see, which of you dares to strike!
By Jove, ye have stirred the old man; that rash arm,
That first advances, moves against the gods,
Against the wrath of Clytus, and the will
Of our great king, whose deputy I stand.
Lys. Well, I shall take another time.
Heph. And I.
Cly. 'Tis false.
Another time, what time? what foolish hour?
No time shall see a brave man do amiss.
And what's the noble cause, that makes this madness?
What big ambition blows this dangerous fire?
A Cupid's puff, is it not, woman's breath?
By all your triumphs in the heat of youth,
When towns were sacked, and beauties prostrate lay,
When my blood boiled, and nature worked me high,
Clytus ne'er bowed his body to such shame:
The brave will scorn the cobweb arts——The souls
Of all that whining, smiling, cozening sex,
Weigh not one thought of any man of war.
Lys. I confess our vengeance was ill-timed.
Cly. Death! I had rather this right arm were lost,
To which I owe my glory, than our king
Should know your fault——what, on this famous day!
Heph. I was to blame.
Cly. This memorable day,
When our hot master, that would tire the world,
Out-ride the labouring sun, and tread the stars,
When he, inclined to rest, comes peaceful on,
Listening to songs: while all his trumpets sleep,
And plays with monarchs, whom he used to drive;
Shall we begin disorders, make new broils?
We, that have temper learnt, shall we awake
Hushed Mars, the lion, that had left to roar?
Lys. 'Tis true; old Clytus is an oracle.
Put up, Hephestion——did not passion blind
My reason, I on such occasion too
Could thus have urged,
Heph. Why is it then we love?
Cly. Because unmanned.——
Why, is not Alexander grown example?
O that a face should thus bewitch a soul,
And ruin all, that's right and reasonable!
Talk be my bane, yet the old man must talk:
Not so he loved, when he at Issus fought,
And joined in mighty duel great Darius,
Whom from his chariot, flaming all with gems,
He hurled to earth, and crushed the imperial crown;
Nor could the gods defend their images,
Which with the gaudy coach lay overturned:
'Twas not the shaft of love, that did the feat;
Cupid had nothing there to do; but now
Two wives he takes, two rival queens disturb
The court; and while each hand does beauty hold,
Where is there room for glory?
Heph. In his heart.
Cly. Well said.
You are his favourite, and I had forgot
Who I was talking to. See Sysigambis comes,
Reading a letter to your princess; go,
Now make your claim, while I attend the king.
Exit.

Enter Sysigambis, Parisatis.

Par. Did not you love my father? Yes, I see
You did; his very name but mentioned brings
The tears, however unwilling, to your eyes.
I loved him too; he would not thus have forced
My trembling heart, which your commands may break,
But never bend.
Sys. Forbear thy lost complaints;
Urge not a suit, which I can never grant.
Behold the royal signet of the king,
Therefore resolve to be Hephestion's wife,
Par. No! since Lysimachus has won my heart,
My body shall be ashes, e'er another's.
Sys. For sixty rolling years who ever stood
The shock of state so unconcern'd as I?
This, whom I thought to govern, being young,
Heaven, as a plague to power, has rendered strong;
Judge my distresses, and my temper prize;
Who, though unfortunate, would still be wise.
Lys. To let you know, that misery doth sway
[*Both kneel.*
An humbler fate than yours, see at your feet
The lost Lysimachus: O mighty queen,
I have but this to beg, impartial stand;
And, since Hephestion serves by your permission,
Disdain not me, who ask your royal leave
To cast a throbbing heart before her feet.
Heph. A blessing, like possession of the princess,
No services, not crowns, nor all the blood,
That circles in our bodies, can deserve:
Therefore I take all helps, much more the king's,
And what your majesty vouchsafed to give;
Your word is past, where all my hopes must hang.
Lys. There perish too—all words want sense in love;
But love and I bring such a perfect passion,
So nobly pure, 'tis worthy of her eyes,
Which without blushing she may justly prize.
Heph. Such arrogance, should Alexander woo,
Would lose him all the conquests he has won.
Lys. Let not a conquest once be named by you,
Who this dispute must to my mercy owe.
Sys. Rise, brave Lysimachus, Hephestion, rise:
'Tis true Hephestion first declared his love;
And 'tis as true, I promised him my aid;
Your glorious king turned mighty advocate.
How noble, therefore, were the victory,
If we could vanquish this disordered love?

Heph. It will never be.
Lys. No, I will yet love on,
And hear from Alexander's mouth, in what
Hephestion merits more than I.
Sys. I grieve,
And fear the boldness, which your love inspires;
But lest her sight should haste your enterprize,
'Tis just I take the object from your eyes.
[*Exeunt Sys. and Par.*
Lys. She's gone, and see, the day, as if her look
Had kindled it, is lost, now she is vanished.
Heph. A sudden gloominess and horror comes
About me.
Lys. Let's away to meet the king;
You know my suit.
Heph. Yonder Cassander comes,
He may inform us.
Lys. No, I would avoid him;
There's something in that busy face of his,
That shocks my nature.
Heph. Where and what you please. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter CASSANDER.

Cass. The morning rises black, the lowering sun,
As if the dreadful business he foreknew,
Drives heavily his sable chariot on:
The face of day now blushes scarlet deep,
As if it feared the stroke which I intend,
Like that of Jupiter——Lightning and thunder!
The lords above are angry, and talk big,
Or rather walk the mighty cirque like mourners
Clad in long clouds, the robes of thickest night,
And seem to groan for Alexander's fall.
'Tis as Cassander's soul could wish it were,
Which, whensoe'er it flies at lofty mischief,
Would startle fate, and make all heaven concerned.
A mad Chaldean, in the dead of night,
Came to my bed-side with a flaming torch;
And bellowing o'er me, like a spirit damned,
He cried, 'Well had it been for Babylon,
'If cursed Cassander never had been born.'

Enter THESSALUS, *and* PHILIP, *with letters.*

Thess. My lord Cassander.
Cass. Ha! who's there?
Phil. Your friends.
Cass. Welcome dear Thessalus, and brother Philip.
Papers——with what contents?
Phil. From Macedon
A trusty slave arrived——great Antipater
Writes, that your mother laboured with you long,
Your birth was slow, and slow is all your life.
Cass. He writes, dispatch the king—Craterus comes,
Who in my room must govern Macedon;
Let him not live a day—he dies to-night;
And thus my father but forestalls my purpose:
Why am I slow then? If I rode on thunder,
I must a moment have to fall from heaven,
Ere I could blast the growth of this Colossus.
Thess. The haughty Polyperchon comes this way,
A mal-content, on whom I lately wrought,
That for a slight affront, at Susa given,
Bears Alexander most pernicious hate.
Cass. So, when I mocked the Persians, that adored him,
He struck me in the face, and by the hair
He swung me to his guards to be chastised;
For which and for my father's weighty cause,
When I abandon what I have resolved,
May I again be beaten like a slave.
But lo, where Polyperchon comes! now fire him
With such complaints, that he may shoot to ruin.

Enter POLYPERCHON.

Pol. Sure I have found those friends, dare second me;
I hear fresh murmurs as I pass along:
Yet, rather than put up, I'll do it alone.
Did not Pausanias, a youth, a stripling,
A beardless boy, swelled with inglorious wrong,
For a less cause his father Philip kill?
Peace then, full heart! move like a cloud about,
And when time ripens thee to break, O shed
The stock of all thy poison on his head.
Cass. All nations bow their heads with homage down,
And kiss the feet of this exalted man:
The name, the shout, the blast from every mouth,
Is Alexander: Alexander bursts
Your cheeks, and with a crack so loud
It drowns the voice of Heaven; like dogs ye fawn,
The earth's commanders fawn, and follow him;
Mankind starts up to hear his blasphemy:
And if this hunter of this barbarous world
But wind himself a God, you echo him
With universal cry.
Pol. I echo him?
I fawn, or fall, like a far eastern slave,
And lick his feet? Boys hoot me from the palace,
To haunt some cloister with my senseless walk,
When thus the noble soul of Polyperchon
Lets go the aim of all his actions, honour.
Thess. The king shall slay me, cut me up alive,
Ply me with fire and scourges, rack me worse
Than once he did Philotas, e'er I bow.
Cass. Curse on thy tongue for mentioning Philotas!
I had rather thou hadst Aristander been,
And to my soul's confusion raised up hell,
With all the furies brooding upon horrors,
Than brought Philotas' murder to remembrance.
Phil. I saw him racked, a sight so dismal sad
My eyes did ne'er behold.
Cass. So dismal! Peace!
It is unutterable; let me stand,
And think upon the tragedy you saw;
By Mars it comes! ay! now the rack's set for
Bloody Craterus, his inveterate foe,
With pitiless Hephestion standing by:
Philotas, like an angel seized by fiends,

Is straight disrobed, a napkin ties his head,
His warlike arms with shameful cords are bound,
And every slave can now the valiant wound.
Pol. Now, by the soul of royal Philip fled,
I dare pronounce young Alexander, who
Would be a god, is cruel as a devil.
Cass. Oh, Polyperchon, Philip, Thessalus,
Did not your eyes rain blood, your spirits burst,
To see your noble fellow-soldier burn,
Yet without trembling, or a tear, endure
The torments of the damned? O barbarians,
Could you stand by, and yet refuse to suffer?
Ye saw him bruised, torn, to the bones made bare;
His veins wide lanced, and the poor quivering flesh
With pincers from his manly bosom ript,
Till ye discovered the great heart lie panting.
Pol. Why killed we not the king, to save Philotas?
Cass. Asses! fools! but asses will bray, and fools be angry.
Why stood ye then like statues? there's the case,
The horror of the sight had turned ye marble.
So the pale Trojans, from their weeping walls,
Saw the dear body of the godlike Hector,
Bloody and soiled, dragged on the famous ground,
Yet senseless stood, nor with drawn weapons ran,
To save the great remains of that prodigious man.
Phil. Wretched Philotas! bloody Alexander!
Thess. Soon after him the great Parmenio fell,
Stabbed in his orchard by the tyrant's doom.
But where's the need to mention public loss,
When each receives particular disgrace?
Pol. Late I remember, to a banquet called,
After Alcides' goblet swift had gone
The giddy round, and wine had made me bold,
Stirring the spirits up to talk with kings,
I saw Craterus with Hephestion enter
In Persian robes; to Alexander's health
They largely drank; then, turning eastward, fell
Flat on the pavement, and adored the sun.
Straight to the king they sacred reverence gave,
With solemn words, 'O son of thundering Jove,
Young Ammon, live for ever;' then kissed the ground.
I laughed aloud, and, scoffing, asked them, why
They kissed no harder;——but the king leapt up,
And spurned me to the earth with this reply:
'Do thou!'——whilst with his foot he prest my neck,
Till from my ears, my nose, and mouth, the blood
Gushed forth, and I lay foaming on the earth—
For which I wish this dagger in his heart.
Cass. There spoke the spirit of Calisthenes;
Remember he's a man, his flesh as soft
And penetrable as a girl's: we have seen him wounded,
A stone has struck him, yet no thunderbolt:
A pebble felled this Jupiter along:
A sword has cut him, a javelin piereed him,
Water will drown him, fire burn him,
A surfeit, nay a fit of common sickness,
Brings this immortal to the gate of death.
Pol. Why should we more delay the glorious business?
Are your hearts firm?
Phil. Hell cannot be more bent
To any ruin, that I to the king's.
Thess. And I.
Pol. Behold my hand: and if you doubt my truth,
Tear up my breast, and lay my heart upon it.
Cass. Join then, O worthy, hearty, noble hands,
Fit instruments for such majestic souls!
Remember Hermolaus, and be hushed.
Pol. Still as the bosom of the desert night,
As fatal planets, or deep plotting fiends.
Cass. To day he comes from Babylon to Susa,
With proud Roxana.
Ah! who's that!——look there!

Enter the Ghost of King Philip, shaking a truncheon at them, walks over the Stage.

Cass. Now by the gods, or furies, which I ne'er
Believed,——there's one of them arrived to shake us.
What art thou? glaring thing, speak! What, the spirit
Of our king Philip, or of Polyphemus?
Nay hurl thy truncheon, second it with thunder;
We will abide——Thessalus, saw you nothing?
Thess. Yes, and am more amazed than you can be.
Phil. 'Tis said, that many prodigies were seen
This morn, but none so horrible as this.
Pol. What! can you fear? though the earth yawned so wide,
That all the labours of the deep were seen,
And Alexander stood on the other side,
I'd leap the burning ditch to give him death,
Or sink myself for ever: Pray, to the business.
Cass. As I was saying, this Roxana, whom,
To aggravate my hate to him, I love,
Meeting him as he came triumphant from
The Indies, kept him revelling at Susa;
But as I found, a deep repentance since
Turns his affections to the queen Statira,
To whom he swore (before he could espouse her)
That he would never bed Roxana more.
Pol. How did the Persian queen receive the news
Of his revolt?
Thess. With grief incredible!
Great Sysigambis wept, but the young queen
Fell dead among her maids;
Nor could their care
With richest cordials, for an hour or more,
Recover life.
Cass. Knowing how much she loved,
I hoped to turn her all into Medea;
For, when the first gust of her grief was past,
I entered, and with breath prepared did blow
The dying sparks into a towering flame,

Describing the new love he bears Roxana,
Conceiving, not unlikely, that the line
Of dead Darius in her cause might rise.
Is my panther's, lioness's rage
So furious, any torrent's falls so swift,
As a wronged woman's hate? Thus far it helps
To give him troubles; which perhaps may end him,
And set the court in universal uproar.
But see! it ripens more than I expected;
The scene works up; kill him, or kill thyself;
So there be mischief any way, 'tis well;
Now change the vizor, every one disperse,
And with a face of friendship meet the king.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter Sysigambis, Statira, Parisatis, *Attendants.*

Stat. Give me a knife, a draught of poison, flames;
Swell heart, break, break, thou stubborn thing!
Now, by the sacred fire, I'll not be held;
Why do ye wish my life, yet stifle me
For want of air? pray give me leave to walk.
Sys. Is there no reverence to my person due?
Darius would have heard me: trust not rumour.
Stat. No, he hates,
He loaths the beauties, which he has enjoyed.
O, he is false, that great, that glorious man
Is tyrant midst of his triumphant spoils,
Is bravely false, to all the gods forsworn:
Yet, who would think it! no, it cannot be,
It cannot——What, that dear protesting man!
He, that has warmed my feet with thousand sighs,
Then cooled them with his tears, died on my knees,
Outwept the morning with his dewy eyes,
And groaned and swore the wandering stars away!
Sys. No, 'tis impossible, believe thy mother,
That knows him well.
Stat. Away, and let me die:
O 'tis my fondness, and my easy nature,
That would excuse him; but I know he's false,
'Tis now the common talk, the news of the world,
False to Statira, false to her, that loved him;
That loved him, cruel victor as he was,
And took him, bathed all o'er in Persian blood;
Kissed the dear cruel wounds, and washed them o'er
And o'er in tears——then bound them with my hair,
Laid him all night upon my panting bosom,
Lulled like a child, and hushed him with my songs.
Par. If this be true, ah, who will ever trust
A man again?
Stat. A man! a man! my Parisatis;
Thus with thy hand held up, thus let me swear thee—
By the eternal body of the sun,
Whose body, O forgive the blasphemy,
I loved not half so well as the least part
Of my dear precious faithless Alexander;
For I will tell thee, and to warn thee of him,
Not the spring's mouth, nor breath of jessamin,
Nor violet's infant-sweets, nor opening buds,
Are half so sweet as Alexander's breast;
From every pore of him a perfume falls,
He kisses softer than a southern wind,
Curls like a vine, and touches like a god.
Sys. When will thy spirits rest, these transports cease?
Stat. Will you not give me leave to warn my sister?
As I was saying——but I told his sweetness;
Then he will talk—good gods, how he will talk!
Even when the joy he sighed for is possest,
He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things,
Vows with so much passion, swears with so much grace,
That 'tis a kind of heaven to be deluded by him.
Par. But what was it, that you would have me swear?
Stat. Alas, I had forgot! let me walk by,
And weep awhile, and I shall soon remember.
Sys. Have patience, child, and give her liberty;
Passions, like seas, will have their ebbs and flows:
Yet, while I see her thus, not all the losses
We have received, since Alexander's conquest,
Can touch my hardened soul; her sorrow reigns
Too fully there
Par. But what if she should kill herself?
Stat. Roxana, then, enjoys my perjured love:
Roxana clasps my monarch in her arms;
Dotes on my conqueror, my dear lord, my king,
Devours his lips, eats him with hungry kisses:
She grasps him all, she, the curst happy she!
By heaven I cannot bear it, 'tis too much;
I'll die, or rid me of the burning torture.
I will have remedy, I will, I will,
Or go distracted; madness may throw off
The mighty load, and drown the flaming passion.
Madam, draw near, with all that are in presence,
And listen to the vow, which here I make.
Sys. Take heed, my dear Statira, and consider,
What desperate love enforces you to swear.
Stat. Pardon me, for I have considered well;
And here I bid adieu to all mankind.
Farewell, ye cozeners of the easy sex,
And thou the greatest, falsest, Alexander!
Farewell, thou most beloved, thou faithless dear!
If I but mention him, the tears will fall;
Sure there is not a letter in his name,
But is a charm to melt a woman's eyes.
Sys. Clear up thy griefs; thy king, thy Alexander,
Comes on to Babylon.
Stat. Why, let him come,
Joy of all eyes but the forlorn Statira's.
Sys. Wilt thou not see him?
Stat. By heaven I never will,

This is my vow, my sacred resolution; [*Kneels.*
And when I break it——
Sus. Ah, do not ruin all!
Stat. May I again be flattered and deluded,
May sudden death, and horrid, come instead
Of what I wished, and take me unprepared!
Sys. Still kneel, and with the same breath call again
The woful imprecation thou hast made.
Stat. No, I will publish it through all the court,
Then, in the bowers of great Semiramis,
For ever lock my woes from human view.
Sys. Yet be persuaded.
Stat. Never urge me more;
Lest, driven to rage, I should my life abhor,
And in your presence put an end to all
The fast calamities, that round me fall.
Par. O angry heaven! what have the guiltless done?
And where shall wretched Parisatis run?
Sys. Captives in war, our bodies we resigned;
But now made free, love does our spirits bind.
Stat. When to my purposed loneness I retire,
Your sight I through the grates shall oft desire,
And after Alexander's health enquire.
And if this passion cannot be removed,
Ask how my resolution he approved,
How much he loves, how much he is beloved?
Then, when I hear that all things please him well,
Thank the good gods, and hide me in my cell.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Notes of trumpets sounding far off.—The scene draws, and discovers a battle of crows and ravens in the air; an eagle and a dragon meet and fight; the eagle drops down with all the rest of the birds, and the dragon flies away. Soldiers walk off, shaking their heads. The conspirators come forward.

Cass. He comes, the fatal glory of the world,
The headlong Alexander, with a guard
Of thronging crowns, comes on to Babylon,
Though warned, in spite of all the powers above,
Who, by these prodigies, foretell his ruin.
Pol. Why all this noise, because a king must die?
Or does heaven fear, because he swayed the earth,
His ghost will war with the high thunderer?
Curse on the babbling fates, that cannot see
A great man tumble, but they must be talking.
Cass. The spirit of king Philip, in those arms
We saw him wear, passed groaning through the court,
His dreadful eye-balls rolled their horror upwards;
He waved his arms, and shook his wondrous head.
I have heard, that, at the crowing of the cock,
Lions will roar, and goblins steal away;
But this majestic air stalks stedfast on,
Spite of the morn, that calls him from the east,
Nor minds the opening of the ivory door.
Phil. 'Tis certain, there was never day like this.
Cass. Late as I musing walked behind the palace,
I met a monstrous child, that, with his hands,
Held to his face, which seemed all over eyes,
A silver bowl, and wept it full of blood:
But having spied me, like a cockatrice,
He glared a while; then, with a shriek so shrill
As all the winds had whistled from his mouth,
He dashed me with the gore he held, and vanished.
Pol. That, which befel me, though it was horrid, yet
When I consider, it appears ridiculous:
For as I passed through a bye vacant place,
I met two women, very old and ugly,
That wrung their heads, and howled, and beat their breasts,
And cried out, poison: When I asked the cause,
They took me by the ears, and with strange force
Held me to the earth, then laughed, and disappeared.
Cass. O how I love destruction with a method,
Which none discern, but those, that weave the plot!
Like silk-worms we are hid in our own web,
But we shall burst at last through all the strings;
And, when time calls, come forth in a new form,
Not insects to be trod, but dragons winged.
Thess. The face of all the court is strangely altered:
There is not a Persian I can meet, but stares
As if he were distracted. Oxyartes,
Statira's uncle, openly declaimed
Against the perjury of Alexander.
Phil. Others, more fearful, are removed to Susa,
Dreading Roxana's rage, who comes in the rear
To Babylon.
Cass. It glads my rising soul,
That we shall see him racked before he dies:
I know he loves Statira more than life,
And on a crowd of kings, in triumph borne,
Comes big with expectation to enjoy her.
But when he hears the oaths, which she has taken,
Her last adieu made public to the world,
Her vowed divorce, how will remorse consume him,
Prey, like the bird of hell, upon his liver!
Pol. To baulk his longing, and delude his lust,
Is more than death, 'tis earnest for damnation.
Cass. Then comes Roxana, who must help our party;
I know her, jealous, bloody, and ambitious.
Sure it was the likeness of her heart to mine,

And sympathy of natures, caused me love her:
'Tis fixed, I must enjoy her, and no way
So proper as to make her guilty first.
Pol. To see two rival queens of different humours,
With a variety of torments vex him!

Enter LYSIMACHUS, *and* HEPHESTION.

Cass. Of that anon: But see Lysimachus,
And the young favourite. Sort, sort yourselves,
And, like to other mercenary souls,
Adore this mortal god, that soon must bleed.
Lys. Here I will wait the king's approach, and stand
His utmost anger, if he do me wrong.
Heph. That cannot be, from power so absolute
And high as his.
Lys. Well, you and I have done.
Pol. How the court thickens!
[*Trumpets sound.*
Cass. Nothing to what it will—Does he not come
To hear a thousand thousand embassies,
Which from all parts to Babylon are brought;
As if the parliament of the world
Had met, and he came on, a god, to give
The infinite assembly glorious audience.

Enter CLYTUS, ARISTANDER *in his robes, with a wand.*

Arist. Haste, reverend Clytus, haste and stop the king!
Cly. He is already entered: Then the press
Of princes, that attend so thick about him,
Keep all, that would approach, at certain distance.
Arist. Though he were hemmed with deities I'd speak to him,
And turn him back from this highway to death.
Cly. Here place yourself within his trumpet's sound.
Lo, the Chaldean priests appear; behold
The sacred fire, Nearchus and Eumenes,
With their white wands, and dressed in eastern robes,
To soothe the king, who loves the Persian mode:
But see, the master of the world appears.

Enter ALEXANDER; *all kneel but* CLYTUS.

Heph. O son of Jupiter, live for ever.
Alex. Rise all; and thou my second self, my love,
O my Hephestion, raise thee from the earth
Up to my breast, and hide thee in my heart.
Art thou grown cold? Why hang thine arms at distance?
Hug me, or, by Heaven, thou lovest me not.
Heph. Not love, my lord! break not the heart you framed,
And moulded up to such an excellence!
Then stamped on it your own immortal image.
Not love the king? such is not woman's love;
So fond a friendship, such a sacred flame,
As I must doubt to find in breasts above.
Alex. Thou dost, thou lovest me, crown of all my wars,
Thou dearer to me than my groves of laurel:
I know thou lovest thy Alexander more
Than Clytus does the king. No tears, Hephestion;
I read thy passion in thy manly eyes,
And glory in those planets of my life,
Above the rival lights, that shine in Heaven.
Lys. I see, that death must wait me, yet I'll on.
Alex. I'll tell thee, friend, and mark it, all ye princes,
Though never mortal man arrived to such
A height as I; yet I would forfeit all,
Cast all my purples, and my conquered crowns,
And die to save this darling of my soul.
Give me thy hand, share all my sceptres while
I live; and, when my hour of fate is come,
I leave thee, what thou merit'st more than I, the world.
Lys. Dread sir, I cast me at your royal feet.
Alex. What! my Lysimachus, whose veins are rich
With our illustrious blood? My kinsman, rise;
Is not that Clytus?
Cly. Your old faithful soldier.
Alex. Come to my hands, thus double arm the king:
And now, methinks, I stand like the dread God,
Who, while his priests and I quaffed sacred blood,
Acknowledged me his son. My lightning thou,
And thou my mighty thunder——I have seen
Thy glittering sword out-fly celestial fire:
And when I cried, 'Begone and execute,'
I've seen him run swifter than starting hinds,
Nor bent the tender grass beneath his feet;
Swifter than shadows fleeting o'er the fields;
Nay, even the winds, with all their stock of wings,
Have puffed behind, as wanting breath to reach him.
Lys. But if your majesty——
Cly. Who would not lose
The last dear drop of blood for such a king?
Alex. Witness, my elder brothers of the sky,
How much I love a soldier——O my Clytus,
Was it not when we passed the Granicus,
Thou didst preserve me from unequal force?
It was then, when Spithridates and Rhesaces,
Fell both upon me with two dreadful strokes,
And clove my tempered helmet quite in sunder,
Then I remember, then thou didst me service;
I think my thunder split them to the navel.
Cly. To your great self you owe that victory,
And sure your arms did never gain a nobler.
Alex. By Heaven, they never did; for well thou know'st,
And I am prouder to have passed that stream,
Than that I drove a million o'er the plain:
Can none remember? Yes, I know all must,
When Glory, like the dazzling eagle, stood,

Perched on my beaver in the Granick flood;
When Fortune's self my standard trembling bore,
And the pale Fates stood frighted on the shore,
When the immortals on the billows rode,
And I myself appeared the leading god.
Aris. But all the honours, which your youth has won,
Are lost, unless you fly from Babylon;
Haste with your griefs, to Susa take your way,
Fly for your life, destructive is your stay.
This morning having viewed the angry sky,
And marked the prodigies, that threatened nigh,
To our bright God I did for succour fly.
But oh———
Alex. What fears thy reverend bosom shake?
Or dost thou from some dream of horror wake?
If so, come grasp me with thy shaking hand,
Or fall behind, while I the danger stand.
Aris. To Orosmades' cave I did repair,
Where I atoned the dreadful God with prayer:
But as I prayed I heard long groans within,
And shrieks as of the damned, that howl for sin:
I knew the omen, and I feared to stay,
But prostrate on the trembling pavement lay.
When he bodes happiness, he answers mild:
'Twas so of old, and the great image smiled:
But now in abrupt thunder he replied,
Loud as rent rocks, or roaring seas, he cried,
'All empires, crowns, glory of Babylon,
Whose head stands wrapped in clouds, must tumble down.'
Alex. If Babylon must fall, what is it to me?
Or can I help immutable decree?
Down, then, vast frame, with all thy lofty towers,
Since it is so ordered by almighty powers:
Pressed by the fates, unloose your golden bars,
'Tis great to fall the envy of the stars.

Enter PERDICCAS, MELEAGER.

Mel. O horror!
Per. Dire portents!
Alex. Out with them, then;
What, are ye ghosts, ye empty shapes of men?
If so, the mysteries of hell unfold,
Be all the scrolls of destiny unrolled,
Open the brazen leaves, and let it come;
Point with a thunder-bolt your monarch's doom.
Per. As Meleager and myself in field,
Your Persian horse about the army wheeled,
We heard a noise as of a rushing wind,
And a thick storm the eye of day did blind:
A croaking noise resounded through the air,
We looked, and saw big ravens battling there;
Each bird of night appeared himself a cloud,
They met and fought, and their wounds rained black blood.
Mel. All, as for honour, did their lives expose;
Their talons clashed, and beaks gave mighty blows,
Whilst dreadful sounds did our scared sense assail,
As of small thunder, or huge Scythian hail.
Per. Our augurs shook, when, with a horrid groan,
We thought that all the clouds had tumbled down.
Soldiers and chiefs,—who can the wonder tell!
Struck to the ground, promiscuously fell;
While the dark birds, each ponderous as a shield,
For fifty furlongs hid the fatal field.
Alex. Be witness for me, all ye powers divine,
If ye be angry, it is no fault of mine;
Therefore let furies face me with a band
From hell, my virtue shall not make a stand;
Though all the curtains of the sky be drawn,
And the stars wink, young Ammon shall go on:
While my Statira shines, I cannot stay,
Love lifts his torch to light me on my way,
And her bright eyes create another day.
Lys. Ere you remove, be pleased, dread sir, to hear
A prince allied to you by blood.
Alex. Speak quickly.
Lys. For all that I have done for you in war,
I beg the princess Parisatis.
Alex. Ha———
Is not my word already past? Hephestion,
I know he hates thee, but he shall not have her;
We heard of this before——Lysimachus,
I here command you nourish no design
To prejudice my person in the mean.
I love, and will prefer to all the world.
Lys. I never failed to obey your majesty,
Whilst you commanded what was in my power;
Nor could Hephestion fly more swift to serve,
When you commanded us to storm a town,
Or fetch a standard from the enemy:
But, when you charge me not to love the princess,
I must confess, I disobey you, as
I would the gods themselves, should they command.
Alex. You should, brave sir? hear me, and then be dumb;
When by my order curst Calisthenes
Was, as a traitor, doomed to live in torments,
Your pity sped him in despite of me.
Think not I have forgot your insolence;
No, though I pardoned it, yet if again
Thou darest to cross me with another crime,
The bolts of fury shall be doubled on thee.
In the mean time think not of Parisatis;
For if thou dost, by Jupiter Amnon,
By my own head, and by king Philip's soul,
I'll not respect that blood of mine thou sharest,
But use thee as the vilest Macedonian.
Lys. I doubted not at first but I should meet
Your indignation, yet my soul's resolved;
And I shall never quit so brave a prize,
While I can draw a bow, or lift a sword.
Alex. Against my life! Ah! was it so? how now?
'Tis said, that I am rash, of hasty humour;
But I appeal to the immortal gods,
If ever petty poor provincial lord

Had temper like to mine: My slave, whom I
Could tread to clay, dares utter bloody threats.
Cly. Contain yourself, dread sir; the noble prince,
I see it in his countenance, would die
To justify his truth; but love makes many faults.
Lys. I meant his minion there should feel my arm;
Love asks his blood, nor shall he live to laugh
At my destruction.
Alex. Now be thy own judge;
I pardon thee for my old Clytus' sake;
But, if once more thou mention thy rash love,
Or darest attempt Hephestion's precious life,
I'll pour such storms of indignation on thee,
Philotus' rack, Calisthenes' disgrace,
Shall be delight to what thou shalt endure,

Enter SYSIGAMBIS, PARISATIS.

Heph. My lord, the queen comes to congratulate
Your safe arrival.
Alex. O thou, the best of women,
Source of my joy, blest parent of my love!
Sys. Permit me kneel, and give those adorations,
Which from the Persian family are due:
Have you not raised us from our ruins high?
And when no hand could help, nor any eye
Behold us with a tear, your's pitied me;
You, like a god, snatched us from sorrow's gulf,
Fixed us in thrones above our former state.
Par. Which, when a soul forgets, advanced so nobly,
May it be drowned in deeper misery!
Alex. To meet me thus, was generously done;
But still there wants, to crown my happiness,
Life of my empire, treasure of my soul,
My dear Statira: O that heavenly beam,
Warmth of my brain, and fire of my heart;
Had she but shot to see me, had she met me,
By this time I had been amongst the gods,
If any extasy can make a height,
Or any rapture hurl us to the heavens.
Cly. Now, who shall dare to tell him the queen's vow?
Alex. How fares my love? ha—neither answer me!
Ye raise my wonder, darkness overwhelms me;
If royal Sysigambis does not weep!
Trembling and horror pierce me, cold as ice.
Is she not well? what none, none answer me?
Or is it worse? Keep down, ye rising sighs,
And murmur in the hollow of my breast:
Run to my heart, and gather more sad wind;
That, when the voice of Fate shall call you forth,
Ye may, at one rush, from the seat of life,
Blow the blood out, and burst like a bladder.
Heph. I would relate it, but my courage fails me.
Alex. If she be dead—That if is impossible;
And let none here affirm it for his soul:
For he, that dares but think so damned a lie,
I'll have his body straight impaled before me,
And glut my eyes upon his bleeding entrails.
Cass. How will this engine of unruly passion
Roar, when we have rammed him to the mouth with poison? [*Aside.*
Alex. Why stand you all, as you were rooted here,
Like the senseless trees, while to the stupid grove
I, like a wounded lion, groan my griefs,
And none will answer—what, not my Hephestion?
If thou hast any love for Alexander,
If ever I obliged thee by my care,
When my quick sight has watched thee in the fight;
Or if to see thee bleed I sent forth cries,
And like a mother, washed thee with my tears;
If this be true, if I deserve thy love,
Ease me, and tell the cause of my disaster.
Heph. Your mourning queen (which I had told before
Had you been calm) has no disease but sorrow,
Which was occasioned first by jealous pangs:
She heard, (for what can escape a watchful lover?)
That you at Susa, breaking all your vows,
Relapsed, and conquered by Roxana's charms,
Gave up yourself devoted to her arms.
Alex. I know that subtle creature, in my riot,
My reason gone, seduced me to her bed;
But when I waked I shook the Circe off,
Though that enchantress held me by the arm,
And wept, and gazed with all the force of love;
Nor grieved I less for that, which I had done,
Than when at Thais' suit, enraged with wine,
I set the famed Persepolis on fire.
Heph. Your queen Statira took it so to heart,
That, in the agony of love, she swore
Never to see your majesty again;
With dreadful imprecations she confirmed
Her oath, and I much fear that she will keep it.
Alex. Ha! did she swear? did that sweet creature swear?
I'll not believe it; no, she is all softness,
All melting, mild, and calm as a rocked infant,
Nor can you wake her into cries: By heaven
She is the child of love, and she was born in smiles.
Par. I and my weeping mother heard her swear.
Sys. And with such fierceness she did aggravate
The foulness of your fault, that I could wish
Your majesty would blot her from your breast.
Alex. Blot her, forget her, hurl her from my bosom,
For ever lose that star that gilds my life,
Guide of my days, and goddess of my nights!
No, she shall stay with me in spite of vows,
My soul and body both are twisted with her.
The god of love empties his golden quiver,
Shoots every grain of her into my heart;

She is all mine, by Heaven I feel her here,
Panting and warm, the dearest—O Statira!
Sys. Have patience, son, and trust to Heaven and me.
If my authority, or the remembrance
Of dead Darius, or her mother's soul,
Can work upon her, she again is yours.
Alex. O mother, help me, help your wounded son,
And move the soul of my offended dear;
But fly, haste, ere the sad procession's made.
Spend not a thought in reply—Begone,
If you would have me live—and, Parisatis,
Hang thou about her knees, wash them with tears:
Nay haste, the breath of gods, and eloquence
Of angels, go along with you—Oh my heart!
[*Exeunt Sys. and Par.*
Lys. Now let your majesty, who feels the torments
And sharpest pangs of love, encourage mine.
Alex. Ha——
Cly. Are you a madman? Is this a time?
Lys. Yes; for I see he cannot be unjust to me,
Lest something worse befal himself.
Alex. Why dost thou tempt me thus to my undoing?
Death thou shouldst have, were it not courted so:
But know, to thy confusion, that my word,
Like destiny, admits not a reverse;
Therefore in chains thou shalt behold the nuptials
Of my Hephestion——Guards, take him prisoner.
Lys. I shall not easily resign my sword,
Till I have dyed it in my rival's blood.
Alex. I charge you, kill him not, take him alive;
The dignity of kings is now concerned,
And I will find a way to tame this beast.
Cly. Kneel, for I see lightning in his eyes.
Lys. I neither hope nor ask a pardon of him;
But if he should restore my sword, I would
With a new violence run against my rival.
Alex. Sure we at last shall conquer this fierce lion:
Hence from my sight, and bear him to a dungeon!
Perdiccas, give this lion to a lion;
None speak for him! fly! stop his mouth, away!
Cly. The king's extremely moved.
Eum. I dare not speak.
Cly. This comes of love and women; 'tis all madness;
Yet were I heated now with wine, I should
Be preaching to the king for this rash foo.
Alex. Come hither, Clytus, and my dear Hephestion;
Lend me your arms, help, for I'm sick on the sudden.
I fear betwixt Statira's cruel love,
And fond Roxana's arts, your king will fall.
Cly. Better the Persian race were all undone.
Heph. Look up, my lord, and bend not thus your head,
As if you'd leave the empire of this world,
Which you with toil have won.
Alex. Would I had not!
There's no true joy in such unwieldy fortune.
Eternal gazers lasting troubles make,
All find my spots, but few my brightness take.
Stand off, and give me air——
Why was I born a prince, proclaimed a god,
Yet have no liberty to look abroad?
Thus palaces in prospect bar the eye,
Which, pleased and free, would o'er the cottage fly,
O'er flowery lands to the gay distant sky.
Farewell, then, empire, and the racks of love;
By all the gods, I will to wilds remove;
Stretched like a Sylvan god on grass lie down,
And quite forget, that e'er I wore a crown.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter EUMENES, PHILIP, THESSALUS, PERDICCAS, LYSIMACHUS, *Guards.*

Eum. FAREWELL, brave spirit! when you come above,
Commend us to Philotas and the rest
Of our great friends.
Thess. Perdiccas, you are grown
In trust, be thankful for your noble office.
Per. As noble as you sentence me, I'd give
This arm, that Thessalus were so employed.
Lys. Cease these untimely jars, farewell to all.
Fight for the king as I have done, and then
You may be worthy of a death like mine——
Lead on.

Enter PARISATIS.

Par. Ah, my Lysimachus, where are you going?
Whither? to be devoured? O barbarous prince!
Could you expose your life to the king's rage,
And yet remember mine was tied to yours?
Lys. The gods preserve you ever from the ills,
That threaten me: Live, madam, to enjoy
A nobler fortune, and forget this wretch.
I ne'er had worth, nor is it possible
That all the blood, which I shall lose this day,
Should merit this rich sorrow from your eyes.
Par. The king, I know, is bent to thy destruction;
Now by command they forced me from his knees:
But take this satisfaction in thy death,

No power, command, my mother's, sister's tears,
Shall cause me to survive thy cruel loss.
Lys. Live, princess, live, howe'er the king disdain me:
Perhaps, unarmed and fighting for your sake,
I may perform what shall amaze the world,
And force him yet to give you to my arms.
Away, Perdiccas——Dear Eumenes, take
The princess to your charge.
[*Exeunt Perd. Lys. Guards.*
Eum. O cruelty!
Par. Lead me, Eumenes, lead me from the light,
Where I may wait till I his ruin hear,
Then free my soul to meet him in the air.
[*Exeunt Par. and Eum.*
Phil. See where the jealous proud Roxana comes,
A haughty vengeance gathers on her brow.
Thes. Peace! they have raised her to their ends; observe.

Enter ROXANA, CASSANDER, POLYPERCHON.

Rox. O you have ruined me, I shall be mad:
Said you so passionately? is it possible?
So kind to her, and so unkind to me?
Cass. More than your utmost fancy can invent.
He swooned thrice at hearing of her vow,
And when our care as oft had brought back life,
He drew his sword, and offered at his breast.
Pol. Then railed at you with such unheard of curses!
Rox. Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,
Or I will blow you up like dust; avaunt!
Madness but meanly represents my toil.
Roxana and Statira, they are names
That must for ever jar: eternal discord,
Fury, revenge, disdain, and indignation
Tear my swollen breast, make way for fire and tempest.
My brain is burst, debate and reason quenched,
The storm is up, and my hot bleeding heart
Splits with the rack, while passions, like the winds,
Rise up to heaven, and put out all the stars.
What saving hand, or what a mighty arm
Can raise me sinking?
Cass. Let your own arm save you!
'Tis in your power, your beauty is almighty:
Let all the stars go out, your eyes can light them.
Wake then, bright planet, that should rule the world,
Wake, like the moon, from your too long eclipse,
And we, with all the instruments of war,
Trumpets and drums, will help your glorious labour.
Pol. Put us to act, and with a violence,
That fits the spirit of a most wronged woman:
Let not Medea's dreadful vengeance stand
A pattern more, but draw your own so fierce,
It may for ever be original.
Cass. Touch not, but dash with strokes so bravely bold,
Till you have formed a face of so much horror,
That gaping furies may run frighted back;
That envy may devour herself for madness,
And sad Medusa's head be turned to stone.
Rox. Yes, we will have revenge, my instruments;
For there is nothing you have said of me,
But comes far short, wanting of what I am.
When in my nonage I at Zogdia lived,
Amongst my she companions I would reign;
Drew them from idleness, and little arts
Of coining looks, and laying snares for lovers,
Broke all their glasses, and their tires tore,
Taught them, like Amazons, to ride and chase
Wild beasts in deserts, and to master men.
Cass. Her looks, her words, her every motion fires me.
Rox. But when I heard of Alexander's conquests;
How with a handful he had millions slain,
Spoiled all the east, their queens his captives made,
Yet with what chastity, and godlike temper,
He saw their beauties, and with pity bowed;
Methought I hung upon my father's lips,
And wished him tell the wondrous tale again:
Left all my sports, the woman now returned,
And sighs uncalled would from my bosom fly;
And all the night, as my Adraste told me,
In slumbers groaned, and murmured Alexander.
Cass. Curse on the name, but I will soon remove
That bar of my ambition and my love. [*Aside.*
Rox. At last to Zogdia this triumpher came,
And, covered o'er with laurels, forced our city:
At night I by my father's order stood,
With fifty virgins waiting at a banquet.
But oh! how glad was I to hear his court,
To feel the pressure of his glowing hand,
And taste the dear, the false protesting lips!
Cass. Wormwood and hemlock henceforth grow about them! [*Aside.*
Rox. Gods! that a man should be so great and base!
What said he not, when in the bridal bed,
He clasped my yielding body in his arms!
Cass. Yet after this prove false!
Pol. Horrid perjury!
Cass. Not to be matched!
Pol. O you must find revenge!
Cass. A person of your spirit be thus slighted,
For whose desire all earth should be too little!
Rox. And shall the daughter of Darius hold him?
That puny girl, that ape of my ambition?
That cried for milk, when I was nursed in blood!
Shall she, made up of watry elements,
A cloud, shall she embrace my proper god,
While I am cast like lightning from his hand?
No, I must scorn to prey on common things;

Though hurled to earth by this disdainful Jove,
I will rebound to my own orb of fire,
And with the wreck of all the heavens expire.
Cass. Now you appear yourself;
'Tis noble anger.
Ror. May the illustrious blood, that fills my womb,
And ripens to be perfect godhead born,
Come forth a fury; may Barsina's bastard
Tread it to hell, and rule as sovereign lord,
When I permit Statira to enjoy
Roxana's right, and strive not to destroy.

Enter Sysigambis, Statira, *in mourning.*

Cass. Behold her going to fulfil her vow;
Old Sysigambis, whom the king engaged,
Resists and awes her with authority.
Ror. 'Twas rashly vowed indeed, and I should pity her.
Sys. O my Statira, how has passion changed thee!
Think if thou drive the king to such extremes,
What in his fury may he not denounce
Against the poor remains of lost Darius?
Stat. I know, I know he will be kind to you,
And to my mourning sister for my sake;
And tell him, how with my departing breath,
I railed not, but spoke kindly of his person,
Nay wept to think of our divided loves,
And sobbing sent, at last, forgiveness to him.
Ror. Grant, heaven, some ease to this distracted wretch!
Let her not linger out a life in torments,
Be these her last words, and at once dispatch her.
Sys. No, by the everlasting fire I swear,
By my Darius' soul, I never more
Will dare to look on Alexander's face,
If you refuse to see him.
Ror. Curse on that cunning tongue, I fear her now.
Cass. No, she's resolved.
Stat. I cast me at your feet,
To bathe them with my tears; or, if you please,
I'll let you life, and wash them with my blood,
But still conjure you not to rack my soul,
Nor hurry my wild thoughts to perfect madness.
Should now Darius' awful ghost appear,
And my pale mother stand beseeching by,
I would persist to death, and keep my vow.
Ror. She shews a certain bravery of soul,
Which I should praise in any but my rival.
Sys. Die then, rebellious wretch! thou art not now
That soft beloved, nor durst thou share my blood.
Go hide thy baseness in the lonely grot,
Ruin thy mother, and thy royal house,
Pernicious creature! shed the innocent
Blood, and sacrifice to the king's wrath
The lives of all thy people; fly, begone,
And hide thee, where bright virtue never shone:
The day will shun thee, nay the stars, that view
Mischiefs and murders, deeds to thee not new,
Will start at this——Go, go, thy crimes deplore,
And never think of Sysigambis more. [*Exeunt.*
Ror. Madam, I hope you will a queen forgive:
Roxana weeps to see Statira grieve.
How noble is the brave resolve you make,
To quit the world for Alexander's sake?
Vast is your mind, you dare thus greatly die,
And yield the king to one so mean as I:
'Tis a revenge will make the victor smart,
And much I fear your death will break his heart.
Stat. You counterfeit, I fear, and know too well
How much your eyes all beauties else excel:
Roxana, who, though not a princess born,
In chains could make the mighty victor mourn.
Forgetting power when wine had made him warm,
And senseless, yet even then you knew to charm:
Preserve him by those arts, that cannot fail,
While I the loss of what I loved bewail.
Ror. I hope your majesty will give me leave
To wait you to the grove, where you would grieve;
Where like the turtle, you the lose will mean
Of that dear mate, and murmur all alone.
Stat. No, proud triumpher o'er my falling state,
Thou shalt not stay to fill me with my fate:
Go to the conquest, which your wiles may boast,
And tell the world you left Statira lost.
Go seize my faithless Alexander's hand,
Both hand and heart were once at my command:
Grasp his loved neck, die on his fragrant breast,
Love him like me, whose love can't be expressed,
He must be happy, and you more than blest;
While I in darkness hide me from the day,
That with my mind I may his form survey,
And think so long, till I think life away.
Ror. No, sickly virtue, no,
Thou shalt not think, nor thy love's loss bemoan,
Nor shall past pleasures through thy fancy run;
That were to make thee blest as I can be:
But thy no-thought I must, I will decree.
As thus, I'll torture thee till thou art mad,
And then no thought to purpose can be had.
Stat. How frail, how cowardly is woman's mind?
We shriek at thunder, dread the rustling wind,
And glittering swords the brightest eyes will blind.
Yet when strong jealousy inflames the soul,
The weak will roar, and calms to tempests roll.
Rival, take heed, and tempt me not too far!
My blood may boil, and blushes shew a war.
Ror. When you retire to your romantic cell,
I'll make thy solitary mansion hell;
Thou shalt nor rest by day, nor sleep by night,
But still Roxana shall thy spirit fright:
Wanton in dreams if thou darest dream of bliss,
Thy roving ghost may think to steal a kiss;

But when to his sought bed, thy wandering air
Shall for the happiness it wished repair,
How will it groan to find thy rival there?
How ghastly wilt thou look, when thou shalt see,
Through the drawn curtains, that great man and me,
Wearied with laughing, joys shot to the soul,
While thou shalt grinning stand, and gnash thy teeth, and howl?
Stat. O barbarous rage! my tears I cannot keep,
But my full eyes in spite of me will weep.
Rox. The king and I in various pictures drawn,
Clasping each other, shaded o'er with lawn,
Shall be the daily presents I will send,
To help thy sorrow to her journey's end.
And when we hear at last thy hour draws nigh,
My Alexander, my dear love and I,
Will come and hasten on thy lingering fates,
And smile and kiss thy soul out through the grates.
Stat. 'Tis well, I thank thee; thou hast waked a rage,
Whose boiling now no temper can assuage:
I meet thy tides of jealousy with more,
Dare thee to duel, and dash thee o'er and o'er.
Rox. What would you dare?
Stat. Whatever you dare do,
My warring thoughts the bloodiest tracts pursue;
I am by love a fury made, like you:
Kill or be killed, thus acted by despair.
Rox. Sure the disdained Statira does not dare?
Stat. Yes, towering proud Roxana, but I dare.
Rox. I tower indeed o'er thee;
Like a fair wood, the shade of kings I stand;
While thou, sick weed, do but infest the land.
Stat. No, like an ivy I will curl thee round,
Thy sapless trunk of all its pride confound,
Then, dry and withered, bend thee to the ground.
What Sysigambis' threats, objected fears,
My sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
Could not effect, thy rival rage has done:
My soul, whose start at breach of oaths begun,
Shall to thy ruin violated run.
I'll see the king in spite of all I swore,
Though curst, that thou mayest never see him more.

Enter PERDICCAS, ALEXANDER, SYSIOAMBIS, *attendants, &c.*

Per. Madam, your royal mother, and the king.
Alex. O my Statira! O my angry dear!
Turn thine eyes on me, I would talk to them:
What shall I say to work upon thy soul?
Where shall I throw me? whither shall I fall?
Stat. For me you shall not fall.
Alex. For thee I will,
Before thy feet I'll have a grave dug up,
And perish quick, be buried straight alive:
Come but, as the earth grows heavy on me,
A tender look, and a relenting word,
Say but, 'twas pity that so great a man,
Who had ten thousand deaths in battles 'scaped,
For one poor fault so early should remove,
And fall a martyr to the god of love.
Rox. Is then Roxana's love and life so poor,
That for another you can chuse to die,
Rather than live for her? what have I done?
How am I altered since at Susa last
You swore, and sealed it with a thousand kisses,
Rather than lose Roxana's smallest charm,
You would forego the conquest of the world?
Alex. Madam, you best can tell what magic drew
Me to your charms, but let it not be told
For your own sake; take that conquered world,
Dispose of crowns and scepters as you please,
Let me but have the freedom of an hour,
To make account with this wronged innocence.
Stat. You know, my lord, you did commit a fault:
I ask but this, repeat your crime no more.
Alex. O never, never.
Rox. Am I rejected, then?
Alex. Exhaust my treasures,
Take all the spoils of the fair conquered Indies;
But, for the ease of my afflicted soul,
Go, where I never may behold thee more.
Rox. Yes, I will go, ungrateful as thou art,
Bane to my life! thou torment of my days,
Thou murderer of the world! for, as thy sword
Hath cut the lives of thousand thousand men,
So will thy tongue undo all woman-kind.
But I'll be gone; this last disdain hath cured me,
And I am now grown so indifferent,
I could behold you kiss without a pang,
Nay, take a torch and light you to your bed:
But do not trust me, no, for if you do,
By all the furies and the flames of love,
By love, which is the hottest burning hell,
I'll set you both on fire to blaze for ever. [*Exit.*
Stat. O Alexander, is it possible? Good gods,
That guilt can shew so lovely!—yet I pardon,
Forgive thee all, by thy dear life I do.
Alex. Ha, pardon! saidst thou, pardon me?
Sys. Now all thy mother's blessings fall upon thee,
My best, my most beloved, my own Statira!
Alex. Is it then true, that thou hast pardoned me?
And is it given me thus to touch thy hand,
And fold thy body in my longing arms?
To gaze upon thy eyes, my happier stars,
To taste thy lip, and thy dear balmy breath,
While every sigh comes forth so fraught with sweets,
'Tis incense to be offered to a god.
Stat. Yes, dear impostor, 'tis most true, that I
Have pardoned thee; and 'tis as true, that while
I stand in view of thee, thy eyes will wound,
Thy tongue will make me wanton as thy wishes;
And while I feel thy hand, my body glows:
Therefore be quick, and take your last adieu,
These your last sighs, and these your parting tears:
Farewell, farewell, a long and last farewell!

Alex. O my Hephestion, bear me, or I sink.
Stat. Nay, you may take—Heaven, how my heart throbs!
You may, you may, if yet you think me worthy,
Take from these trembling lips a parting kiss.
Alex. No, let me starve first—why, Statira, why?
What is the meaning of all this?—O gods!
I know the cause, my working brain divines——
You'll say you pardoned, but with this reserve,
Never to make me blest as I have been,
To slumber by the side of that false man,
Nor give a heaven of beauty to a devil:
Think you not thus? Speak, madam.
Sys. She is not worthy, son, of so much sorrow:
Speak comfort to him, speak, my dear Statira,
I ask thee by those tears: Ah! canst thou e'er
Pretend to love, yet with dry eyes behold him?
Alex. Silence more dreadful than severest sounds:
Would she but speak, though death, eternal exile
Hung on her lips, yet, while her tongue pronounces,
There must be music even in my undoing.
Stat. Still, my loved lord, I cannot see you thus;
Nor can I ever yield to share your bed:
O I shall find Roxana in your arms,
And taste her kisses left upon your lips.
Alex. Yes, obstinate, I will, madam, you shall,
You shall, in spite of this resistless passion,
Be served; but you must give me leave to think
You never loved.—O could I see you thus!
Hell has not half the tortures that you raise.
Cly. Never did passions combat thus before.
Alex. O I shall burst,
Unless you give me leave to rave a while.
Sys. Yet e'er destruction sweep us both away,
Relent, and break through all to pity him!
Alex. Yes, I will shake this Cupid from my arms,
If all the rages of the earth would fright him;
Drown him in the deep bowl of Hercules;
Make the world drunk, and then, like Æolus,
When he gave passage to the struggling winds,
I'll strike my spear into the reeling globe
To let it blood, set Babylon in a blaze,
And drive this god of flames with more consuming fire.
Stat. My presence will but force him to extremes;
Besides, 'tis death to me to see his pains:
Yet stand resolved never to yield again——
Permit me to remove.
Alex. I charge ye, stay her!
For if she pass, by all the hell I feel,
Your souls, your naked ghosts, shall wait upon her.
O turn thee! turn! thou barbarous brightness, turn!
Hear my last words, and see my utmost pang:
But first kneel with me, all my soldiers kneel!
[*All kneel.*
Yet lower—prostrate to the earth.——Ah! mother, what,
Will you kneel too? Then let the sun stand still,
To see himself out-worshipped; not a face
Be shewn, that is not washed all o'er in tears,
But weep as if you here beheld me slain.
Sys. Hast thou a heart? or art thou savage turned?
But if this posture cannot move your mercy,
I never will speak more.
Alex. O my Statira!
I swear, my queen, I'll not out-live thy hate,
My soul is still as death—But one thing more,
Pardon my last extremities—the transports
Of a deep wounded breast, and all is well.
Stat. Rise, and may heaven forgive you all, like me.
Alex. You are too gracious.—Clytus, bear me hence;
When I am laid in earth, yield her the world.
There's something here heaves, as cold as ice,
That stops my breath—Farewell, oh gods! for ever.
Stat. Hold off, and let me run into his arms,
My dearest, my all love, my lord, my king!
You shall not die, if that the soul and body
Of thy Statira can restore thy life:
Give me thy wonted kindness.
Alex. O the killing joy!
O extasy! my heart will burst my breast,
To leap into thy bosom; but, by heaven,
This night I will revenge me of thy beauties,
For the dear rack I have this day endured;
For all the sighs and tears that I have spent,
I'll have so many thousand burning loves;
So swell thy lips, so fill me with thy sweetness,
Thou shalt not sleep nor close thy wandring eyes:
The smiling hours shall all be loved away,
We'll surfeit all the night, and languish all the day.
Stat. Nor shall Roxana——
Alex. Let her not be named——
O mother! how shall I requite your goodness!
And you, my fellow warriors, that could weep
For your lost king—But I invite you all,
My equals in the throne as in the grave,
Without distinction to the riot come,
To the king's banquet——
Cly. I beg your majesty
Would leave me out.
Alex. None, none shall be excused;
All revel out the day, 'tis my command.
Gay as the Persian god our self will stand,
With a crowned goblet in our lifted hand.
Young Ammon and Statira shall go round,
While antic measures beat the burdened ground,
And to the vaulted skies our clangors sound.
[*Exeun*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter CLYTUS *in his Macedonian habit;* HEPHESTION, EUMENES, MELEAGER, *&c. in Persian robes.*

Cly. AWAY, I will not wear these Persian robes;
Nor ought the king be angry for the reverence
I owe my country: sacred are her customs,
Which honest Clytus shall preserve to death.
O let me rot in Macedonian rags,
Rather than shine in fashions of the east.
Then for the adorations he requires,
Roast my old body in infernal flames,
Or let him cage me like Calisthenes.
Eum. Dear Clytus, be persuaded.
Heph. You know the king
Is godlike, full of all the richest virtues,
That ever royal heart possessed; yet you
Perverse, but to one humour will oppose him.
Cly. Call you it humour? 'tis a pregnant one,
By Mars there's venom in it, burning pride;
And, though my life should follow, rather than
Bear such a hot ambition in my bowels,
I'd rip them up to give the poison vent.
Mele. Was not that Jupiter, whom we adore,
A man, but, for his more than human acts,
Advanced to heaven, and worshipped for its lord!
Heph. By all his thunder and his sovereign power,
I'll not believe the earth yet ever felt
An arm like Alexander's; not that god
You named, though riding in a car of fire,
And drawn by flying horses, winged with lightning,
Could, in a shorter space, do greater deeds,
Drive all the nations, and lay waste the world.
Cly. There's not a man of war among you all,
That loves the king like me; yet I'll not flatter,
Nor soothe his vanity, it is blameable;
And when the wine works, Clytus's thoughts will out.
Heph. Then go not to the banquet.
Cly. I was called,
My minion, was I not, as well as you?
I'll go; my friends, in this old habit thus,
And laugh, and drink the king's health heartily;
And while you, blushing, bow your heads to earth,
And hide them in the dust, I'll stand upright,
Straight as a spear, the pillar of my country,
And be by so much nearer to the gods——
But see, the king and all the court appear.

Enter ALEXANDER, SYSIGAMBIS, STATIRA, PARISATIS, *&c.*

Par. Spare him, O spare Lysimachus his life!
I know you will; kings should delight in mercy.
Alex. Shield me, Statira, shield me from her sorrow!

Par. O save him, save him, e'er it be too late!
Speak the kind word, before the gaping lion
Swallow him up; let not your soldier perish
But for one rashness, which despair did cause:
I'll follow thus for ever on my knees,
And make your way so slippery with tears,
You shall not pass—Sister, do you conjure him!
Alex. O mother, take her, take her from me;
[*Kneels.*
Her watry eyes assault my very soul,
They shake my best resolve——
Stat. Did I not break
Through all for you? nay, now, my lord, you must.
Sys. Nor would I make my son so bold a prayer
Had I not first consulted for his honour.
Alex. Honour! what honour! has not Statira said it!
Were I the king of the blue firmament,
And the bold Titans should again make war,
Though my resistless arrows were made ready,
By all the gods she should arrest my hand.
Fly then, even thou, his rival so beloved,
Fly with old Clytus, snatch him from the jaws
Of the devouring beast, bring him adorned
To the king's banquet, fit for loads of honour.
[*Exeunt Heph. Eum. Par. and Cly.*
Stat. O my loved lord! let me embrace your knees!
I am not worthy of this mighty passion:
You are too good for goddesses themselves:
No woman, nor the sex, is worth a grain
Of this illustrious life of my dear master.
Why are you so divine, to cause such fondness,
That my heart leaps, and beats, and fain would out,
To make a dance of joy about your feet?
Alex. Excellent woman! no, 'tis impossible
To say how much I love thee—Ha! again!
Such extasies life cannot carry long;
The day comes on so fast, and beamy joy
Darts with such fierceness on me, night will follow.
A pale crowned head flew lately glaring by me,
With two dead hands, which threw a crystal globe
From high, that shattered in a thousand pieces.
But I will lose this boding dream in wine;
Then, warm and blushing for my queen's embraces,
Bear me, with all my heat, to thy loved bosom.
Stat. Go, my best love, and cheer your drooping spirits;
Laugh with your friends, and talk your grief away,
While, in the bower of great Semiramis,
I dress your bed with all the sweets of Nature,
And crown it as the altar of my love;
Where I will lay me down, and softly mourn,
But never close my eyes till you return.
[*Exeunt Stat. Sys.*

Alex. Is she not more than mortal e'er can wish!
Diana's soul cast in the flesh of Venus!
By Jove, 'tis ominous, our parting is;
Her face looked pale too, as she turned away:
And when I wrung her by the rosy fingers,
Methought the strings of my great heart did crack.
What should it mean?——Forward, Leomedon.

ROXANA *meets him, with* CASSANDER, POLYPERCHON, PHILIP, *and* THESSALUS.

Why, madam, gaze you thus?
Rox. For a last look, [*She holds his hand.*
And that the memory of Roxana's wrongs
May be for ever printed on your mind.
Alex. O madam, you must let me pass.
Rox. I will.
But I have sworn, that you shall hear me speak,
And mark me well, for fate is in my breath:
Love on the mistress, you adore, to death;
Still hope, but I fruition will destroy;
Languish for pleasures, you shall ne'er enjoy.
Still may Statira's image draw your sight,
Like those deluding fires that walk at night;
Lead you through fragrant grots and flow'ry groves,
And charm you through deep grass with sleeping loves;
That when your fancy to its height does rise,
That light, you loved, may vanish from your eyes,
Darkness, despair, and death, your wandering soul surprize.
Alex. Away! lead, Meleager, to the banquet.
[*Ex. with Mel. &c.*
Rox. So unconcerned! O I could tear my flesh,
Or him, or you, nay all the world to pieces.
Cass. Still keep this spirit up, preserve it still,
Lose not a grain, for such majestic atoms
First made the world, and must preserve its greatness.
Rox. I know I am whatever thou canst say.
My soul is pent, and has not elbow room;
'Tis swelled with this last slight, beyond all bounds:
O that it had a space might answer to
Its infinite desire, where I might stand,
And hurl the spheres about like sportive balls!
Cass. We are your slaves, admirers of your fury:
Command Cassander to obey your pleasure,
And I will on, swift as your nimble eye
Scales heaven; when I am angry with the fates,
No age, nor sex, nor dignity of blood,
No ties of law nor nature, not the life
Imperial, though guarded by the gods,
Shall bar Cassander's vengeance—he shall die.
Rox. Ha! shall he die? shall I consent to kill him?
To see him clasped in the cold arms of death,
Whom I with such an eagerness have loved?
Cass. If Alexander lives, you cannot reign,
Nor shall your child; old Sysigambis' head
Will not be idle—sure destruction waits
Both you and yours; let not your anger cool,
But give the word; say, Alexander bleeds,
Draw the dry veins of all the Persian race,
And hurl a ruin o'er the east, 'tis done.
Pol. Behold the instruments of this great work.
Phil. Behold your forward slave.
Thess. I'll execute.
Rox. And when this ruin is accomplished, where
Shall curst Roxana fly with this dear load?
Where shall she find a refuge from the arms
Of all the successors of this great man?
No barbarous nation will receive a guilt
So much transcending theirs, but drive me out:
The wildest beasts will hunt me from their dens,
And birds of prey molest me in the grave.
Cass. No, you shall live—pardon the insolence
Which this almighty love enforces from me—
You shall live safer, nobler than before,
In your Cassander's arms.
Rox. Disgraced Roxana, whither wilt thou fall?
I ne'er was truly wretched till this moment:
There's not one mark of former majesty
To awe my slave, that offers at my honour.
Cass. Madam, I hope you'll not impute my passion
To want of that respect, which I must bear you;
Long have I loved——
Rox. Peace, most audacious villain,
Or I will stab this passion in thy throat!
What, shall I leave the bosom of a deity,
To clasp a clod, a moving piece of earth,
Which a mole heaves? So far art thou beneath me.
Cass. Your majesty shall hear no more folly.
Rox. Nor dare to meet my eyes; for if thou dost
With a love-glance, thy plots are all unravelled,
And your kind thoughts of Alexander told,
Whose life, in spite of all his wrongs to me,
Shall be for ever sacred and untouched.
Cass. I know, dread madam, that Cassander's life
Is in your hands, so cast to do you service.
Rox. You thought, perhaps, because I practised charms
To gain the king, that I had loose desires:
No, 'tis my pride, that gives me height of pleasure,
To see the man, by all the world admired,
Bowed to my bosom, and my captive there.
Cass. By your own life, the greatest oath I swear,
Cassander's passion from this time is dumb.
Rox. No, if I were a wanton, I would make
Princes the victims of my raging fires:
I, like the changing moon, would have the stars
My followers, and mantled kings by night

Should wait my call; fine slaves to quench my flame,
Who, lest in dreams they should reveal the deed,
Still as they came, successively should bleed.
Cass. To make atonement for the highest crime,
I beg your majesty will take the life
Of queen Statira as a sacrifice.
Rox. Rise, thou hast made ample expiation;
Yes, yes, Statira, rival, thou must die;
I know this night is destined for my ruin,
And Alexander from the glorious revels
Flies to thy arms.
Phil. The bowers of Semiramis are made
The scene this night of their new kindled loves.
Rox. Methinks I see her yonder, (oh the torment!)
Busy for bliss, and full of expectation:
She adorns her head, and her eyes give new lustre;
Languishes in her glass, tries all her looks;
Steps to the door, and listens for his coming;
Runs to the bed, and kneels, and weeps, and wishes,
Then lays the pillow easy for his head,
Warms it with sighs, and moulds it with her kisses.
Oh, I am lost! torn with imagination!
Kill me, Cassander, kill me instantly,
That I may haunt her with a thousand devils!
Cass. Why do you stop to end her while you may?
No time so proper as the present; now
While Alexander feasts with all his court:
Give me your eunuchs, half your Zogdian slaves,
I'll do the deed; nor shall a waiter escape,
That serves your rival, to relate the news.
Pol. She was committed to Eumenes' charge.
Rox. Eumenes dies, and all that are about her,
Nor shall I need your aid; you'll love again;
I'll head the slaves myself, with this drawn dagger,
To carry death, that's worthy of a queen.
A common fate ne'er rushes from my hand;
'Tis more than life to die by my command:
And when she sees,
That to my arm her ruin she must owe,
Her thankful head will straight be bended low,
Her heart shall leap half way to meet the blow.
[*Exit Roxana.*
Cass. Go thy ways, Semele—she scorns to sin
Beneath a god—We must be swift; the ruin
We intend, who knows, she may discover?
Pol. It must be acted suddenly; to night;
Now—at the banquet; Philip holds his cup.
Phil. And dares to execute—propose his fate.
Cass. Observe in this small phial certain death;
It holds a poison of such deadly force,
Should Æsculapius drink it, in five hours
(For then it works) the god himself were mortal.
I drew it from Nonacris' horrid spring;
A drop infused in wine will seal his death,
And send him howling to the lowest shades.
Phil. Would it were done!
Cass. O we shall have him tear
(E'er yet the moon has half her journey rode)
The world to atoms; for it scatters pains
All sorts, and through all nerves, veins, arteries.
Even with extremity of frost, it burns;
Drives the distracted soul about her house,
Which runs to all the pores, the doors of life,
Till she is forced for air to leave her dwelling.
Pol. By Pluto's self, the work is wondrous brave.
Cass. Now separate: Philip and Thessalus,
Haste to the banquet; at his second call
Give him that fatal draught, that crowns the night,
While Polyperchon and myself retire.
Exeunt omnes, præter Cassander.
Yes, Alexander, now thou pay'st me well;
Blood for a blow is interest indeed.
Methinks I am grown taller with the murder,
And, standing straight on this majestic pile,
I hit the clouds, and see the world below me!
Oh, 'tis the worst of racks to a brave spirit,
To be born base, a vassal, a cursed slave;
Now, by the project labouring in my brain,
'Tis nobler far to be a king in hell,
To head infernal legions, chiefs below,
To let them loose for earth, to call them in,
And take account of what dark deeds are done,
Than be a subject-god in heaven, unblest,
And without mischief have eternal rest! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Scene draws, ALEXANDER *is seen standing on a throne, with all his commanders about him, holding goblets in their hands.*

Alex. To our immortal health, and our fair queen's;
All drink it deep, and while it flies about,
Mars and Bellona join to make us music.
A hundred bulls be offered to the sun,
White as his beams—speak the big voice of war,
Beat all our drums, and blow our silver trumpets,
Till we provoke the gods to act our pleasure,
In bowls of nectar and replying thunder!
[*Sound while they drink.*

Enter HEPHESTION, CLYTUS, *leading* LYSIMACHUS *in his shirt, bloody;* PERDICCAS, *Guard.*

Cly. Long live the king, and conquest crown his arms
With laurels ever-green: Fortune's his slave,
And kisses all that fight upon his side.
Alex. Did not I give command you should preserve
Lysimachus?
Heph. You did.
Alex. What, then, portend those bloody marks?

Heph. Your mercy flew too late: Perdiccas had,
According to the dreadful charge you gave,
Already placed the prince in a lone court,
Unarmed, all but his hands, on which he wore
A pair of gauntlets; such was his desire,
To shew in death the difference betwixt
The blood of the Æacides, and common men.
Cly. At last the door of an old lion's den
Being drawn up, the horrid beast appeared:
The flames, which from his eyes shot glooming red,
Made the sun start, as the spectators thought,
And round them cast a day of blood and death.
Heph. When we arrived, just as the valiant prince
Cried out, 'O Parisatis, take my life;
'Tis for thy sake I go undaunted thus,
To be devoured by this most dreadful creature.'
Cly. Then walking forward, the large beast descried
His prey, and with a roar, that made us pale,
Flew fiercely on him; but the active prince,
Starting aside, avoided his first shock,
With a slight hurt, and as the lion turned,
Thrust gauntlet, arm and all, into his throat,
And, with Herculean force, tore forth by the roots
The foaming bloody tongue; and while the savage,
Faint with that loss, sunk to the blushing earth,
To plough it with his teeth, your conquering soldier
Leaped on his back, and dashed his skull to pieces.
Alex. By all my laurels, 'twas a godlike act,
And 'tis my glory, as it shall be thine,
That Alexander could not pardon thee.
O my brave soldier, think not all the prayers
Of the lamenting queens could move my soul
Like what thou hast performed: Grow to my breast. [*Embraces him.*
Lys. However love did hurry my wild arm,
When I was cool, my feverish blood did bate,
And as I went to death, I blest the king.
Alex. Lysimachus, we both have been transported,
But from this hour be certain of my heart;
A lion be the impress of thy shield,
And that golden armour, we from Porus won,
The king presents thee: but retire to bed,
Thy toils ask rest.
Lys. I have no wounds to hinder,
Of any moment; or if I had, though mortal,
I'd stand to Alexander's health, till all
My veins were dry, and fill them up again
With that rich blood, which makes the gods immortal.
Alex. Hephestion, thy hand, embrace him close;
Though next my heart you hang, the jewel there,
For scarce I know whether my queen be nearer,
Thou shalt not rob me of my glory, youth,
That must to ages flourish—Parisatis
Shall now be his, that serves me best in war:
Neither reply, but mark the charge I give,
And live as friends—sound, sound my armies honour;
Health to their bodies, and eternal fame
Wait on their memory, when those are ashes!
Live all! you must, 'tis a god gives you life.
[*Sound.*
[*Lysimachus offers Clytus a Persian robe, which he refuses.*
Cly. O vanity!
Alex. Ha! what says Clytus?
Who am I?
Cly. The son of good king Philip.
Alex. No, 'tis false;
By all my kindred in the skies,
Jove made my mother pregnant.
Cly. I have done.
[*Here follows an entertainment of Indian singers and dancers: The music flourishes.*]
Alex. Hold, hold; Clytus, take the robe.
Cly. Sir, the wine,
The weather's hot; besides you know my humour.
Alex. O 'tis not well: I'd burn rather than be
So singular and froward.
Cly. So would I,
Burn, hang, or drown, but in a better cause;
I'll drink or fight for sacred majesty
With any here—Fill me another bowl!
Will you excuse me?
Alex. You will be excused;
But let him have his humour, he is old.
Cly. So was your father, sir—This to his memory:
Sound all the trumpets there.
Alex. They shall not sound
Till the king drinks—By Mars, I cannot take
A moment's rest for all my years of blood,
But one or other will oppose my pleasure.
Sure I was formed for war;
All, all are Alexander's enemies;
Which I could tame——Yes, the rebellious world
Should feel my wrath—But let the sports go on.
[*The Indians dance.*
Lys. Nay, Clytus, you that could advise——
Alex. Forbear;
Let him persist, be positive, and proud,
Sullen and dazzled, amongst the noble souls,
Like an infernal spirit, that had stole
From hell, and mingled with the laughing gods.
Cly. When gods grow hot, where's the difference
'Twixt them and devils? Fill me greek wine! yet fuller,
For I want spirits.
Alex. Ha! let me hear a song.
Cly. Music for boys—Clytus would hear the groans
Of dying persons, and the horses' neighings;
Or, if I must be tortured with shrill voices,
Give me the cries of matrons in sacked towns.

Heph. Lysimachus, the king looks sad; let us awake him:
Health to the son of Jupiter Ammon!
Every man take his goblet in his hand,
Kneel all, and kiss the earth with adoration.
Alex. Sound, sound, that all the universe may hear!
That I could speak like Jove, to tell abroad
The kindness of my people—Rise, O rise,
My hands, my arms, my heart is ever yours.
[*Comes from his throne, all kiss his hand.*
Cly. I did not kiss the earth, nor must your hand,
I am unworthy, sir.
Alex. I know thou art,
Thou enviest my great honour—Sit, my friends;
Nay, I must have room—Now let us talk
Of war, for what more fits a soldier's mouth?
And speak, speak freely, or you do not love me,
Who, think you, was the bravest general
That ever led an army to the field?
Heph. I think the sun himself ne'er saw a chief
So truly great, so fortunately brave,
As Alexander: not the famed Alcides,
Nor fierce Achilles, who did twice destroy,
With their all-conquering arms, the famous Troy.
Lys. Such was not Cyrus.
Alex. O you flatter me.
Cly. They do indeed, and yet you love them for it,
But hate old Clytus for his hardy virtue.
Come, shall I speak a man more brave than you,
A better general, and a more expert soldier?
Alex. I should be glad to learn; instruct me, sir.
Cly. Your father Philip—I have seen him march,
And fought beneath his dreadful banner, where
The stoutest at the table would have trembled:
Nay, frown not, sir; you cannot look me dead.
When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war,
The laboured battle sweat, and conquest bled.
Why should I fear to speak a truth more noble
Than e'er your father, Jupiter Ammon, told you?
Philip fought men, but Alexander women.
Alex. Spite! by the gods, proud spite! and burning envy!
Is then my glory come to this at last,
To vanquish women? Nay, he said the stoutest here
Would tremble at the dangers he had seen.
In all the sickness and the wounds I bore,
When from my reins the javelin head was cut,
Lysimachus, Hephestion, speak, Perdiccas,
Did I e'er tremble? O the cursed liar!
Did I once shake or groan? or bear myself
Beneath my majesty, my dauntless courage?
Heph. Wine has transported him.
Alex. No, 'tis plain mere malice:
I was a woman too at Oxydrace,
When planting at the walls a scaling ladder,
I mounted, spite of showers of stones, bars, arrows,
And all the lumber, which they thundered down,
When you beneath cried out, and spread your arms,
That I should leap among you, did I so?
Lys. Turn the discourse, my lord, the old man raved.
Alex. Was I a woman, when, like Mercury,
I left the walls to fly amongst my foes,
And, like a baited lion, dyed myself
All over with the blood of those bold hunters?
Till spent with toil, I battled on my knees,
Plucked forth the darts, that made my shield a forest,
And hurled them back with most unconquered fury.
Cly. 'Twas all bravado, for before you leaped,
You saw that I had burst the gates asunder.
Alex. Did I then turn me, like a coward, round,
To seek for succour? Age cannot be so base;
That thou wert young again! I would put off
My majesty, to be more terrible,
That, like an eagle, I might strike this hare
Trembling to earth; shake thee to dust, and tear
Thy heart for this bold lye, thou feeble dotard!
Cly. What, do you pelt me, like a boy, with apples? [*He tosses fruit at him as they rise.*
Kill me, and bury the disgrace I feel!
I know the reason that you use me so,
Because I saved your life at Granicus;
And, when your back was turned, opposed my breast
To bold Rhesaces' sword; you hate me for it,
You do, proud prince.
Alex. Away! your breath's too hot.
[*Flings him from him.*
Cly. You hate the benefactor, though you took
The gift, your life, from this dishonoured Clytus;
Which is the blackest, worst ingratitude.
Alex. Go, leave the banquet: Thus far I forgive thee.
Cly. Forgive yourself for all your blasphemies,
The riots of a most debauched and bloated life;
Philotas' murder———
Alex. Ha! What said the traitor?
Lys. Eumenes, let us force him hence.
Cly. Away!
Heph. You shall not tarry: Drag him to the door.
Cly. No, let him send me, if I must be gone,
To Philip, Attalus, Calisthenes;
To great Parmenio, to his slaughtered sons:
Parmenio, who did many brave exploits
Without the king—the king, without him, nothing.
Alex. Give me a javelin!
[*Takes one from the guards.*
Heph. Hold, sir!
Alex. Off, sirrah! lest
At once I strike it through his heart and thine.
Lys. O sacred sir, have but a moment's patience!
Alex. Preach patience to another lion—what,

Hold my arms? I shall be murdered here,
Like poor Darius, by my own barbarous subjects.
Perdiccas, sound my trumpets to the camp,
Call my soldiers to the court; nay haste,
For there is treason plotting against my life,
And I shall perish ere they come to rescue.
Lys. and Heph. Let us all die, ere think so damned a deed. [*Kneel.*
Alex. Where is the traitor?
Cly. Sure there is none about you;
But here stands honest Clytus, whom the king
Invited to his banquet.
Alex. Begone and sup with Philip,
[*Strikes him through.*
Parmenio, Attalus, Calisthenes;
And let bold subjects learn, by thy sad fate,
To tempt the patience of a man much above them.
Cly. The rage of wine is drowned in gushing blood:
O Alexander, I have been to blame;
Hate me not after death, for I repent,
That so I urged your noblest, sweetest nature.
Alex. What's this I hear? say on, my dying soldier.
Cly. I should have killed myself, had I but lived
To be once sober—Now I fall with honour,
My own hand would have brought foul death.—
O pardon! [*Dies.*
Alex. Then I am lost; what has my vengeance done?
Who is it thou hast slain? Clytus; what was he?
The faithfullest subject, worthiest counsellor,
Who for saving thy life, when
Thou foughtst bare-headed at the river Granicus,
Has now a noble recompense for speaking rashly;
For a forgetfulness, which wine did work,
The poor, the honest Clytus thou hast slain.
Are these the laws of hospitality?
Thy friends will shun thee now, and stand at distance,
Nor dare to speak their minds, nor eat with thee,
Nor drink, lest by thy madness they die too.
Heph. Guards, take the body hence.
Alex. None dare to touch him,
For we must never part. Cruel Hephestion
And Lysimachus, that had the power,
And would not hold me!
Lys. Dear sir, we did.
Alex. I know it;
Ye held me like a beast, to let me go
With greater violence—Oh you have undone me!
Excuse it not; you, that could stop a lion,
Could not turn me: You should have drawn your swords,
And barred my rage with their advancing points;
Made reason glitter in my dazzled eyes,
Till I had seen what ruin did attend me:
That had been noble, that had shewed a friend;
Clytus would so have done to save your lives.
Lys. When men shall hear how highly you were urged——
Alex. No, you have let me stain my rising virtue,
Which else had ended brighter than the sun.
Death, hell, and furies! you have sunk my glory:
Oh, I am all a blot, which seas of tears,
And my heart's blood, can never wash away;
Yet 'tis but just I try, and on the point,
Still reeking, hurl my black polluted breast.
Heph. O sacred sir, that must not be.
Eum. Forgive my pious hands.
Lys. And mine, that dare disarm my master.
Alex. Yes, cruel men, ye now can shew your strength!
Here's not a slave but dares oppose my justice;
Yet I will render all endeavours vain,
That tend to save my life—Here I will lie[*Falls.*
Close to his bleeding side, thus kissing him;
These pale dead lips, that have so oft advised me;
Thus bathing o'er his reverend face in tears;
Thus clasping his cold body in my arms,
Till death, like him, has made me stiff and horrid.
Heph. What shall we do?
Lys. I know not, my wounds bleed afresh
With striving with him: Perdiccas, lend us your arm. [*Exeunt Perdiccas, Lysimachus.*
Heph. Call Aristander hither;
Or Meleager, let us force him from the body.

Cries without—Arm! Arm! Treason, Treason!

Enter Perdiccas *bloody.*

Per. Haste, all take arms! Hephestion, where's the king?
Heph. There, by old Clytus' side, whom he has slain.
Per. Then misery on misery will fall,
Like rolling billows, to advance the storm.
Rise, sacred sir, and haste to aid the queen;
Roxana, filled with furious jealousy,
Came with a guard of Zogdian slaves unmasked,
And broke upon me with such sudden rage,
That all are perished, who resistance made:
I only with these wounds, through clashing spears,
Have forced my way, to give you timely notice.
Alex. What says Perdiccas? Is the queen in danger?
Per. She dies, unless you turn her fate, and quickly:
Your distance from the place asks more speed,
And the ascent to the flying grove is high.
Alex. Thus from my grave I rise to save my love,
All draw your swords, with wings of lightning, move;
When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay,
'Tis beauty calls, and glory shews the way.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Statira is discovered sleeping in the bower of Semiramis; *the spirits of Queen* Statira, *her Mother, and* Darius, *appear standing on each side of her, with daggers, threatening her.—They sing.*

Dar. *Is innocence so void of cares,*
That it can undisturbed sleep,
Amidst the noise of horrid wars,
That make immortal spirits weep?
Stat. *No boding crows, nor ravens come,*
To warn her of approaching doom.
Dar. *She walks, as she dreams, in a garden of flowers,*
And her hands are employed in the beautiful bowers;
She dreams of the man that is far from the grove,
And all her soft fancy still runs on her love.
Stat. *She nods o'er the brooks, that run purling along,*
And the nightingales lull her more fast with a song.
Dar. *But see the sad end which the gods have decreed.*
Stat. *This poinard's thy fate.*
Dar. *My daughter must bleed.*
Chorus. *Awake then, Statira, awake, for alas you must die;*
Ere an hour be past, you must breathe out your last.
Dar. *And be such another as I.*
Stat. *As I.*
Chorus. *And be such another as I.* [*Exeunt.*

Statira *sola.*

Stat. Bless me, ye powers above, and guard my virtue!
I saw, nor was't a dream, I saw and heard
My royal parents, there I saw them stand;
My eyes beheld their precious images;
I heard their heavenly voices: Where, O where
Fled you so fast, dear shades, from my embraces?
You told me this—this hour should be my last,
And I must bleed—Away, 'tis all delusion!
Do I not wait for Alexander's coming?
None but my loving lord can enter here:
And will he kill me?—hence, fantastic shadows!
And yet methinks he should not stay thus long;
Why do I tremble thus? If I but stir,
The motion of my robes makes my heart leap.
When will the dear man come, that all my doubts
May vanish in his breast? That I may hold him
Fast as my fears can make me; hug him close
As my fond soul can wish; give all my breath
In sighs and kisses; swoon, die away with rapture!
But hark! I hear him—— [*Noise within.*
Fain I would hide my blushes—
I hear his tread, but dare not go to meet him.

Enter Roxana, *with slaves and a dagger.*

Rox. At length we have conquered this stupendous height,
These flying groves, whose wonderful ascent
Leads to the clouds.
Stat. Then all the vision's true, [*Retires.*
And I must die, lose my dear lord for ever:
That, that is the murderer.
Rox. Shut the brazen gate,
And make it fast with all the massy bars.
I know the king will fly to her relief,
But we have time enough—Where is my rival?
Appear, Statira, now no more a queen;
Roxana calls; where is your majesty?
Stat. And what is she, who with such towering pride,
Would awe a princess, that is born above her?
Rox. I like the port imperial beauty bears,
It shews thou hast a spirit fit to fall
A sacrifice to fierce Roxana's wrongs.
Be sudden then, put forth these royal breasts,
Where our false master has so often languished,
That I may change their milky innocence
To blood, and dye me in a deep revenge.
Stat. No, barbarous woman, though I durst meet death
As boldly as our lord, with a resolve,
At which thy coward heart would tremble;
Yet I disdain to stand the fate you offer,
And therefore, fearless of thy dreadful threats,
Walk thus regardless by thee.
Rox. Ha! so stately!
This sure will sink you.
Stat. No, Roxana, no:
The blow you give will strike me to the stars,
But sink my murderess in eternal ruin.
Rox. Who told you this?
Stat. A thousand spirits tell me:
There's not a god but whispers in my ear,
This death will crown me with immortal glory;
To die so fair, so innocent, so young,
Will make me company for queens above.
Rox. Preach on.
Stat. While you, the burden of the earth,
Fall to the deep, so heavy with thy guilt,
That hell itself must groan at thy reception;
While foulest fiends shun thy society,
And thou shalt walk alone, forsaken fury!
Rox. Heaven witness for me, I would spare thy life,
If any thing but Alexander's love
Were in debate; come, give me back his heart,
And thou shalt live empress of all the world.
Stat. The world is less than Alexander's love,
Yet could I give it, 'tis not in my power;
This I dare promise, if you spare my life,
Which I disdain to beg, he shall speak kindly.
Rox. Speak! is that all?

Stat. Perhaps at my request,
And for a gift so noble as my life,
Bestow a kiss.
Rox. A kiss! no more?
Stat. O gods!
What shall I say to work her to my end?
Fain I would see him—Yes, a little more—
Embrace you, and for ever be your friend.
Rox. O the provoking word! Your friend! thou diest:
Your friend! What, must I bring you then together?
Adore your bed, and see you softly laid?
By all my pangs, and labours of my love,
This has thrown off all that was sweet and gentle.
Therefore——
Stat. Yet hold thy hand advanced in air;
I see my death is written in thy eyes.
Therefore wreak all the lust of vengeance on me,
Wash in my blood, and steep thee in my gore;
Feed like a vulture, tear my bleeding heart.
But, O Roxana! that there may appear
A glimpse of justice for thy cruelty,
A grain of goodness for a mass of evil,
Give me my death in Alexander's presence!
Rox. Not for the rule of heaven—Are you so cunning?
What, you would have him mourn you as you fall?
Take your farewell, and taste such healing kisses,
As might call back your soul. No, thou shalt fall
Now, and when death has seized thy beauteous limbs,
I'll have thy body thrown into a well,
Buried beneath a heap of stones for ever.

Enter a Slave.

Slave. Madam, the king with all his captains and his guards
Are forcing ope the doors, he threatens thousand deaths
To all that stop his entrance, and I believe
Your eunuchs will obey him.
Rox. Then I must haste. [*Stabs her.*
Stat. What, is the king so near?
And shall I die so tamely, thus defenceless?
O ye gods, will you not help my weakness?
Rox. They are afar off. [*Stabbing her.*
Stat. Alas! they are indeed.

Enter Alexander, Cassander, Polyperchon, *Guards and Attendants.*

Alex. Oh happy! Thou shalt reign the queen of devils.
Rox. Do, strike, behold my bosom swells to meet thee;
'Tis full of thine, of veins that run ambition,
And I can brave whatever fate you bring.
Alex. Call our physicians! haste! I'll give an empire
To save her—Oh my soul, alas Statira!
These wounds,—Oh gods, are these my promised joys!

Enter Physicians.

Stat. My cruel love, my weeping Alexander,
Would I had died before you entered here!
For now I ask my heart an hundred questions;
What! must I lose my life, my lord, for ever?
Alex. Ha! villains, are they mortal?—what, retire!
Raise your dashed spirits from the earth, and say,
Say she shall live, and I will make you kings.
Give me this one, this poor, this only life,
And I will pardon you for all the wounds,
Which your arts widen, all diseases, deaths,
Which your damned drugs throw through the lingering world.
Rox. Rend not your temper; see a general silence
Confirms the bloody pleasure, which I sought;
She dies.——
Alex. And darest thou, monster, think to escape?
Stat. Life's on the wing,—my love, my lord,
Come to my arms, and take the last adieu.
Here let me lie, and languish out my soul.
Alex. Answer me, father, wilt thou take her from me?
What, is the black, sad hour at last arrived,
That I must never clasp her body more?
Never more bask in her eye-shine again?
Nor view the loves, that played in those dear beams,
And shot me with a thousand thousand smiles?
Stat. Farewel, my dear, my life, my most loved lord,
I swear by Orosmades, 'tis more pleasure,
More satisfaction that I thus die yours,
Than to have lived another's—Grant me one thing.
Alex. All, all,—but speak that I may execute
Before I follow thee.
Stat. Leave not the earth
Before Heaven calls you; spare Roxana's life.
'Twas love of you, that caused her give me death;
And, O! sometimes, amidst your revels, think
Of your poor queen, and ere the chearful bowl
Salute your lips, crown it with one rich tear,
And I am happy. [*Dies.*
Alex. Close not thy eyes;
Things of import I have to speak before
Thou takest thy journey:—Tell the gods I'm coming,
To give them an account of life and death,
And many other hundred thousand policies,
That much concern the government of heaven——
O she is gone! the talking soul is mute!
She's hushed, no voice of music now is heard!
The bower of beauty is more still than death;
The roses fade, and the melodious bird,
That waked their sweets, has left them now for ever.
Rox. 'Tis certain now you never shall enjoy her;

Therefore Roxana may have leave to hope
You will at last be kind, for all my sufferings,
My torments, racks, for this last dreadful murder,
Which furious love of thee did bring upon me.
Alex. O thou vile creature! bear thee from my sight,
And thank Statira, that thou art alive:
Else thou hadst perished; yes, I would have rent,
With my just hands, that rock, that marble heart;
I would have dived through seas of blood to find it,
To tear the cruel quarry from its center.
Rox. O take me to your arms, and hide my blushes!
I love you spite of all your cruelties;
There is so much divinity about you,
I tremble to approach: yet here's my hold,
Nor will I leave the sacred robe, for such
Is every thing, that touches that blest body:
I'll kiss it as the relic of a god,
And love shall grasp it with these dying hands.
Alex. O that thou wert a man, that I might drive
Thee round the world, and scatter thy contagion,
As gods hurl mortal plagues, when they are angry!
Rox. Do, drive me, hew me into smallest pieces,
My dust shall be inspired with a new fondness;
Still the love-motes shall play before your eyes,
Where'er you go, however you despise.
Alex. Away! there's not a glance that flies from thee,
But, like a basilisk, comes winged with death.
Rox. O speak not such harsh words, my royal master!
Look not so dreadful on your kneeling servant;
But take, dear sir, O take me into grace,
By the dear babe, the burden of my womb,
That weighs me down, when I would follow faster!
My knees are weary, and my force is spent:
O do not frown, but clear thy angry brow!
Your eyes will blast me, and your words are bolts,
That strike me dead; the little wretch I bear,
Leaps frighted at your wrath, and dies within me.
Alex. O thou hast touched my soul so tenderly,
That I will raise thee, though thy hands are ruin.
Rise, cruel woman, rise, and have a care,
O do not hurt that unborn innocence,
For whose dear sake I now forgive thee all.
But haste, begone! fly, fly from these sad eyes,
Fly with thy pardon, lest I call it back;
Though I forgive thee, I must hate thee ever.
Rox. I go, I fly for ever from thy sight.
My mortal injuries have turned my mind,
And I could curse myself for being kind.
If there be any majesty above,
That has revenge in store for perjured love,
Send, Heaven, the swiftest ruin on his head;
Strike the destroyer, lay the victor dead;
Kill the triumpher, and avenge my wrong,
In height of pomp, while he is warm and young;
Bolted with thunder let him rush along,
And when in the last pangs of life he lies,
Grant I may stand to dart him with my eyes:
Nay, after death,
Pursue his spotted ghost, and shoot him as he flies!
[*Exit.*
Alex. O my fair star, I shall be shortly with thee;
For I already feel the sad effects
Of those most fatal imprecations.
What means this deadly dew upon my forehead?
My heart too heaves.
Cass. It will anon be still—— [*Aside.*
The poison works.
Pol. I'll see the wished effect [*Aside.*
Ere I remove, and gorge me with revenge.

Enter PERDICCAS *and* LYSIMACHUS.

Per. I beg your majesty will pardon me,
A fatal messenger;
Great Sysigambis, hearing Statira's death,
Is now no more;
Her last words gave the princess to the brave
Lysimachus: but that, which most will strike you,
Your dear Hephestion, having drank too largely
At your last feast, is of a surfeit dead.
Alex. How! dead? Hephestion dead? alas the dear
Unhappy youth!—But he sleeps happy,
I must wake for ever:—This object, this,
This face of fatal beauty,
Will stretch my lids with vast, eternal tears——
Who had the care of poor Hephestion's life?
Lys. Philarda, the Arabian artist.
Alex. Fly, Meleager, hang him on a cross!
That for Hephestion——
But here lies my fate; Hephestion, Clytus,
All my victories for ever folded up:
In this dear body my banner's lost,
My standard's triumphs gone!
O when shall I be mad? Give order to
The army, that they break their shields, swords, spears,
Pound their bright armour into dust; away!
Is there not cause to put the world in mourning?
Tear all your robes:—he dies, that is not naked
Down to the waste, all like the sons of sorrow.
Burn all the spires, that seem to kiss the sky;
Beat down the battlements of every city:
And for the monument of this loved creature,
Root up those bowers, and pave them all with gold:
Draw dry the Ganges, make the Indies poor;
To build her tomb, no shrines nor altars spare,
But strip the shining gods to make it rare. [*Exit.*
Cass. Ha! whither now? follow him, Polyperchon. *Exit Pol.*
I find Cassander's plot grows full of death;
Murder is playing her great master-piece,

And the sad sisters sweat, so fast I urge them:
O how I hug myself for this revenge!
My fancy's great in mischief; for methinks
The night grows darker, and the labouring ghosts,
For fear that I should find new torments out,
Run o'er the old with most prodigious swiftness.
I see the fatal fruit betwixt the teeth,
The sieve brim full, and the swift stone stand still.

Enter Polyperchon.

What, does it work?
Pol. Speak softly.
Cass. Well.
Pol. It does;
I followed him, and saw him swiftly walk
Toward the palace; oftimes looking back,
With watry eyes, and calling out Statira.
He stumbled at the gate, and fell along;
Nor was he raised with ease by his attendants,
But seemed a greater load than ordinary,
As much more as the dead outweigh the living.
Cass. Said he nothing?
Pol. When they took him up,
He sighed, and entered with a strange wild look,
Embraced the princes round, and said he must
Dispatch the business of the world in haste.

Enter Philip *and* Thessalus.

Phil. Back, back, all scatter—With a dreadful shout
I heard him cry, 'I am but a dead man!'
Thess. The poison tears him with that height of horror,
That I could pity him.
Pol. Peace——where shall we meet?
Cass. On Saturn's field.
Methinks I see the frighted deities,
Ramming more bolts in their big-bellied clouds,
And firing all the heavens to drown his noise.
Now we should laugh——But go, disperse yourselves,
While each soul here, that fills his noble vessel,
Swells with the murder, works with ruin o'er;
And from the dreadful deed this glory draws,
We killed the greatest man, that ever was.

SCENE II.

Enter Alexander *and all his Attendants.*

Alex. Search there, nay, probe me, search my wounded reins!
Pull, draw it out!
Lys. We have searched, but find no hurt.
Alex. O I am shot, a forked burning arrow
Sticks cross my shoulders: the sad venom flies,
Like lightning, through my flesh, my blood, my marrow.
Lys. This must be treason.
Perd. Would I could but guess!
Alex. Ha! what a change of torments I endure!
A bolt of ice runs hissing through my bowels:
'Tis sure the arm of death: give me a chair;
Cover me, for I freeze, and my teeth chatter,
And my knees knock together.
Perd. Heaven bless the king!
Alex. Ha! who talks of heaven?
I am all hell; I burn, I burn again!
The war grows wondrous hot; hey for the Tiger!
Bear me, Bucephalus, amongst the billows:
O 'tis a noble beast; I would not change him
For the best horse the Sun has in his stable:
For they are hot, their mangers full of coals,
Their manes are flakes of lightning, curls of fire,
And their red tails, like meteors, whisk about.
Lys. Help all, Eumenes, help! I cannot hold him!
Alex. Ha, ha, ha! I shall die with laughter.
Parmenio, Clytus, dost thou see yon fellow,
That ragged soldier, that poor tattered Greek?
See how he puts to flight the gaudy Persians,
With nothing but a rusty helmet on, through which
The grizly bristles of his pushing beard
Drive them like pikes——Ha, ha, ha!
Perd. How wild he talks!
Lys. Yet warring in his wildness.
Alex. Sound, sound, keep your ranks close; ay, now they come:
O the brave din, the noble clank of arms!
Charge, charge apace, and let the phalanx move:
Darius comes——ha! let me in, none dare
To cross my fury.——Philotas is unhorsed;—Ay, 'tis Darius;
I see, I know him by the sparkling plumes,
And his gold chariot, drawn by ten white horses:
But, like a tempest, thus I pour upon him——
He bleeds! with that last blow I brought him down;
He tumbles! take him, snatch the imperial crown.
They fly, they fly!——follow, follow!——Victoria! Victoria!
Victoria!———O let me sleep.
Perd. Let's raise him softly, and bear him to his bed:
Alex. Hold, the least motion gives me sudden death;
My vital spirits are quite parched up,
And all my smoky entrails turned to ashes.
Lys. When you, the brightest star that ever shone,
Shall set, it must be night with us for ever.
Alex. Let me embrace you all before I die:
Weep not, my dear companions; the good gods
Shall send you, in my stead, a nobler prince,
One that shall lead you forth with matchless conduct.
Lys. Break not our hearts with such unkind expressions.
Perd. We will not part with you, nor change for Mars.
Alex. Perdiccas, take this ring,
And see me laid in the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Lys. To whom does your dread majesty bequeath
The empire of the world?
Alex. To him that is most worthy.
Perd. When will you, sacred sir, that we should give
To your great memory those divine honours,
Which such exalted virtue does deserve?
Alex. When you are all most happy, and in peace.
Your hands——O father, if I have discharged
[*Rises.*
The duty of a man to empire born;
If, by unwearied toil, I have deserved
The vast renown of thy adopted son,
Accept this soul, which thou didst first inspire,
And which this sigh thus gives thee back again.
[*Dies.*

Lys. Eumenes, cover the fallen majesty;
If there be treason, let us find it out;
Lysimachus stands forth to lead you on,
And swears, by these most honoured dear remains,
He will not taste those joys which beauty brings,
Till we revenge the greatest, best of kings.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ALL FOR LOVE;

OR,

THE WORLD WELL LOST.

BY

DRYDEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
Marc Antony.	Cleopatra, *queen of Egypt.*
Ventidius, *his general.*	Octavia, *Antony's wife.*
Dolabella, *his friend.*	Charmion, } *Cleopatra's maids.*
Alexas, *the queen's eunuch.*	Iras, }
Serapion, *priest of Isis.*	*Antony's two infant daughters.*
Romans.	
Myris.	

Scene,—Alexandria.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Temple of Isis.*

Serapion, *and* Myris, *Priests of Isis, discovered.*

Ser. Portents and prodigies are grown so frequent,
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flowed, ere the wonted season, with a torrent
So unexpected, and so wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haste
Even of the hinds, that watched it. Men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees, that grew
On the utmost margin of the water-mark:
Then with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It slipt from underneath the scaly herd:
Here monstrous phocæ panted on the shore;
Forsaken dolphins there, with their broad tails,
Lay lashing the departing waves; hard by them
Sea-horses, floundering in the slimy mud,
Tossed up their heads, and dashed the ooze about them.

Enter Alexas *behind them.*

Myr. Avert these omens, Heaven!
Ser. Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone aisle of the temple while I walked,
A whirlwind rose, that, with a violent blast,
Shook all the dome; the doors around me clapt;
The iron wicket, that defends the vault,
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burst open, and disclosed the mighty dead:
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armed ghost starts up; the boy-king last
Reared his inglorious head: a peal of groans
Then followed, and a lamentable voice
Cried, 'Egypt is no more.' My blood ran back,
My shaking knees against each other knocked,

On the cold pavement down I fell entranced,
And so unfinished left the horrid scene!
Alex. And dreamt you this, or did invent the story, [*Shewing himself.*
To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
And train them up betimes in fear of priesthood?
Ser. My lord, I saw you not,
Nor meant my words should reach your ears; but what
I uttered was most true.
Alex. A foolish dream,
Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts
And holy luxury.
Ser. I know my duty:
This goes no farther.
Alex. 'Tis not fit it should,
Nor would the times now bear it, were it true.
All southern from yon hills the Roman camp
Hangs o'er us black and threatening, like a storm
Just breaking on our heads.
Ser. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony,
But in their servile hearts they own Octavius.
Myr. Why, then, does Antony dream out his hours,
And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
Which might redeem what Actium lost?
Alex. He thinks 'tis past recovery.
Ser. Yet the foe
Seems not to press the siege.
Alex. Oh, there's the wonder.
Mecænas and Agrippa, who can most
With Cæsar, are his foes. His wife, Octavia,
Driven from his house, solicits her revenge;
And Dolabella, who was once his friend,
Upon some private grudge now seeks his ruin;
Yet still war seems on either side to sleep.
Ser. 'Tis strange, that Antony, for some days past,
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra,
But here in Isis' temple lives retired,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair.
Alex. 'Tis true; and we much fear he hopes, by absence,
To cure his mind of love.
Ser. If he be vanquished,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doomed to be
A Roman province, and our plenteous harvests
Must then redeem the scarceness of their soil.
While Antony stood firm, our Alexandria
Rivalled proud Rome (dominion's other seat),
And fortune striding, like a vast Colossus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.
Alex. Had I my wish, these tyrants of all nature,
Who lord it o'er mankind, should perish, perish,
Each by the other's sword; but since our will
Is lamely followed by our power, we must
Depend on one, with him to rise or fall.
Ser. How stands the queen affected?
Alex. Oh, she doats,
She doats, Serapion, on this vanquished man,
And winds herself about his mighty ruins,
Whom, would she yet forsake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his pursuer's hands,
She might preserve us all: but 'tis in vain—
This changes my designs, this blasts my counsels,
And makes me use all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wish divided from her arms
Far as the earth's deep centre. Well, you know
The state of things: no more of your ill omens
And black prognostics; labour to confirm
The people's hearts.

Enter VENTIDIUS, *talking aside with a gentleman of* ANTONY'S.

Ser. These Romans will o'erhear us.
But who's that stranger? by his warlike port,
His fierce demeanor, and erected look,
He is of no vulgar note.
Alex. Oh, 'tis Ventidius,
Our emperor's great lieutenant in the east,
Who first shewed Rome, that Parthia could be conquered.
When Antony returned from Syria last,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.
Ser. You seem to know him well.
Alex. Too well. I saw him in Cilicia first,
When Cleopatra there met Antony:
A mortal foe he was to us and Egypt.
But let me witness to the worth I hate;
A braver Roman never drew a sword:
Firm to his prince, but as a friend, not slave:
He ne'er was of his pleasures, but presides
O'er all his cooler hours, and morning counsels:
In short, the plainness, fierceness, rugged virtue
Of an old true stampt Roman lives in him.
His coming bodes, I know not what, of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw, to mark him better,
And I'll acquaint you why I sought you here,
And what is our present work.
[*They withdraw to a corner of the stage, and* VENTIDIUS, *with the other, comes forward to the front.*
Vent. Not see him, say you?
I say I must, and will.
Gent. He has commanded,
On pain of death, none should approach his presence.
Vent. I bring him news, will raise his drooping spirits,
Give him new life.
Gent. He sees not Cleopatra.
Vent. Would he had never seen her!
Gent. He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use
Of any thing but thought; or if he talks,
'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving;
Then he defies the world, and bids it pass.
Sometimes he gnaws his lips, and curses loud
The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth
Into a scornful smile, and cries, 'Take all!
The world is not worth my care.'
Vent. Just, just his nature.
Virtue is his path, but sometimes 'tis too narrow

For his vast soul, and then he starts out wide,
And bounds into a vice, that bears him far
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
Judging himself with malice to himself,
And not forgiving what as man he did,
Because his other parts are more than man.
He must not thus be lost.

[ALEXAS *and the priests come forward.*

Alex. You have your full instructions; now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly.

Ser. Romans! Egyptians! hear the queen's command.
Thus Cleopatra bids: Let labour cease;
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,
That gave the world a lord; 'tis Antony's.
Live Antony, and Cleopatra live!
Be this the general voice sent up to heaven,
And every public place repeat this echo.

Vent. Fine pageantry! [*Aside.*

Ser. Set out before your doors
The images of all your sleeping fathers,
With laurels crowned; with laurels wreath your posts,
And strew with flowers the pavement; let the priest
Do present sacrifice, pour out the wine,
And call the gods to join with you in gladness.

Vent. Curse on the tongue that bids this general joy!
Can they be friends to Antony, who revel
When Antony's in danger? Hide, for shame,
You Romans, your great grandsires' images,
For fear their souls should animate their marbles,
To blush at their degenerate progeny.

Alex. A love, which knows no bounds to Antony,
Would mark the day with honours; when all Heaven
Laboured for him, when each propitious star
Stood wakeful in his orb to watch that hour,
And shed his better influence: her own birth-day
Our queen neglected, like a vulgar fate,
That passed obscurely by.

Vent. Would it had slept
Divided far from his, till some remote
And future age had called it out to ruin
Some other prince, not him!

Alex. Your emperor,
Tho' grown unkind, would be more gentle than
To upbraid my queen for loving him too well.

Vent. Does the mute sacrifice upbraid the priest?
He knows him not his executioner.
Oh! she has decked his ruin with her love,
Led him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter,
And made perdition pleasing: she has left him
The blank of what he was.
I tell thee, eunuch, she has quite unmanned him:
Can any Roman see and know him now,
Thus altered from the lord of half mankind,
Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman's toy,
Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honours,
And crampt within a corner of the world?
Oh, Antony!
Thou bravest soldier, and thou best of friends!
Bounteous as nature, next to nature's God!
Couldst thou but make new worlds, so wouldst thou give them,
As bounty were thy being. Rough in battle
As the first Romans, when they went to war,
Yet, after victory, more pitiful
Than all their praying virgins left at home!

Alex. Would you could add to those more shining virtues,
His truth to her, who loves him.

Vent. Would I could not!
But wherefore waste I precious hours with thee?
Thou art her darling mischief, her chief engine,
Antony's other fate. Go tell thy queen,
Ventidius is arrived to end her charms.
Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone,
Nor mix effeminate sounds with Roman trumpets.
You dare not fight for Antony; go pray,
And keep your cowards' holiday in temples.

[*Exeunt Alex. Serap.*

Re-enter the Gentleman of MARC ANTONY.

2 *Gent.* The emperor approaches, and commands,
On pain of death, that none presume to stay.

1 *Gent.* I dare not disobey him.

[*Going out with the other.*

Vent. Well, I dare:
But I'll observe him first, unseen, and find
Which way his humour drives: the rest I'll venture.

[*Withdraws.*

Enter ANTONY, *walking with a disturbed motion before he speaks.*

Ant. They tell me, 'tis my birth-day; and I'll keep it
With double pomp of sadness:
'Tis what the day deserves, which gave me breath.
Why was I raised the meteor of the world,
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,
Till all my fires were spent, and then cast downward,
To be trod out by Cæsar?

Vent. [*Aside*] On my soul
'Tis mournful, wondrous mournful!

Ant. Count thy gains
Now, Antony; wouldst thou be born for this?
Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
Has starved thy wanting age.

Vent. [*Aside*] How sorrow shakes him!
So, now the tempest tears him up by the roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.

Ant. [*Having thrown himself down*] Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor;
The place, thou pressest on thy mother earth,

Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then 'twill be too large,
When thou art contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia,
(For Cleopatra will not live to see it)
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widowed hand to Cæsar;
Cæsar will weep, the crocodile will weep,
To see his rival of the universe
Lie still and peaceful there. I'll think no more of it.
Give me some music; look, that it be sad.
I'll soothe my melancholy, till I swell
And burst myself with sighing— [*Soft music.*
'Tis somewhat to my humour. Stay, I fancy
I'm now turned wild, a commoner of nature;
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all,
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene,
Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy bark,
And look just of a piece as I grew from it:
My uncombed locks, matted like misletoe,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murmuring brook
Runs at my foot——
Vent. Methinks I fancy
Myself there too.
Ant. The herd come jumping by me,
And fearless quench their thirst, while I look on,
And take me for their fellow-citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts.
[*Soft music again.*
Vent. I must disturb him: I can hold no longer. [*Stands before him.*
Ant. [*Starting up*] Art thou Ventidius?
Vent. Are you Antony?
I'm liker what I was than you to him
I left you last.
Ant. I'm angry.
Vent. So am I.
Ant. I would be private. Leave me.
Vent. Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.
Ant. Will not leave me!
Where have you learnt that answer? Who am I?
Vent. My emperor; the man I love next heaven:
If I said more, I think 'twere scarce a sin:
You're all that's good and godlike.
Ant. All that's wretched.
You will not leave me then?
Vent. 'Twas too presuming
To say I would not; but I dare not leave you;
And 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence
So soon, when I so far have come to see you.
Ant. Now thou hast seen me, art thou satisfied?
For, if a friend, thou hast beheld enough,
And, if a foe, too much.
Vent. Look, emperor, this is no common dew:
[*Weeping.*
I have not wept this forty years; but now
My mother comes afresh into my eyes:
I cannot help her softness.
Ant. By heaven he weeps! Poor good old man, he weeps!
The big round drops course one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop them, Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death; they set my shame,
That caused them, full before me.
Vent. I'll do my best.
Ant. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends;
See, I have caught it too. Believe me 'tis not
For my own griefs but thine—Nay, father——
Vent. Emperor.
Ant. Emperor! why that's the style of victory:
The conquering soldier, red with unfelt wounds,
Salutes his general so; but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.
Vent. I warrant you.
Ant. Actium, Actium! Oh—
Vent. It sits too near you.
Ant. Here, here it lies, a lump of lead by day,
And, in my short distracted nightly slumbers,
The hag, that rides my dreams——
Vent. Out with it; give it vent.
Ant. Urge not my shame—
I lost a battle.
Vent. So has Julius done.
Ant. Thou favourest me, and speakest not half thou thinkest;
For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly;
But Antony——
Vent. Nay, stop not.
Ant. Antony
(Well, thou wilt have it) like a coward fled,
Fled, while his soldiers fought; fled first, Ventidius.
Thou longest to curse me, and I give thee leave;
I know thou camest prepared to rail.
Vent. I did.
Ant. I'll help thee—I have been a man, Ventidius.
Vent. Yes, and a brave one; but—
Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have lost my reason, have disgraced
The name of soldier with inglorious ease;
In the full vintage of my flowing honours
Sat still, and saw it prest by other hands;
Fortune came smiling to my youth, and wooed it,
And purple greatness met my ripened years.
When first I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs,
The wish of nations, and the willing world
Received me as its pledge of future peace.
I was so great, so happy, so beloved,
Fate could not ruin me, till I took pains,
And worked against my fortune, chid her from me,
And turned her loose; yet still she came again.
My careless days, and my luxurious nights,
At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,

Gone, gone, divorced for ever. Help me, soldier,
To curse this madman, this industrious fool,
Who laboured to be wretched. Pr'ythee curse me.
Vent. No.
Ant. Why?
Vent. You are too sensible already
Of what you have done, too conscious of your failings,
And, like a scorpion, whipt by others first
To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge.
I would bring balm, and pour it in your wounds,
Cure your distempered mind, and heal your fortunes.
Ant. I know thou wouldst.
Vent. I will.
Ant. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Vent. You laugh.
Ant. I do, to see officious love
Give cordials to the dead.
Vent. You would be lost then?
Ant. I am.
Vent. I say you are not. Try your fortune.
Ant. I have to the utmost. Dost thou think me desperate
Without just cause? No, when I found all lost
Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
And learned to scorn it here, which now I do
So heartily, I think it is not worth
The cost of keeping.
Vent. Cæsar thinks not so;
He'll thank you for the gift, he could not take.
You would be killed like Tully, would you? Do;
Hold out your throat to Cæsar, and die tamely.
Ant. No, I can kill myself, and so resolve.
Vent. I can die with you too, when time shall serve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.
Ant. Sure thou dreamest, Ventidius.
Vent. No, 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscalled philosophy.
Up, up, for honour's sake! twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief: by painful journies
I led them, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches of the Nile:
'Twill do you good to see their sunburnt faces,
Their scarred cheeks, and chopt hands: there's virtue in them:
They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.
Ant. Where left you them?
Vent. I said in Lower Syria.
Ant. Bring them hither;
There may be life in these.
Vent. They will not come.
Ant. Why didst thou mock my hopes with promised aids
To double my despair? they are mutinous.
Vent. Most firm and loyal.
Ant. Yet they will not march
To succour me? Oh trifler!
Vent. They petition
You would make haste to head them.
Ant. I'm besieged.
Vent. There's but one way shut up—How came I hither?
Ant. I will not stir.
Vent. They would perhaps desire
A better reason.
Ant. I have never used
My soldiers to demand a reason of
My actions. Why did they refuse to march?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Ant. What was it they said?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra:
Why should they fight indeed to make her conquer,
And make you more a slave? to gain you kingdoms,
Which for a kiss, at your next midnight feast,
You'll sell to her?—Then she new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond such or such a tax;
Each pendant in her ear shall be a province.
Ant. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free licence
On all my other faults, but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra! she deserves
More worlds than I can lose.
Vent. Behold, you powers!
To whom you have entrusted humankind;
See Europe, Afric, Asia, put in balance,
And all weighed down by one light worthless woman!
I think the gods are Antonies, and give,
Like prodigals, this nether world away
To none but wasteful hands.
Ant. You grow presumptuous.
Vent. I take the privilege of plain love to speak.
Ant. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain insolence!
Thy men are cowards, thou an envious traitor,
Who, under seeming honesty, hath vented
The burden of thy rank o'erflowing gall.
Oh that thou wert my equal, great in arms
As the first Cæsar was, that I might kill thee,
Without stain to my honour!
Vent. You may kill me:
You have done more already, called me traitor.
Ant. Art thou not one?
Vent. For shewing you yourself,
Which none else durst have done? But had I been
That name, which I disdain to speak again,
I needed not have sought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hindered me to have led my conquering eagles

To fill Octavia's bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious happy traitor,
And not have been so called.
Ant. Forgive me, soldier;
I have been too passionate.
Vent. You thought me false,
Thought my old age betrayed you. Kill me, sir,
Pray kill me: yet you need not; your unkindness
Has left your sword no work.
Ant. I did not think so;
I said it in my rage: prithee forgive me.
Why didst thou tempt my anger by discovery
Of what I would not hear?
Vent. No prince, but you,
Could merit that sincerity, I used;
Nor durst another man have ventured it:
But you, ere love misled your wandering eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Framed in the very pride and boast of nature;
So perfect, that the gods, who formed you, wondered
At their own skill, and cried, 'A lucky hit
Has mended our design!' Their envy hindered,
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When heaven would work for ostentation sake,
To copy out again.
Ant. But Cleopatra——
Go on, for I can bear it now.
Vent. No more.
Ant. Thou dar'st not trust my passion, but thou mayest:
Thou only lovest, the rest have flattered me.
Vent. Heaven's blessing on your heart for that kind word!
May I believe you love me? Speak again.
Ant. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this. [*Embracing him.*
Thy praises were unjust: but I'll deserve them,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt:
Lead me to victory; thou knowest the way.
Vent. And will you leave this——
Ant. Prithee do not curse her,
And I will leave her, though heaven knows I love
Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honour:
But I will leave her.
Vent. That is my royal master.
And shall we fight?
Ant. I warrant thee, old soldier;
Thou shalt behold me once again in iron,
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, 'Come, follow me.'
Vent. Oh, now I hear my emperor! In that word
Octavius fell. Gods! let me see that day,
And if I have ten years behind, take all;
I'll thank you for the exchange.
Ant. Oh, Cleopatra!
Vent. Again!
Ant. I have done; in that last sigh she went.
Cæsar shall know what it is to force a lover
From all he holds most dear.
Vent. Methinks you breathe
Another soul; your looks are most divine;
You speak a hero, and you move a god.
Ant. Oh, thou hast fired me! my soul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me. Once again
That noble eagerness of fight has seized me,
That eagerness, with which I darted upward
To Cassius' camp: in vain the steepy hill
Opposed my way, in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head, and planted all my shield;
I won the trenches, while my foremost men
Lagged on the plain below.
Vent. Ye gods, ye gods,
For such another honour!
Ant. Come on, my soldier;
Our hearts and arms are still the same: I long
Once more to meet our foes, that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops,
May taste fate to them, mow them out a passage,
And, entering where the foremost squadrons yield,
Begin the noble harvest of the field. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A grand Saloon.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS.

Cleo. What shall I do, or whither shall I turn!
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.
Alex. He goes to fight for you.
Cleo. Then he would see me ere he went to fight.
Flatter me not; if once he goes, he is lost,
And all my hopes destroyed.
Alex. Does this weak passion
Become a mighty queen?
Cleo. I am no queen:
Is this to be a queen, to be besieged
By you insulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? These ills are small,
For Antony is lost, and I can mourn
For nothing else but him. Now come, Octavius;
I have no more to lose; prepare thy bands;
I am fit to be a captive: Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a slave.
Iras. Call reason to assist you.
Cleo. I have none,
And none would have: my love's a noble madness,
Which shows, the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man;
But I have loved with such transcendent passion,

I soared at first quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it—No, I am proud
'Tis thus: would Antony could see me now!
Think you, he would not sigh? Though he must leave me,
Sure he would sigh; for he is noble-natured,
And bears a tender heart: I know him well:
Ah no! I know him not: I knew him once,
But now 'tis past.

Iras. Let it be past with you:
Forget him, madam.

Cleo. Never, never, Iras:
He once was mine, and once, though now it is gone,
Leaves a faint image of possession still.

Alex. Think him inconstant, cruel, and ungrateful.

Cleo. I cannot; if I could, those thoughts were vain:
Faithless, ungrateful, cruel, though he be,
I still must love him.

Enter CHARMION.

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?
Am I to live or die? Nay, do I live,
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,
Fate took the word, and then I lived or died.

Char. I found him, madam——

Cleo. A long speech preparing!
If thou bringest comfort, haste and give it me,
For never was more need.

Iras. I know he loves you.

Cleo. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me so,
Before her tongue could speak it: now she studies
To soften what he said: but give me death
Just as he sent it, Charmion, undisguised,
And in the words he spoke.

Char. I found him then,
Encompassed round, I think, with iron statues,
So mute, so motionless, his soldiers stood,
While awfully he cast his eyes about,
And every leader's hopes and fears surveyed.
Methought he looked resolved, and yet not pleased:
When he beheld me struggling in the crowd,
He blushed, and bade make way.

Alex. There's comfort yet.

Char. Ventidius fixed his eyes upon my passage
Severely, as he meant to frown me back,
And sullenly gave place. I told my message,
Just as you gave it, broken and disordered;
I numbered in it all your sighs and tears,
And while I moved your pitiful request,
That you but only begged a last farewell,
He fetched an inward groan, and every time
I named you, sighed, as if his heart were breaking,
But shunned my eyes, and guiltily looked down.
He seemed not now that awful Antony,
Who shook an armed assembly with his nod,
But making show as he would rub his eyes,
Disguised and blotted out a falling tear.

Cleo. Did he then weep, and was I worth a tear?
If what thou hast to say be not as pleasing,
Tell me no more, but let me die contented.

Char. He bid me say, he knew himself so well,
He could deny you nothing, if he saw you,
And therefore——

Cleo. Thou wouldst say he would not see me!

Char. And therefore begged you not to use a power,
Which he could ill resist; yet he should ever
Respect you as he ought.

Cleo. Is that a word
For Antony to use to Cleopatra?
Oh, that faint word respect! how I disdain it!
Disdain myself for loving after it!
He should have kept that word for cold Octavia;
Respect is for a wife. Am I that thing,
That dull insipid lump, without desires,
And without power to give them?

Alex. You misjudge;
You see through love, and that deludes your sight,
As what is straight seems crooked through the water;
But I, who bear my reason undisturbed,
Can see this Antony, this dreaded man,
A fearful slave, who fain would run away,
And shuns his master's eyes; if you pursue him,
My life on it, he still drags a chain along,
That needs must clog his flight.

Cleo. Could I believe thee——

Alex. By every circumstance I know he loves.
True, he is hard prest by interest and honour;
Yet he but doubts and parleys, and casts out
Many a long look for succour.

Cleo. He sends word
He fears to see my face.

Alex. And would you more?
He shows his weakness, who declines the combat;
And you must urge your fortune. Could he speak
More plainly? to my ears the message sounds,
'Come to my rescue, Cleopatra, come!
Come, free me from Ventidius, from my tyrant:
See me, and give me a pretence to leave him.'
[*A march.*
I hear his trumpets. This way he must pass.
Please you retire a while; I'll work him first,
That he may bend more easy.

Cleo. You shall rule me,
But all, I fear, in vain. [*Exit with Char. and Iras.*

Alex. I fear so too,
Though I concealed my thoughts to make her bold;
But it is our utmost means, and fate befriend it.
[*Withdraws. A march till all are on.*

Enter Lictors with fasces, one bearing the Eagle; then enter ANTONY *and* VENTIDIUS, *followed by other Commanders.*

Ant. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,

But holds from virtue nothing.
Vent. Has he courage?
Ant. But just enough to season him from coward.
Oh! 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter! if he ventures
(As in Illyria once they said he did)
To storm a town, 'tis when he cannot chuse,
When all the world have fixed their eyes upon him;
And then he lives on that for seven years after:
But at a close revenge he never fails.
Vent. I heard you challenged him.
Ant. I did, Ventidius:
What thinkest thou was his answer? 'twas so tame
—He said, he had more ways than one to die,
I had not.
Vent. Poor!
Ant. He has more ways than one,
But he would chuse them all before that one.
Vent. He first would chuse an ague or a fever.
Ant. No, it must be an ague, not a fever;
He has not warmth enough to die by that.
Vent. Or old age and a bed.
Ant. Ay, there's his choice;
He would live like a lamp to the last wink,
And crawl upon the utmost verge of life.
Oh, Hercules! why should a man like this,
Who dares not trust his fate for one great action,
Be all the care of heaven? why should he lord it
O'er fourscore thousand men, of whom each one
Is braver than himself?
Vent. You conquered for him;
Philippi knows it: there you shared with him
That empire, which your sword made all your own.
Ant. Fool that I was! upon my eagle's wings
I bore this wren till I was tired with soaring,
And now he mounts above me.
Good heavens! is this, is this the man, who braves me,
Who bids my age make way, drives me before him
To the world's ridge, and sweeps me off like rubbish?
Vent. Sir, we lose time; the troops are mounted all.
Ant. Then give the word to march:
I long to leave this prison of a town,
To join thy legions, and in open field
Once more to show my face. Lead, my deliverer!

Enter ALEXAS.

Alex. Great emperor,
In mighty arms renowned above mankind,
But, in soft pity to the oppressed, a god,
This message sends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing lord.
Vent. Smooth sycophant!
Alex. A thousand wishes, and ten thousand prayers,
Millions of blessings, wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you too,
And would have sent
As many embraces to your arms,
As many dear parting kisses to your lips,
But those, she fears, have wearied you already.
Vent. [*Aside.*] False crocodile!
Alex. And yet she begs not now, you would not leave her;
That were a wish too mighty for her hopes,
And too presuming (for her low fortune and your ebbing love);
That were a wish for her most prosperous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindness.
Ant. [*Aside.*] Well, I must man it out—What would the queen?
Alex. First to these noble warriors, who attend
Your daring courage in the chase of fame,
(Too daring and too dangerous for her quiet)
She humbly recommends all she holds dear,
All her own cares and fears, the care of you.
Vent. Yes, witness Actium.
Ant. Let him speak, Ventidius.
Alex. You, when his matchless valour bears him forward
With ardour, too heroic, on his foes;
Fall down, as she would do, before his feet,
Lie in his way, and stop the paths of death;
Tell him this god is not invulnerable,
That absent Cleopatra bleeds in him;
And, that you may remember her petition,
She begs you wear these trifles as a pawn,
Which, at your wished return, she will redeem
[*Gives jewels to the Commanders.*
With all the wealth of Egypt.
This to the great Ventidius she presents,
Whom she can never count her enemy,
Because he loves her lord.
Vent. Tell her I'll none of it;
I am not ashamed of honest poverty:
Not all the diamonds of the east can bribe
Ventidius from his faith. I hope to see
These, and the rest of all her sparkling store,
Where they shall more deservingly be placed.
Ant. And who must wear them then?
Vent. The wronged Octavia.
Ant. You might have spared that word.
Vent. And she that bribe.
Ant. But have I no remembrance?
Alex. Yes, a dear one;
Your slave, the queen——
Ant. My mistress.
Alex. Then your mistress.
Your mistress would, she says, have sent her soul,
But that you had long since; she humbly begs
This ruby bracelet, set with bleeding hearts,
(The emblems of her own) may bind your arm.
[*Presenting a bracelet.*
Vent. Now, my best lord, in honour's name I ask you,
For manhood's sake, and for your own dear safety,
Touch not these poisoned gifts,
Infected by the sender! touch them not!

Myriads of bluest plagues lie underneath them,
And more than aconite has dipt the silk.
Ant. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius;
A lady's favours may be worn with honour.
What, to refuse her bracelet! on my soul,
When I lie pensive in my tent alone,
'Twill pass the wakeful hours of winter nights
To tell these pretty beads upon my arm,
To count for every one a soft embrace,
A melting kiss at such and such a time,
And now and then the fury of her love,
When—And what harm's in this?
Alex. None, none, my lord,
But what's to her, that now 'tis past for ever.
Ant. [*Going to tie it.*] We soldiers are so awkward—help me tie it.
Alex. In faith, my lord, we courtiers too are awkward
In these affairs; so are all men indeed;
But shall I speak?
Ant. Yes, freely.
Alex. Then, my lord, fair hands alone
Are fit to tie it; she, who sent it, can.
Vent. Hell! death! this eunuch pandar ruins you.
You will not see her? [*Alexas whispers an attendant, who goes out.*
Ant. But to take my leave.
Vent. Then I have washed an Ethiop. You are undone!
You're in the toils! you're taken! you're destroyed!
Her eyes do Cæsar's work.
Ant. You fear too soon:
I am constant to myself: I know my strength;
And yet she shall not think me barbarous neither,
Born in the deeps of Afric: I'm a Roman,
Bred to the rules of soft humanity.
A guest, and kindly used, should bid farewell.
Vent. You do not know
How weak you are to her, how much an infant;
You are not proof against a smile or glance;
A sigh will quite disarm you.
Ant. See, she comes!
Now you shall find your error. Gods! I thank you;
I formed the danger greater than it was,
And now 'tis near 'tis lessened.
Vent. Mark the end yet.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

Ant. Well, madam, we are met.
Cleo. Is this a meeting!
Then we must part!
Ant. We must.
Cleo. Who says we must?
Ant. Our own hard fates.
Cleo. We make those fates ourselves.
Ant. Yes, we have made them; we have loved each other,
Into our mutual ruin.
Cleo. The gods have seen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in heaven; and all the world
(As 'twere the business of mankind to part us)
Is armed against my love; even you yourself
Join with the rest: you, you are armed against me.
Ant. I will be justified in all I do
To late posterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it,
Else favour me with silence.
Cleo. You command me,
And I am dumb.
Vent. I like this well: he shows authority.
Ant. That I derive my ruin
From you alone———
Cleo. Oh, heavens! I ruin you!
Ant. You promised me your silence, and you break it,
Ere I have scarce begun.
Cleo. Well, I obey you.
Ant. When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
Ere Cæsar saw your eyes: you gave me love,
And were too young to know it. That I settled
Your father in his throne was for your sake;
I left the acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Cæsar stepped in, and, with a greedy hand,
Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord,
And was beside too great for me to rival:
But I deserved you first, though he enjoyed you.
When after I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardoned you.
Cleo. I cleared myself———
Ant. Again you break your promise!
I loved you still, and took your weak excuses,
Took you into my bosom, stained by Cæsar,
And not half mine: I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the business of the world,
Shut out inquiring nations from my sight,
To give whole years to you.
Vent. Yes, to your shame be it spoken! [*Aside.*
Ant. How I loved,
Witness ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet,
As all your business were to count my passion.
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love:
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you every day, and all the day,
And every day was still but as the first,
So eager was I still to see you more.
Vent. 'Tis all too true.
Ant. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
As she indeed had reason, raised a war
In Italy, to call me back.
Vent. But yet
You went not.
Ant. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mouldering from my hands each hour,

And left me scarce a grasp; I thank your love for't.
Vent. Well pushed: that last was home.
Cleo. Yet may I speak?
Ant. If I have urged a falsehood, yes; else not.
Your silence says I have not. Fulvia died:
(Pardon, you gods! with my unkindness died.)
To set the world at peace, I took Octavia,
This Cæsar's sister. In her pride of youth
And flower of beauty did I wed that lady,
Whom, blushing, I must praise, although I left her.
You called; my love obeyed the fatal summons:
This raised the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
You hindered it; yet, when I fought by sea,
Forsook me fighting; and—oh stain to honour!
Oh lasting shame! I knew not that I fled,
But fled to follow you.
Vent. What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
And to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our strength away.
Ant. All this you caused:
And would you multiply more ruins on me?
This honest man, my best, my only friend,
Has gathered up the shipwreck of my fortunes:
Twelve legions I have left, my last recruits,
And you have watched the news, and bring your eyes
To seize them too. If you have aught to answer,
Now speak, you have free leave.
Alex. She stands confounded:
Despair is in her eyes. [*Aside.*
Vent. Now lay a sigh in the way to stop his passage;
Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions:
'Tis like they shall be sold.
Cleo. How shall I plead my cause, when you, my judge,
Already have condemned me? Shall I bring
The love, you bore me, for my advocate?
That now is turned against me, that destroys me;
For love, once past, is, at the best, forgotten,
But oftener sours to hate. It will please my lord
To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty;
But could I once have thought it would have pleased you,
That you would pry with narrow searching eyes
Into my faults, severe to my destruction,
And watching all advantages with care,
That serve to make me wretched! Speak, my lord,
For I end here. Though I deserve this usage,
Was it like you to give it?
Ant. Oh, you wrong me,
To think I sought this parting, or desired
To accuse you more than what will clear myself,
And justify this breach.
Cleo. Thus low I thank you,
And, since my innocence will not offend,
I shall not blush to own it.
Vent. After this,
I think she'll blush at nothing.
Cleo. You seem grieved
(And therein you are kind) that Cæsar first
Enjoyed my love, though you deserved it better;
For had I first been yours, it would have saved
My second choice; I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Cæsar first,
You say, possessed my love. Not so, my lord:
He first possessed my person, you my love:
Cæsar loved me, but I loved Antony:
If I endured him after, 'twas because
I judged it due to the first name of men;
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.
Vent. Oh, siren! siren!
Yet grant that all the love she boasts were true,
Has she not ruined you? I still urge that,
The fatal consequence.
Cleo. The consequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greatest foe,
To say it was designed. It is true I loved you,
And kept you far from an uneasy wife,
Such Fulvia was.
Yes; but he'll say you left Octavia for me:
And can you blame me to receive that love,
Which quitted such desert for worthless me?
How often have I wished some other Cæsar,
Great as the first, and as the second young,
Would court my love, to be refused for you!
Vent. Words, words! but Actium, sir, remember Actium!
Cleo. Ev'n there I dare his malice. True, I counselled
To fight at sea; but I betrayed you not:
I fled, but not to the enemy. 'Twas fear:
Would I had been a man not to have feared!
For none would then have envied me your friendship,
Who envy me your love.
Ant. We are both unhappy:
If nothing else, yet our ill fortune parts us.
Speak! would you have me perish by my stay?
Cleo. If, as a friend, you ask my judgment, go;
If, as a lover, stay. If you must perish—
'Tis a hard word—but stay.
Vent. See now the effects of her so boasted love!
She strives to drag you down to ruin with her;
But could she 'scape without you, oh, how soon
Would she let go her hold, and haste to shore,
And never look behind!
Cleo. Then judge my love by this.
[*Giving Antony a writing.*
Could I have borne
A life or death, a happiness or woe,
From yours divided, this had given me means.
Ant. By Hercules the writing of Octavius!
I know it well: 'tis that proscribing hand,
Young as it was, that led the way to mine,
And left me but the second place in murder——
See, see, Ventidius! here he offers Egypt,

And joins all Syria to it as a present,
So in requital she forsakes my fortunes,
And joins her arms with his.
Cleo. And yet you leave me!
You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you!
Indeed I do! I have refused a kingdom,
That's a trifle;
For I could part with life, with any thing,
But only you. Oh let me die but with you!
Is that a hard request?
Ant. Next living with you
'Tis all, that heaven can give.
Alex. He melts; we conquer. [*Aside.*
Cleo. No, you shall go; your interest call you hence:
Yes, your dear interest pulls to strong for these
Weak arms to hold you here— [*Takes his hand.*
Go, leave me, soldier,
(For you're no more a lover) leave me dying;
Push me all pale and panting from your bosom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after,
Breathless almost for joy, and cry, 'She's dead!'
The soldiers shout. You then perhaps may sigh,
And muster all your Roman gravity;
Ventidius chides, and straight your brow clears up,
As I had never been.
Ant. Gods! 'tis too much! too much for man to bear!
Cleo. What is it for me then,
A weak forsaken woman, and a lover?
Here let me breathe my last; envy me not
This minute in your arms! I'll die apace,
As fast as e'er I can, and end your trouble.
Ant. Die!—rather let me perish, loosened nature
Leap from its hinges, sink the props of heaven,
And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
My eyes! my soul! my all!—— [*Embraces her.*
Vent. And what's this toy,
In balance with your fortune, honour, fame?
Ant. What is it, Ventidius? it outweighs them all.
Why, we have more than conquered Cæsar now;
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is she, who drags me down to ruin!
But, could she escape without me, with what haste
Would she let slip her hold, and make to shore,
And never look behind!
Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wronged innocence.
Vent. I'll rather die than take it. Will you go?
Ant. Go! whither? go from all that's excellent!
Faith, honour, virtue, all good things, forbid
That I should go from her, who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms. Give, you gods!
Give to your boy, your Cæsar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off;
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.
Cleo. She's wholly yours. My heart's so full of joy,
That I shall do some wild extravagance
Of love in public, and the foolish world,
Which knows not tenderness, will think me mad.
Vent. Oh women! women! women! all the gods
Have not such power of doing good to man
As you of doing harm. [*Exit.*
Ant. Our men are armed:
Unbar the gate, that looks to Cæsar's camp;
I would revenge the treachery he meant me,
And long security makes conquest easy.
I'm eager to return before I go,
For all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance. How I long for night!
That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And triumph once o'er Cæsar ere we die.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, ALEXAS, *and a train of Egyptians,* ANTONY *and Romans;* CLEOPATRA *crowns* ANTONY.

Ant. I THOUGHT how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close and melt me into love:
So pleased with that sweet image I sprung forwards,
And added all my strength to every blow.
Cleo. Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You have been too long away from my embraces;
But when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs and with amorous sighs
I'll say you are unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss.
Ant. My brighter Venus!
Cleo. Oh, my greater Mars!
Ant. Thou joinest us well, my love.
Suppose me come from the Phlegræan plains,
Where gasping giants lay cleft by my sword,
And mountain-tops par'd off each other blow
To bury those I slew; receive me, goddess!
Let Cæsar spread his subtle nets, like Vulcan;
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heaven and earth at once,
And make their envy what they meant their sport,
Let those, who took us, blush; I would love on,
With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
As their superior god.
There's no satiety of love in thee;
Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,

And blossoms rise to fill its empty place,
And I grow rich by giving.

Enter VENTIDIUS, *and stands apart.*

Alex. Oh, now the danger's past, your general comes;
He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs,
But with contracted brows looks frowning on,
As envying your success.
Ant. Now, on my soul, he loves me, truly loves me;
He never flattered me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue: even this minute,
Methinks, he has a right of chiding me.
Lead to the temple; I'll avoid his presence;
It checks too strong upon me. [*Exeunt the rest.*
[*As Antony is going, Ventidius pulls him by the robe.*
Vent. Emperor!
Ant. 'Tis the old argument; I prithee spare me.
[*Looking back.*
Vent. But this one hearing, emperor.
Ant. Let go
My robe, or by my father Hercules——
Vent. By Hercules' father—that's yet greater,
I bring you somewhat you would wish to know,
Ant. Thou seest we are observed; attend me here,
And I'll return. [*Exit.*
Vent. I'm waning in his favour, yet I love him;
I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin!
And sure the gods, like me, are fond of him:
His virtues lie so mingled with his crimes,
As would confound their choice to punish one,
And not reward the other.

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. We can conquer,
You see, without your aid:
We have dislodged their troops.
They look on us at distance, and like curs,
'Scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathless on the plain.
Vent. 'Tis well; and he
Who lost them could have spared ten thousand more:
Yet if by this advantage you could gain
An easier peace, while Cæsar doubts the chance
Of arms——
Ant. Oh, think not on it, Ventidius!
The boy pursues my ruin; he'll no peace!
His malice is considerate in advantage:
Oh, he's the coolest murderer! so staunch,
He kills and keeps his temper.
Vent. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him?
Mecænas or Agrippa might do much.
Ant. They're both too deep in Cæsar's interests.
We'll work it out by dint of sword, or perish.
Vent. Fain I would find some other.
Ant. Thank thy love.
Some four or five such victories as this
Will save thy farther pains.
Vent. Expect no more; Cæsar is on his guard.
I know, sir, you have conquered against odds;
But still you draw supplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians; he has all the world,
And at his beck nations come pouring in
To fill the gaps you make. Pray think again.
Ant. Why dost thou drive me from myself to search
For foreign aids, to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a wide and barren place,
To find a friend? The wretched have no friends——
Yet I have one, the bravest youth of Rome,
Whom Cæsar loves beyond the love of women;
He could resolve his mind, as fire does wax,
From that hard rugged image melt him down,
And mould him in what softer form he pleased.
Vent. Him would I see, that man of all the world!
Just such a one we want.
Ant. He loved me too;
I was his soul; he lived not but in me:
We were so closed within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found, that joined us first,
That does not reach us yet: we were so mixt
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost:
We were one mass: we could not give or take
But from the same; for he was I, I he.
Vent. He moves as I would wish him. [*Aside.*
Ant. After this
I need not tell his name: 'twas Dolabella.
Vent. He is now in Cæsar's camp.
Ant. No matter where,
Since he is no longer mine. He took unkindly,
That I forbad him Cleopatra's sight,
Because I feared he loved her. He confest
He had a warmth, which for my sake he stifled;
For 'twere impossible, that two, so one,
Should not have loved the same. When he departed,
He took no leave, and that confirmed my thoughts.
Vent. It argues, that he loved you more than her,
Else he had staid; but he perceived you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend. I know he loves you.
Ant. I should have seen him, then, ere now.
Vent. Perhaps
He has thus long been labouring for your peace.
Ant. Would he were here!
Vent. Would you believe he loved you?
I read your answer in your eyes, you would,
Not to conceal it longer, he has sent
A messenger from Cæsar's camp with letters.
Ant. Let him appear.
Vent. I'll bring him instantly.
[*Exit Ventidius, and re-enters immediately with Dolabella.*

Ant. 'Tis he himself, himself! by holy friendship! [*Runs to embrace him.*
Art thou returned at last, my better half!
Come, give me all myself!
Let me not live,
If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,
Was ever half so fond!
Dol. I must be silent, for my soul is busy
About a nobler work. She's new come home,
Like a long absent man, and wanders o'er
Each room, a stranger to her own, to look
If all be safe.
Ant. Thou hast what's left of me,
For I am now so sunk from what I was,
Thou findest me at my lowest watermark:
The rivers, that ran in, and raised my fortunes,
Are all dried up, or take another course:
What I have left is from my native spring;
I have still a heart, that swells, in scorn of fate,
And lifts me to my banks.
Dol. Still you are lord of all the world to me.
Ant. Why then, I yet am so, for thou art all!
If I had any joy, when thou wert absent,
I grudged it to myself; methought I robbed
Thee of thy part. But oh, my Dolabella!
Thou hast beheld me other than I am——
Hast thou not seen my morning chambers filled
With sceptered slaves, who waited to salute me?
With eastern monarchs, who forgot the sun,
To worship my uprising? Menial kings
Ran coursing up and down my palace-yard,
Stood silenced in my presence, watched my eyes,
And, at my least command, all started out,
Like racers to the goal.
Dol. Slaves to your fortune.
Ant. Fortune is Cæsar's now; and what am I?
Vent. What you have made yourself: I will not flatter.
Ant. Is this friendly done?
Dol. Yes, when his end is so: I must join with him,
Indeed I must, and yet you must not chide:
Why am I else your friend?
Ant. Take heed, young man,
How thou upbraidest my love! the queen has eyes,
And thou too hast a soul! Canst thou remember
When, swelled with hatred, thou beheldest her first,
As accessary to thy brother's death?
Dol. Spare my remembrance! 'twas a guilty day,
And still the blush hangs here.
Ant. To clear herself
For sending him no aid, she came from Egypt.
Her galley down the silver Sydnos rowed,
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold,
The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails,
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed,
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.
Dol. No more! I would not hear it!
Ant. Oh, you must!
She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting she could take them. Boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning with their painted wings the winds,
That played about her face; but if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object! To soft flutes
The silver oars kept time, and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight,
And both to thought. 'Twas heaven, or somewhat more!
For she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.
Then, Dolabella, where was then thy soul?
Was not thy fury quite disarmed with wonder?
Didst thou not shrink behind me from those eyes,
And whisper in my ear, Oh, tell her not,
That I accused her of my brother's death!
Dol. And should my weakness be a plea for yours?
Mine was an age, when love might be excused,
When kindly warmth, and when my springing youth
Made it a debt to nature: yours——
Vent. Speak boldly:
Yours, he would say, in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forced,
When all the sap was needful for the trunk,
When it went down, then they constrained the course,
And robbed from nature to supply desire.
In you (I would not use so harsh a word)
'Tis but plain dotage.
Ant. Ha!
Dol. 'Twas urged too home.
But yet the loss was private that I made;
'Twas but myself I lost; I lost no legions;
I had no world to lose, no people's love.
Ant. This from a friend?
Dol. Yes, Antony, a true one;
A friend so tender, that each word I speak
Stabs my own heart before it reach your ear.
Oh! judge me not less kind, because I chide.
To Cæsar I excuse you.
Ant. Oh, ye gods!
Have I then lived to be excused to Cæsar!
Dol. As to your equal.
Ant. Well, he's but my equal:
While I wear this, he never shall be more.
Dol. I bring conditions from him.
Ant. Are they noble?
Methinks thou shouldst not bring them else; yet he
Is full of deep dissembling, knows no honour
Divided from his interest. Fate mistook him,
For Nature meant him for an usurer:
He's fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms,

Vent. Then, granting this,
What power was theirs, who wrought so hard a temper
To honourable terms?
Ant. It was my Dolabella, or some god.
Dol. Not I, nor yet Mecænas nor Agrippa;
They were your enemies, and I, a friend,
Too weak alone; yet 'twas a Roman deed.
Ant. 'Twas like a Roman done. Show me that man,
Who has preserved my life, my love, my honour;
Let me but see his face!
Vent. That task is mine,
And heaven! thou know'st how pleasing.
[*Exit Vent.*
Dol. You'll remember,
To whom you stand obliged?
Ant. When I forget it,
Be thou unkind, and that's my greatest curse.
My queen shall thank him too.
Dol. I fear she will not.
Ant. But she shall do it. The queen, my Dolabella!
Hast thou not still some grudgings of thy fever?
Dol. I would not see her lost.
Ant. When I forsake her,
Leave me my better stars, for she has truth
Beyond her beauty. Cæsar tempted her
At no less price than kingdoms to betray me;
But she resisted all: and yet thou chidest me
For loving her too well. Could I do so?
Dol. Yes; there's my reason.

Re-enter VENTIDIUS *with* OCTAVIA, *leading Antony's two little Daughters.*

Ant. Where—Octavia there! [*Starting back.*
Vent. What! is she poison to you? a disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? has Nature
No secret call, no whisper, they are yours?
Dol. For shame, my lord, if not for love, receive them
With kinder eyes. If you confess a man,
Meet them, embrace them, bid them welcome to you.
Your arms should open, even without your knowledge,
To clasp them in; your feet should turn to wings
To bear you to them; and your eyes dart out,
And aim a kiss, ere you could reach their lips.
Ant. I stood amazed to think how they came hither.
Vent. I sent for them; I brought them in, unknown
To Cleopatra's guards.
Dol. Yet are you cold?
Oct. Thus long have I attended for my welcome,
Which, as a stranger, sure I might expect.
Who am I?
Ant. Cæsar's sister.

Oct. That's unkind!
Had I been nothing more than Cæsar's sister,
Know I had still remained in Cæsar's camp:
But your Octavia, your much injured wife,
Though banished from your bed, driven from your house,
In spite of Cæsar's sister, still is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride:
I come to claim you as my own, to show
My duty first, to ask, nay beg, your kindness.
Your hand, my lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.
[*Taking his hand.*
Vent. Do take it, thou deservest it.
Dol. On my soul,
And so she does. She's neither too submissive,
Nor yet too haughty; but so just a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.
Ant. I fear, Octavia, you have begged my life.
Oct. Begged it, my lord!
Ant. Yes, begged it, my ambassadress;
Poorly and basely begged it of your brother.
Oct. Poorly and basely I could never beg,
Nor could my brother grant.
Ant. Shall I, who to my kneeling slave could say,
Rise up and be a king, shall I fall down
And cry, 'Forgive me, Cæsar!' Shall I set
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word,
Forgive, would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.
Dol. You shall not need it.
Ant. I will not need it. Come, you have all betrayed me—
My friend too! to receive some vile conditions.
My wife has bought me with her prayers and tears,
And now I must become her branded slave:
In every peevish mood she will upbraid
The life she gave: if I but look awry,
She cries, 'I'll tell my brother.'
Oct. My hard fortune
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes:
But the conditions I have brought are such
You need not blush to take. I love your honour,
Because 'tis mine. It never shall be said
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
Sir, you are free, free even from her you loathe;
For though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the east. I may be dropt at Athens;
No matter where; I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.

Vent. Was ever such a strife of sullen honour!
Both scorn to be obliged.
Dol. Oh, she has touched him in the tenderest part:
See how he reddens with despite and shame,
To be outdone in generosity!
Vent. See how he winks! how he dries up a tear,
That fain would fall!
Ant. Octavia, I have heard you, and must praise
The greatness of your soul,
But cannot yield to what you have proposed;
For I can ne'er be conquered but by love,
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropt at Athens; was it not so?
Oct. It was, my lord.
Ant. Then I must be obliged
To one, who loves me not, who to herself
May call me thankless and ungrateful man.
I'll not endure it; no.
Vent. I'm glad it pinches there.
Oct. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up,
That you might think you owed me for your life,
And owed it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injured, and my haughty soul
Could brook but ill the man, who slights my bed.
Ant. Therefore, you love me not.
Oct. Therefore, my lord,
I should not love you.
Ant. Therefore you would leave me.
Oct. And therefore I should leave you—if I could.
Dol. Her soul's too great, after such injuries,
To say she loves, and yet she lets you see it.
Her modesty and silence plead her cause.
Ant. Oh, Dolabella! which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia,
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?
Vent. Justice and pity both plead for Octavia,
For Cleopatra neither.
One would be ruined with you, but she first
Had ruined you; the other you have ruined,
And yet she would preserve you.
In every thing their merits are unequal.
Ant. Oh, my distracted soul!
Oct. Sweet heaven, compose it!
Come, come, my lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you should accept it. Look on these;
Are they not yours? or stand they thus neglected
As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him,
For you may speak, and he may own you too
Without a blush; and so he cannot all
His children. Go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves, from that bad woman:
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms,
And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist:
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children,
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.
[*Here the children go to him, &c.*
Vent. Was ever sight so moving! Emperor!
Dol. Friend!
Oct. Husband!
Both Child. Father!
Ant. I am vanquished: take me,
Octavia, take me, children, share me all.
[*Embracing them.*
I have been a thriftless debtor to your loves,
And run out much in riot from your stock;
But all shall be amended.
Oct. Oh, blest hour!
Dol. Oh, happy change!
Vent. My joy stops at my tongue!
But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.
Ant. [*To Oct.*] This is thy triumph: lead me where thou wilt,
Even to thy brother's camp.
Oct. All there are yours.

Enter ALEXAS *hastily.*

Alex. The queen, my mistress, sir, and yours—
Ant. 'Tis past. Octavia, you shall stay this night;
To-morrow Cæsar and we are one.
[*Exit, leading Oct. Dol. and the children follow.*
Vent. There is news for you! Run, my officious eunuch!
Be sure to be the first; haste forward;
Haste, my dear eunuch, haste! [*Exit.*
Alex. This downright fighting fool, this thick-skulled hero,
This blunt unthinking instrument of death,
With plain dull virtue, has outgone my wit.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and train.*

Oh, madam! I have seen what blasts my eyes;
Octavia is here!
Cleo. Peace with thy raven's note!
I know it too, and now am in
The pangs of death.
Alex. You are no more a queen,
Egypt is lost.
Cleo. What tellest thou me of Egypt!
My life, my soul is lost! Octavia has him!
Oh, fatal name to Cleopatra's love!
My kisses, my embraces, now are her's,
While I—But thou hast seen my rival; speak,
Does she deserve this blessing? is she fair?
Bright as a goddess? and is all perfection
Confined to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that course matter, which, when she was finished,
The gods threw by for rubbish.
Alex. She is indeed a very miracle.

Cleo. Death to my hopes, a miracle!
Alex. A miracle— [*Bowing.*
I mean of goodness; for in beauty, madam,
You make all wonder cease.
Cleo. I was too rash:
Take this in part of recompence. But oh!
I fear thou flatterest me. [*Giving a ring.*
Char. She comes! she's here!
Iras. Fly, madam! Cæsar's sister!
Cleo. Were she the sister of the thunderer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.

Enter OCTAVIA *with* VENTIDIUS. OCTAVIA *bears up to* CLEOPATRA.

Oct. I need not ask, if you are Cleopatra;
Your haughty carriage——
Cleo. Shews I am a queen.
Nor need I ask who you are.
Oct. A Roman;
A name, that makes and can unmake a queen.
Cleo. Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.
Oct. He was a Roman, till he lost that name
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come
To free him hence.
Cleo. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno!
When he grew weary of that household clog,
He chose my easier bonds.
Oct. I wonder not
Your bonds are easy; you have long been practised
In that lascivious art. He is not the first,
For whom you spread your snares; let Cæsar witness.
Cleo. I loved not Cæsar; it was but gratitude
I paid his love: the worst your malice can,
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he, whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.
Oct. I would view nearer [*Coming up close to her.*
That face, which has so long usurped my right,
To find the inevitable charms, that catch
Mankind so sure, that ruined my dear lord.
Cleo. Oh, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.
Oct. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife. Shame of our sex!
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments,
That make sin pleasing?
Cleo. You may blush you want them.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent heaven,
Have given me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank them? should I be ashamed,
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;
And, when I love not him, heaven change this face
For one like that!
Oct. Thou lovest him not so well.
Cleo. I love him better, and deserve him more.
Oct. You do not, cannot: you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium who betrayed him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? only Cleopatra.
Cleo. Yet she, who loves him best, is Cleopatra.
If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife,
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favour it: the world contemns poor me,
For I have lost my honour, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
There wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.
Oct. Be it so then; take thy wish.
[*Exit with Vent.*
Cleo. And 'tis my wish,
Now he is lost, for whom I lived.
My sight grows dim, and every object dances
And swims before me in the maze of death.
My spirits, while they were opposed, kept up;
They could not sink beneath a rival's scorn:
But now she's gone they faint.
Alex. Mine have had leisure
To recollect their strength, and furnish counsel
To ruin her, who else must ruin you.
Cleo. Vain promiser!
Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras.
My grief has weight enough to sink you both.
Conduct me to some solitary chamber,
And draw the curtains round,
Then leave me to myself, to take alone
My fill of grief;
There I till death will his unkindness weep,
As harmless infants mourn themselves asleep.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Saloon.*

Enter ANTONY *and* DOLABELLA.

Dol. WHY would you shift it from yourself on me?
Can you not tell her you must part?
Ant. I cannot;
I could pull out an eye and bid it go,
And the other should not weep. Oh, Dolabella!
How many deaths are in this word 'Depart!'
I dare not trust my tongue to tell her so:
One look of her's would thaw me into tears,
And I should melt, till I were lost again.
Dol. Then let Ventidius;
He's rough by nature.
Ant. Oh, he'll speak too harshly,
He'll kill her with the news: thou, only thou.
Dol. Nature has cast me in so soft a mould,
That but to hear a story, feigned for pleasure,
Of some sad lover's death, moistens my eyes,
And robs me of my manhood.—I should speak
So faintly, with such fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earnest.
Ant. Therefore, therefore
Thou, only thou, art fit. Think thyself me,
And when thou speakest (but let it first be long),
Take off the edge from every sharper sound,
And let our parting be as gently made
As other loves begin. Wilt thou do this?
Dol. What you have said so sinks into my soul,
That, if I must speak, I shall speak just so.
Ant. I leave you then to your sad task. Farewell!
I sent her word to meet you.
[*Goes to the door, and comes back.*
I forgot:
Let her be told, I'll make her peace with mine:
Her crown and dignity shall be preserved,
If I have power with Cæsar——Oh! be sure
To think on that!
Dol. Fear not, I will remember.
[*Antony goes again to the door, and comes back.*
Ant. And tell her too, how much I was constrained;
I did not this but with extremest force.
Desire her not to hate my memory,
For I'll still cherish hers——insist on that.
Dol. Trust me, I'll not forget it.
Ant. Then that's all.
[*Goes out and returns again.*
Wilt thou forgive my fondness this once more?
Tell her, though we shall never meet again,
If I should hear she took another love,
The news would break my heart—Now I must go,
For every time, I have returned, I feel
My soul more tender, and my next command
Would be to bid her stay, and ruin both. [*Exit.*
Dol. Men are but children of a larger growth,
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing,
But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's open view. Thus I discovered,
And blamed the love of ruined Antony,
Yet wish, that I were he, to be so ruined.

Enter VENTIDIUS *above.*

Vent. Alone, and talking to himself! Concerned too!
Perhaps my guess is right: he loved her once,
And may pursue it still.
Dol. Oh, friendship! friendship!
Ill canst thou answer this, reason worse:
Unfaithful in the attempt, hopeless to win,
And, if I win, undone. Mere madness all.
And yet the occasion fair. What injury
To him, to wear the robe, which he throws by?
Vent. None, none at all. This happens as I wish,
To ruin her yet more with Antony. [*Aside.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, *talking with* ALEXAS, CHARMION, *and* IRAS, *on the other side.*

Dol. She comes! what charms have sorrow on that face!
Sorrow seems pleased to dwell with so much sweetness;
Yet now and then a melancholy smile
Breaks loose, like lightning in a winter's night,
And shows a moment's day.
Vent. If she should love him too! Her eunuch there!
That porc'pisce bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
Sweet devil! that I may hear.
Alex. Believe me; try
[*Dolabella goes over to Charmion and Iras, seems to talk with them.*
To make him jealous; jealousy is like
A polished glass, held to the lips, when life's in doubt:
If there be breath, 'twill catch the lamp and show it.
Cleo. I grant you jealousy's a proof of love,
But 'tis a weak and unavailing medicine;
It puts out the disease, and makes it show,
But has no power to cure.
Alex. 'Tis your last remedy, and strongest too:
And then this Dolabella, who so fit
To practise on? He's handsome, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for nature's bait
To catch weak women's eyes.
He stands already more than half suspected
Of loving you: the least kind word or glance,
You give this youth, will kindle him with love;

Then, like a burning vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.
Cleo. Can I do this? ah, no! my love's so true,
That I can neither hide it, where it is,
Nor show it, where it is not. Nature meant me
A wife, a silly, harmless household dove,
Fond without art, and kind without deceit;
But fortune, that has made a mistress of me,
Has thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnished
Of falsehood to be happy.
Alex. Force yourself;
The event will be, your lover will return
Doubly desirous to possess the good,
Which once he feared to lose.
Cleo. I must attempt it;
But oh, with what regret!
[*Exit Alex. She comes up to Dolabella.*
Vent. So now the scene draws near; they're in my reach.
Cleo. to Dol. Discoursing with my women! Might not I
Share in your entertainment?
Char. You have been
The subject of it, madam.
Cleo. How! and how?
Iras. Such praises of your beauty!
Cleo. Mere poetry:
Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.
Dol. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt.
Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung:
I, who have seen—had I been born a poet,
Should chuse a nobler name.
Cleo. You flatter me;
But it is your nation's vice: all of your country
Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend is like you;
I am sure he sent you not to speak these words.
Dol. No, madam; yet he sent me——
Cleo. Well, he sent you——
Dol. On a less pleasing errand.
Cleo. How! less pleasing?
Less to yourself or me?
Dol. Madam, to both;
For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.
Cleo. You, Charmion, and your fellow, stand at distance.
Hold up, my spirits! [*Aside.*]—Well, now your mournful matter,
For I am prepared, perhaps can guess it too.
Dol. I wish you would, for 'tis a thankless office
To tell ill news; and I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.
Cleo. Of all your sex,
I soonest could forgive you, if you should.
Vent. Most delicate advances! Woman! woman!
Dear, damned unconstant sex!
Cleo. In the first place,
I am to be forsaken; is it not so?
Dol. I wish I could not answer to that question.
Cleo. Then pass it over, because it troubles you;
I should have been more grieved another time.
Next, I am to lose my kingdom—Farewell, Egypt!
Yet is there any more?
Dol. Madam, I fear
Your too deep sense of grief has turned your reason.
Cleo. No, no, I am not run mad; I can bear fortune;
And love may be expelled by other love,
As poisons are by poisons.
Dol. ——You overjoy me, madam,
To find your griefs so moderately borne.
You have the worst: all are not false like him.
Cleo. No, heaven forbid they should!
Dol. Some men are constant.
Cleo. And constancy deserves reward, that is certain.
Dol. Deserves it not, but give it leave to hope.
Vent. I'll swear thou hast my leave. I have enough:
But how to manage this! Well, I'll consider.
[*Exit.*
Dol. I came prepared
To tell you heavy news; news, which I thought
Would fright the blood from your pale cheeks to hear;
But you have met it with a chearfulness,
That makes my task more easy; and my tongue,
Which on another's message was employed,
Would gladly speak its own.
Cleo. Hold, Dolabella.
First tell me, were you chosen by my lord,
Or sought you this employment?
Dol. He picked me out, and, as his bosom-friend,
He charged me with his words.
Cleo. The message then
I know was tender, and each accent smooth,
To mollify that rugged word 'Depart!'
Dol. Oh! you mistake: he chose the harshest words:
With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows,
He coined his face in the severest stamp,
And fury shook his fabric like an earthquake:
He heaved for vent, and burst, like bellowing Etna,
In sounds scarce human, 'Hence, away for ever!
'Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
'And bane of all my hopes!

[*All the time of this speech Cleopatra seems more and more concerned, till she sinks quite down.*

'Let her be driven, as far as men can think,
'From man's commerce: she'll poison to the centre.'
Cleo. Oh, I can bear no more! [*Faints.*

Dol. Help, help! Oh wretch! oh cursed, cursed wretch!
Char. Help! chafe her temples, Iras.
Iras. Bend, bend her forward quickly.
Char. Heaven be praised,
She comes again!
Cleo. Oh, let him not reproach me!
Why have you brought me back to this loathed being,
The abode of falsehood, violated vows,
And injured love! For pity let me go;
For, if there be a place of long repose,
I am sure I want it. My disdainful lord
Can never break that quiet, nor awake
The sleeping soul with hollowing in my tomb
Such words as fright her hence. Unkind! unkind!
Dol. Believe me 'tis against myself I speak; [*Kneeling.*
That sure deserves belief. I injured him;
My friend ne'er spoke these words. Oh! had you seen
How often he came back, and every time
With something more obliging and more kind
To add to what he said; what dear farewells,
How almost vanquished by his love he parted,
And leaned to what unwillingly he left:
I, traitor as I was, for love of you,
(But what can you not do, who made me false!)
I forged that lie, for whose forgiveness kneels
This self-accused, self-punished, criminal.
Cleo. With how much ease believe we what we wish!
Rise, Dolabella; if you have been guilty,
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
The advance of kindness, which I made, was feigned,
To call back fleeting love by jealousy;
But it would not last! Oh! rather let me lose,
Than so ignobly trifle with, his heart.
Dol. I find your breast fenced round from human reach,
Transparent as a rock of solid crystal,
Seen through, but never pierced. My friend, my friend!
What endless treasure hast thou thrown away,
And scattered, like an infant, in the ocean
Vain sums of wealth, which none can gather thence!
Cleo. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one, who wanders through long barren wilds,
And yet foreknows no hospitable inn
Is near to succour hunger,
Eats his fill before his painful march,
So would I feed a while my famished eyes
Before we part, for I have far to go,
If death be far, and never must return.

VENTIDIUS, *with* OCTAVIA, *behind.*

Vent. From whence you may discover—Oh, sweet, sweet!
Would you indeed! the pretty hand in earnest? [*Aside.*
Dol. I will, for this reward: [*Takes her hand.*
——Draw it not back;
'Tis all I e'er will beg.
Vent. They turn upon us.
Oct. What quick eyes has guilt!
Vent. Seem not to have observed them, and go on.

They enter.

Dol. Saw you the emperor, Ventidius?
Vent. No;
I sought him, but I heard, that he was private,
None with him but Hipparchus, his freed man.
Dol. Know you his business?
Vent. Giving him instructions
And letters to his brother, Cæsar.
Dol. Well,
He must be found. [*Exeunt Dolabella and Cleopatra.*
Oct. Most glorious impudence!
Vent. She looked, methought,
As she would say, 'Take your old man, Octavia;
Thank you, I am better here.'
Well, but what use
Make we of this discovery?
Oct. Let it die.
Vent. I pity Dolabella! but she is dangerous;
Her eyes have power beyond Thessalian charms
To draw the moon from heaven; for eloquence
The sea-green Sirens taught her voice their flattery;
And, while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
Unmarked of those, that hear: then she's so charming,
Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth:
The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles,
And with heaved hands, forgetting gravity,
They bless her wanton eyes: even I, who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold such beauty,
And, while I curse, desire it. Antony
Must needs have some remains of passion still,
Which may ferment into a worse relapse,
If now not fully cured—But see, he comes—
I know this minute
With Cæsar he is endeavouring her peace.
Oct. You have prevailed—but for a farther purpose [*Walks off.*
I'll prove how he will relish this discovery.
What, make a strumpet's peace! it swells my heart:
It must not, shall not be.
Vent. His guards appear.
Let me begin, and you shall second me.

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. Octavia, I was looking for you, my love.
What, are your letters ready? I have given
My last instructions.
Oct. Mine, my lord, are written.
Ant. Ventidius! [*Drawing him aside.*

Vent. My lord?
Ant. A word in private.
When saw you Dolabella?
Vent. Now, my lord.
He parted hence, and Cleopatra with him.
Ant. Speak softly; 'twas by my command he went,
To bear my last farewell.
Vent. It looked indeed
Like your farewell.
Ant. More softly—My farewell!
What secret meaning have you in these words,
Of 'my farewel?' He did it by my order.
Vent. Then he obeyed your order, I suppose. [*Aloud.*
You bid him do it with all gentleness,
All kindness, and all—love.
Ant. How she mourned!
The poor forsaken creature!
Vent. She took it as she ought; she bore your parting,
As she did Cæsar's, as she would another's,
Were a new love to come.
Ant. Thou dost belie her,
Most basely and maliciously belie her.
Vent. I thought not to displease you: I have done.
Oct. You seem disturbed, my lord. [*Coming up.*
Ant. A very trifle.
Retire, my love.
Vent. It was indeed a trifle.
He sent——
Ant. No more. Look how thou disobey'st me;
Thy life shall answer it. [*Angrily.*
Oct. Then 'tis no trifle.
Vent. [*To Oct.*] 'Tis less; a very nothing: you too saw it
As well as I, and therefore 'tis no secret.
Ant. She saw it!
Vent. Yes; she saw young Dolabella—
Ant. Young Dolabella!
Vent. Young? I think him young,
And handsome too; and so do others think him.
But what of that? he went by your command,
Indeed, 'tis probable, with some kind message,
For she received it graciously: She smiled;
And then he grew familiar with her hand,
Squeezed it, and worried it with ravenous kisses;
She blushed, and sighed, and smiled, and blushed again;
At last she took occasion to talk softly,
And brought her cheek up close, and leaned on his,
At which he whispered kisses back on hers;
And then she cryed aloud, 'that constancy
Should be rewarded!'—This I saw and heard.
Ant. What woman was it, whom you heard and saw
So playful with my friend?
Not Cleopatra?
Vent. Even she, my lord.
Ant. My Cleopatra!
Vent. Your Cleopatra,
Dolabella's Cleopatra,
Every man's Cleopatra.
Ant. 'Tis false.
Vent. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much used to lonely nights.
Ant. I'll think no more of it.
I know 'tis false, and see the plot betwixt you.
You need not have gone this way, Octavia;
What harms it you, that Cleopatra's just?
She's mine no more. I see and I forgive;
Urge it no farther, love.
Oct. Are you concerned,
That she's found false?
Ant. I should be, were it so;
For, though 'tis past, I would not, that the world
Should tax my former choice; that I loved one
Of so light note; but I forgive you both.
Vent. What has my age deserved, that you should think
I would abuse your ears with perjury?
If heaven be true, she's false.
Ant. Though heaven and earth
Should witness it, I'll not believe her tainted.
Vent. I'll bring you, then, a witness
From hell, to prove her so. Nay, go not back,
[*Seeing Alexas just entering, and starting back.*
For stay you must and shall.
Alex. What means my lord?
Vent. To make you do what most you hate, speak truth.
You are of Cleopatra's private counsel,
Of her bed counsel, her lascivious hours,
Are conscious of each nightly change she makes,
And watch her as Chaldeans do the moon,
Can tell what signs she passes through what day.
Alex. My noble lord!
Vent. My most illustrious pandar!
No fine set speech, no cadence, no turned periods,
But a plain homespun truth, is what I ask:
I did myself o'erhear your queen make love
To Dolabella: speak, for I will know,
By your confession, what more passed betwixt them,
How near the business draws to your employment,
And when the happy hour?
Ant. Speak truth, Alexas; whether it offend
Or please Ventidius, care not. Justify
Thy injured queen from malice: dare his worst.
Oct. [*Aside.*] See how he gives him courage, how he fears
To find her false, and shuts his eyes to truth,
Willing to be misled!
Alex. As far as love may plead for woman's frailty,
Urged by desert and greatness of the lover,
So far, divine Octavia, may my queen
Stand even excused to you for loving him,
Who is your lord; so far from brave Ventidius
May her past actions hope a fair report.

Ant. 'Tis well and truly spoken: Mark, Ventidius.
Alex. To you, most noble emperor, her strong passion
Stands not excused, but wholly justified.
Her beauty's charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe drew the distant vows
Of sighing kings, and at her feet were laid
The sceptres of the earth, exposed on heaps,
To chuse where she would reign;
She thought a Roman only could deserve her,
And, of all Romans, only Antony;
And, to be less than wife to you, disdained
Their lawful passion.
Ant. 'Tis but truth.
Alex. And yet, though love and your unmatched desert
Have drawn her from the due regard of honour,
At last heaven opened her unwilling eyes
To see the wrongs, she offered fair Octavia,
Whose holy bed she lawlessly usurped:
The sad effects of this unprosperous war
Confirmed those pious thoughts.
Vent. [*Aside.*] Oh, wheel you there?
Observe him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk substantial reason. Fear not, eunuch;
The emperor has given thee leave to speak.
Alex. Else had I never dared to offend his ears
With what the last necessity has urged
On my forsaken mistress; yet I must not
Presume to say, her heart is wholly altered.
Ant. No, dare not for thy life! I charge thee, dare not
Pronounce that fatal word!
Oct. Must I bear this? Good heaven! afford me patience! [*Aside.*
Vent. Oh, sweet eunuch! my dear half man, proceed!
Alex. Yet Dolabella
Has loved her long; he, next my godlike lord,
Deserves her best; and should she meet his passion,
Rejected, as she is, by him she loved———
Ant. Hence from my sight, for I can bear no more!
Let furies drag thee quick to hell! each torturing hand
Do thou employ till Cleopatra comes,
Then join thou too, and help to torture her!
[*Exit Alexas, thrust out by Antony.*
Oct. 'Tis not well!
Indeed, my lord, 'tis much unkind to me,
To shew this passion, this extreme concernment,
For an abandoned, faithless prostitute.
Ant. Octavia, leave me! I am much disordered!
Leave me, I say!
Oct. My lord!
Ant, I bid you leave me.
Vent. Obey him, madam; best withdraw awhile,
And see how this will work.

Oct. Wherein have I offended you, my lord,
That I am bid to leave you? am I false
Or infamous? am I a Cleopatra?
Were I she,
Base as she is, you would not bid me leave you,
But hang upon my neck, take slight excuses,
And fawn upon my falsehood.
Ant. 'Tis too much,
Too much, Octavia! I am prest with sorrows,
Too heavy to be borne, and you add more!
I would retire, and recollect what's left
Of man within, to aid me.
Oct. You would mourn
In private for your love, who has betrayed you.
You did but half return to me; your kindness
Lingered behind with her. I hear, my lord,
You make conditions for her,
And would include her treaty: wondrous proofs
Of love to me!
Ant. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turned a Dolabella too,
And let this fury loose?
Vent. Oh, be advised,
Sweet madam! and retire.
Oct. Yes, I will go, but never to return;
You shall no more be haunted with this fury.
My lord, my lord! love will not always last,
When urged with long unkindness and disdain.
Take her again, whom you prefer to me;
She stays but to be called. Poor cozened man!
Let a feigned parting give her back your heart,
Which a feigned love first got; for injured me,
Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
My duty shall be yours.
To the dear pledges of our former love
My tenderness and care shall be transferred,
And they shall cheer by turns my widowed nights.
So take my last farewell! for I despair
To have you whole, and scorn to take you half.
[*Exit.*
Vent. I combat heaven, which blasts my best designs!
My last attempt must be to win her back;
But oh! I fear in vain. [*Exit.*
Ant. Why was I framed with this plain honest heart,
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,
But bears its workings outward to the world?
I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
And forced a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood;
Octavia had believed it, and had staid.
But I am made a shallow-forded stream,
Seen to the bottom, all my clearness scorned,
And all my faults exposed.—See, where he comes,

Enter DOLABELLA.

Who has profaned the sacred name of friend,
And worn it into vileness!
With how secure a brow and specious form

He gilds the secret villain! Sure that face
Was meant for honesty, but heaven mismatched it,
And furnished treason out with nature's pomp,
To make its work more easy.
Dol. O my friend!
Ant. Well, Dolabella, you performed my message?
Dol. I did, unwillingly.
Ant. Unwillingly!
Was it so hard for you to bear our parting?
You should have wished it.
Dol. Why!
Ant. Because you love me;
And she received my message with as true,
With as unfeigned a sorrow as you brought it?
Dol. She loves you even to madness.
Ant. Oh! I know it.
You, Dolabella, do not better know
How much she loves me. And should I
Forsake this beauty, this all perfect creature?
Dol. I could not, were she mine.
Ant. And yet you first
Persuaded me. How come you altered since?
Dol. I said at first I was not fit to go:
I could not bear her sighs, and see her tears,
But pity must prevail; and so perhaps
It may again with you; for I have promised,
That she should take her last farewell; and see,
She comes to claim my word.

Enter CLEOPATRA.

Ant. False Dolabella!
Dol. What's false, my lord?
Ant. Why, Dolabella's false,
And Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.
Draw near, you well-joined wickedness, you serpents,
Whom I have in my kindly bosom warmed,
Till I am stung to death!
Dol. My lord, have I
Deserved to be thus used?
Cleo. Can heaven prepare
A newer torment? can it find a curse
Beyond our separation?
Ant. Yes, if fate
Be just, much greater: Heaven should be ingenious
In punishing such crimes. The rolling stone
And gnawing vulture were slight pains, invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripened sin
To such a monstrous growth, 'twill pose the gods
To find an equal torture. Two, two such!
Oh, there's no farther name; two such to me,
To me, who locked my soul within your breasts,
Had no desires, no joys, no life, but you;
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart: I had no use,
No fruit, of all but you: a friend and mistress
Was what the world could give. Oh, Cleopatra!
Oh, Dolabella! how could you betray
This tender heart, which, with an infant fondness,
Lay lulled betwixt your bosoms, and there slept
Secure of injured faith?
Dol. If she has wronged you,
Heaven, hell, and you, revenge it!
Ant. If she has wronged me!
Thou wouldst evade thy part of guilt: but swear
Thou lovest not her.
Dol. Not so as I love you.
Ant. Not so? Swear, swear, I say, thou dost not love her.
Dol. No more than friendship will allow.
Ant. No more!
Friendship allows thee nothing: thou art perjured—
And yet thou didst not swear thou lovest her not;
But not so much, no more. Oh, trifling hypocrite!
Who durst not own to her thou dost not love,
Nor own to me thou dost! Ventidius heard it,
Octavia saw it.
Cleo. They are enemies.
Ant. Alexas is not so; he, he confest it;
He, who next hell best knew it, he avowed it.
Why do I seek a proof beyond yourself? [*To Dol.*
You, whom I sent to bear my last farewell,
Returned to plead her stay.
Dol. What shall I answer?
If to have loved be guilt, then I have sinned;
But if to have repented of that love
Can wash away my crime, I have repented;
Yet, if I have offended past forgiveness,
Let her not suffer: she is innocent.
Cleo. Ah, what will not a woman do, who loves!
What means will she refuse to keep that heart,
Where all her joys are placed! 'Twas I encouraged,
'Twas I blew up the fire, that scorched his soul,
To make you jealous, and by that regain you:
But all in vain; I could not counterfeit:
In spite of all the dams, my love broke o'er,
And drowned my heart again: Fate took the occasion,
And thus one minute's feigning has destroyed
My whole life's truth.
Ant. Thin cobweb arts of falsehood,
Seen and broke through at first.
Dol. Forgive your mistress.
Cleo. Forgive your friend.
Ant. You have convinced yourselves;
You plead each other's cause. What witness have you,
That you but meant to raise my jealousy?
Cleo. Ourselves and heaven.
Ant. Guilt witnesses for guilt! Hence love and friendship!
You have no longer place in human breasts;
These two have driven you out: avoid my sight!
I would not kill the man, whom I have loved,
And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me!
I do not know how long I can be tame;
For, if I stay one minute more to think

How I am wronged, my justice and revenge
Will cry so loud within me, that my pity
Will not be heard for either.
Dol. Heaven has but
Our sorrow for our sins, and then delights
To pardon erring man; sweet mercy seems
Its darling attribute, which limits justice,
As if there were degrees in infinite,
And infinite would rather want perfection,
Than punish to extent.
Ant. I can forgive
A foe, but not a mistress and a friend:
Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest; and the soul resigned
Is stabbed by its own guards. I'll hear no more:
Hence from my sight for ever!
Cleo. How? for ever!
I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go for ever?
My joys, my only joys, are centred here:
What place have I to go to? my own kingdom?
That I have lost for you; or to the Romans?
They hate me for your sake: or must I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpless banished woman,
Banished for love of you, banished from you;
Ay, there's the banishment! Oh, hear me, hear me,
With strictest justice, for I beg no favour,
And, if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me!
Ant. I must not hear you;
I have a fool within me takes your part,
But honour stops my ears.
Cleo. For pity hear me!
Would you cast off a slave, who followed you,
Who crouched beneath your spurn? He has no pity!
See, if he gives one tear to my departure,
One look, one kind farewell: oh, iron heart!
Let all the gods look down and judge betwixt us,
If he did ever love!
Ant. No more. Alexas!
Dol. A perjured villain!
Ant. to Cleo. Your Alexas! yours!
Cleo. Oh, 'twas his plot; his ruinous design
To engage you in my love by jealousy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him speak.
Ant. I have, I have.
Cleo. And if he clear me not—
Ant. Your creature! one, who hangs upon your smiles,
Watches your eye, to say or unsay
Whate'er you please. I am not to be moved.
Cleo. Then must we part? farewell, my cruel lord!
The appearance is against me; and I go,
Unjustified, for ever from your sight.
How I have loved, you know; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know, myself:
I love you more, even now you are unkind,
Than when you loved me most; so well, so truly,
I'll never strive against, but die pleased
To think you once were mine.
Ant. Good Heaven! they weep at parting.
Must I weep too? that calls them innocent.
I must not weep; and yet I must, to think,
That I must not forgive——
Live, but live wretched; 'tis but just you should,
Who made me so: live from each other's sight;
Let me not hear you meet. Set all the earth
And all the seas betwixt your sundered loves;
View nothing common but the sun and skies.
Now all take several ways,
And each your own sad fate with mine deplore,
That you were false, and I could trust no more.
[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Temple.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

Char. Be just, heaven! such virtue, punished thus,
Will make us think, that chance rules all above,
And shuffles, with a random hand, the lots,
Which man is forced to draw.
Cleo. I could tear out these eyes, that gained his heart,
And had not power to keep it. Oh, the curse
Of doating on, even when I find it dotage!
Bear witness, gods! you heard him bid me go;
You, whom he mocked, with imprecating vows,
Of promised faith—I'll die, I will not bear it.
You may hold me——
[*She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her.*
But I can keep my breath; I can die inward,
And choke this love.

Enter ALEXAS.

Iras. Help, oh, Alexas, help!
The queen grows desperate, her soul struggles in her,
With all the agonies of love and rage,
And strives to force its passage.
Cleo. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor!—Oh,
Oh for a little breath to vent my rage!
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.
Alex. Yes, I deserve it for my ill timed truth.
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling majesty,
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,
Thus to be crushed and pounded into atoms,
By its o'erwhelming weight? 'Tis too presuming
For subjects to preserve that wilful power,
Which courts its own destruction.

Cleo. I would reason
More calmly with you. Did you not o'errule
And force my plain, direct, and open love
Into these crooked paths of jealousy?
Now what's the event? Octavia is removed,
But Cleopatra banished. Thou, thou villain,
Hast pushed my boat to open sea, to prove,
At my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back.
It cannot be; I am lost too far; I am ruined:
Hence! thou impostor, traitor, monster, devil—
I can no more: thou and my griefs have sunk
Me down so low, that I want voice to curse thee.
Alex. Suppose some ship-wrecked seaman near the shore,
Dropping and faint with climbing up the cliff,
If, from above, some charitable hand
Pull him to safety, hazarding himself
To draw the other's weight, would he look back
And curse him for his pains? The case is yours;
But one step more, and you have gained the height.
Cleo. Sunk, never more to rise.
Alex. Octavia's gone, and Dolabella banished.
Believe me, madam, Antony is yours:
His heart was never lost, but started off
To jealousy, love's last retreat, and covert,
Where it lies hid in shades, watchful in silence,
And listening for the sound, that calls it back.
Some other, any man, 'tis so advanced,
May perfect this unfinished work, which I
(Unhappy only to myself) have left
So easy to his hand.
Cleo. Look well thou dost, else——
Alex. Else what your silence threatens—Antony
Is mounted up the Pharos, from whose turret
He stands surveying our Egyptian gallies
Engaged with Cæsar's fleet: now death or conquest!
If the first happen, fate acquits my promise;
If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.
[*A distant shout within.*
Char. Have comfort, madam: did you mark that shout?
[*Second shout nearer.*
Iras. Hark! they redouble it.
Alex. 'Tis from the port;
The loudness shows it near. Good news, kind Heavens!
Cleo. Osiris make it so!

Enter SERAPION.

Ser. Where, where's the queen?
Alex. How frightfully the holy coward stares!
As if not yet recovered of the assault,
When all his gods, and what's more dear to him,
His offerings, were at stake.
Ser. Oh, horror, horror!
Egypt has been; the latest hour is come.
The queen of nations from her ancient seat
Is sunk for ever in the dark abyss:
Time has unrolled her glories to the last,
And now closed up the volume.
Cleo. Be more plain!
Say whence thou camest! though Fate is in thy face,
Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
And threatens ere thou speakest.
Ser. I came from Pharos,
From viewing (spare me, and imagine it)
Our land's last hope, your navy——
Cleo. Vanquished?
Ser. No;
They fought not.
Cleo. Then they fled.
Ser. Nor that: I saw,
With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
Row out, and thrice he waved his hand on high,
And thrice, with cheerful cries, they shouted back:
'Twas then false Fortune, like a fawning strumpet,
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting,
And flatter to the last: the well-timed oars
Now dipped from every bark, now smoothly run
To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met,
But not as foes. In few, we saw their caps
On either side thrown up: the Egyptian gallies,
Received like friends, past through, and fell behind
The Roman rear; and now they all come forward,
And ride within the port.
Cleo. Enough, Serapion;
I have heard my doom. This needed not, you gods!
When I lost Antony, your work was done.
'Tis but superfluous malice. Where's my lord?
How bears he this last blow?
Ser. His fury cannot be expressed by words:
Thrice he attempted headlong to have fallen
Full on his foes, and aimed at Cæsar's galley:
Withheld, he raves on you, cries he's betrayed.
Should he now find you——
Alex. Shun him, seek your safety,
Till you can clear your innocence.
Cleo. I'll stay.
Alex. You must not; haste you to the monument,
While I make speed to Cæsar.
Cleo. Cæsar! no;
I have no business with him.
Alex. I can work him
To spare your life, and let this madman perish.
Cleo. Base fawning wretch! wouldst thou betray him too?
Hence from my sight! I will not hear a traitor:
'Twas thy design brought all this ruin on us.
Serapion, thou art honest; counsel me:
But haste, each moment's precious.
Ser. Retire; you must not see Antony.
He, who began this mischief,
'Tis just he tempt the danger: let him clear you;
And since he offered you his servile tongue
To gain a poor precarious life from Cæsar,
Let him expose that fawning eloquence,
And speak to Antony.

Alex. Oh heavens! I dare not:
I meet my certain death.
Cleo. Slave, thou deservest it.
Not that I fear my lord will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he banished me,
And thought me false, he scorned to take my life:
But I'll be justified, and then die with him.
Alex. Oh! pity me, and let me follow you!
Cleo. To death, if thou stir hence. Speak, if thou canst,
Now for thy life, which basely thou wouldst save,
While mine I prize at this. Come, good Serapion.
[*Exeunt Cleo. Ser. Char. and Iras.*
Alex. Oh, that I less could fear to lose this being,
Which, like a snow-ball in my coward hand,
The more 'tis grasped the faster melts away.
Poor reason! what a wretched aid art thou!
For still, in spite of thee,
These two long lovers, soul and body, dread
Their final separation. Let me think;
What can I say to save myself from death?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.
Ant. Which way? where? [*Within.*
Vent. This leads to the monument. [*Within.*
Alex. Ah me! I hear him: yet I'm unprepared:
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I so oft have raised,
Forsakes me at my need. I dare not stay,
Yet cannot go far hence. [*Exit.*

Enter Antony *and* Ventidius.

Ant. Oh, happy Cæsar! thou hast men to lead:
Think not 'tis thou hast conquered Antony,
But Rome has conquered Egypt. I'm betrayed.
Vent. Curse on this treacherous train!
Their soil and heaven infect them all with baseness,
And their young souls come tainted to the world,
With the first breath they draw.
Ant. The original villain sure no god created;
He was a bastard of the Sun by Nile;
Aped into man with all his mother's mud
Crusted about his soul.
Vent. The nation is
One universal traitor, and their queen
The very spirit and extract of them all.
Ant. Is there yet left
A possibility of aid and valour?
Is there one god unsworn to my destruction,
The least unmortgaged hope? for, if there be,
Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
Of such a boy as Cæsar.
The world's one half is yet in Antony,
And from each limb of it, that's hew'd away,
The soul comes back to me.
Vent. There yet remain
Three legions in the town; the last assault
Lopt off the rest. If death be your design,
As I must wish it now, these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial.
Ant. They're enough.
We'll not divide our stars, but side by side
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts: so every death
Thou givest, I'll take on me as a just debt,
And pay thee back a soul.
Vent. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,
I am so pleased with this brave Roman fate,
That I would not be Cæsar to outlive you!
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,
I shall be shown to all the ethereal crowd,
'Lo! this is he, who died with Antony!'
Ant. Who knows but we may pierce through all their troops,
And reach my veterans yet? 'Tis worth the tempting
To o'erleap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wandering destinies behind.

Enter Alexas, *trembling.*

Vent. See, see that villain!
See Cleopatra stamped upon that face,
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood!
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes!
How he has set his countenance for deceit,
And promises a lie before he speaks!
Let me dispatch him first. [*Drawing.*
Alex. Oh, spare me, spare me!
Ant. Hold; he's not worth your killing. On thy life,
(Which thou mayest keep, because I scorn to take it)
No syllable to justify thy queen;
Save thy base tongue its office.
Alex. Sir, she's gone
Where she shall never be molested more,
By love or you.
Ant. Fled to her Dolabella!
Die, traitor! I revoke my promise; die!
[*Going to kill him.*
Alex. Oh, hold; she is not fled.
Ant. She is; my eyes
Are open to her falsehood. My whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship;
But now I wake, I'm like a merchant roused
From soft repose, to see his vessel sinking
And all his wealth cast o'er. Ungrateful woman!
Who followed me but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatteries to my morning wake;
But now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
And seeks the spring of Cæsar.
Alex. Think not so;
Her fortunes have in all things mixed with yours:
Had she betrayed her naval force to Rome,
How easily might she have gone to Cæsar;
Secure by such a bribe?
Vent. She sent it first,
To be more welcome after.

Ant. 'Tis too plain,
Else would she have appeared to clear herself.
Alex. Too fatally she has; she could not bear
To be accused by you, but shut herself
Within her monument, looked down and sighed,
While from her unchanged face the silent tears
Dropt, as they had not leave, but stole their parting.
Some undistinguished words she inly murmured;
At last she raised her eyes, and with such looks
As dying Lucrece cast——
Ant. My heart forebodes——
Vent. All for the best. Go on.
Alex. She snatched her poniard,
And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
Plunged it within her breast; then turned to me;
'Go, bear my lord,' said she, 'my last farewell,
And ask him if he yet suspect my faith.'
More she was saying, but death rushed betwixt.
She half pronounced your name with her last breath,
And buried half within her.
Vent. Heaven be praised!
Ant. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love!
And art thou dead?
Oh, those two words! their sound should be divided.
Hadst thou been false and died, or hadst thou lived
And hadst been true—But innocence and death!
This shows not well above. Then what am I?
The murderer of this truth, this innocence!
Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt!
Vent. Is it come to this? The gods have been so gracious,
And thus you thank them for it.
Ant. [*To Alex.*] Why stay'st thou here?
Is it for thee to spy upon my soul,
And see its inward mourning? Get thee hence!
Thou art not worthy to behold what now
Becomes a Roman emperor to perform.
Alex. He loves her still; [*Aside.*
His grief betrays it. Good! the joy to find
She's yet alive completes the reconcilement:
I have saved myself and her. But oh! the Romans!
Fate comes too fast upon my wit,
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double.
[*Exit.*
Vent. Would she had died a little sooner though,
Before Octavia went; you might have treated;
Now 'twill look tame, and would not be received.
Come, come yourself, and let's die warm together.
Ant. I will not fight; there's no more work for war;
The business of my angry hours is done.
Vent. Cæsar is at your gate.
Ant. Why, let him enter:
He's welcome now.
Vent. What lethargy has crept into your soul?
Ant. 'Tis but a scorn of life, and just desire
To free myself from bondage.
Vent. Do it bravely.
Ant. I will, but not by fighting. Oh, Ventidius,
What should I fight for now? my queen is dead:
I was but great for her: my power, my empire,
Were but my merchandise to buy her love,
And conquered kings my factors. Now she's dead,
Let Cæsar take the world—
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone,
Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous,
For all the bribes of life are gone away.
Vent. Would you be taken?
Ant. Yes, I would be taken;
But as a Roman ought; dead, my Ventidius—
For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach,
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know, whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense,
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod,
Till it was dinted inwards. Let him walk
Alone upon it: I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out, and the world stands before me,
Like a black desert at the approach of night:
I'll lay me down and stray no farther on.
Vent. I could be grieved,
But that I'll not outlive you. Chuse your death,
For I have seen him in such various shapes,
I care not which I take: I'm only troubled
The life I bear is worn to such a rag,
'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish indeed
We threw it from us with a better grace,
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at least thrust out our paws, and wound
The hunters, that enclose us.
Ant. I have thought on it;
Ventidius, you must live.
Vent. I must not, sir.
Ant. Wilt thou not live to speak some good of me?
To stand by my fair fame, and guard the approaches
From the ill tongues of men?
Vent. Who shall guard mine
For living after you?
Ant. Say, I command it.
Vent. If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves,
And need no living witness.
Ant. Thou hast loved me,
And fain I would reward thee. I must die;
Kill me, and take the merit of my death,
To make thee friends with Cæsar.
Vent. Thank your kindness!
You said I loved you, and in recompense
You bid me turn a traitor! Did I think

You would have used me thus! that I should die
With a hard thought of you!
Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out.
I have thought better; do not deny me twice.
Vent. By heaven I will not!
Let it not be to outlive you.
Ant. Kill me first,
And then die thou; for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend before thyself.
Vent. Give me your hand—
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor! [*Embrace.*
Methinks that word's too cold to be my last:
Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
That's all——
I will not make a business of a trifle—
And yet I cannot look on you and kill you:
Pray turn your face.
Ant. I do: strike home; be sure.
Vent. Home as my sword will reach. [*Kills himself.*
Ant. Oh, thou mistakest!
That wound was none of thine; give it me back:
Thou robbest me of my death.
Vent. I do indeed;
But think, 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
If that may plead my pardon. And you, gods!
Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjured,
Rather than kill my friend. [*Dies.*
Ant. Farewell! ever my leader, even in death!
My queen and thou have got the start of me,
And I'm the lag of honour.—Gone so soon!
Is death no more! He used him carelessly,
With a familiar kindness; ere he knocked,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,
As who should say, you're welcome at all hours,
A friend need give no warning—Books had spoiled him,
For all the learned are cowards by profession.
'Tis not worth
My further thought; for death, for aught I know,
Is but to think no more. Here's to be satisfied.
[*Falls on his sword.*
I have missed my heart—Oh, unperforming hand!
Thou never couldst have erred in a worse time.
My fortune jades me to the last; and death,
Like a great man, takes state, and makes me wait
For my admittance— [*Trampling within.*
Some, perhaps, from Cæsar!
If he should find me living, and suspect,
That I played booty with my life! I'll mend
My work ere they can reach me.
[*Rises upon his knees.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

Cleo. Where is my lord? where is he?
Char. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.
Cleo. My fears were prophets! I am come too late!
Oh, that accursed Alexas! [*Runs to him.*
Ant. Art thou living?
Or am I dead before I knew, and thou
The first kind ghost, that meets me?
Cleo. Help me seat him!
Send quickly, send for help!
[*They place him in a chair.*
Ant. I am answered:
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra!
I'll make the most I can of life, to stay
A moment more with thee.
Cleo. How is it with you?
Ant. 'Tis, as with a man
Removing in a hurry; all packed up
But one dear jewel, that his haste forgot,
And he for that returns upon the spur;
So I come back for thee.
Cleo. Too long, ye heavens! you have been cruel to me!
Oh, now be kind, and give me back
His fleeting life!
Ant. It will not be, my love!
I keep my soul by force.
Say but thou art not false!
Cleo. 'Tis now too late
To say I'm true; I'll prove it and die with you.
Unknown to me Alexas feigned my death,
Which, when I knew, I hasted to prevent
This fatal consequence. My fleet betrayed
Both you and me.
Ant. And Dolabella——
Cleo. Scarce esteemed before he loved, but hated now.
Ant. Enough! my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st, thou wilt come after: I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou say'st,
That we may part more kindly.
Cleo. I will come;
Doubt not, my life! I'll come, and quickly too!
Cæsar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.
Ant. But grieve not, while thou stayest,
My last disastrous times!
Think we have had a clear and glorious day,
And heaven did kindly to delay the storm,
Just till our close of evening. Ten years love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To the utmost joys! What ages have we lived!
And now to die each other's! and so dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,
Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.
Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours
For your unkindness, and not one for love!
Ant. No, not a minute—this one kiss—more worth
Than all I leave to Cæsar.— [*Dies.*

Cleo. Oh, tell me so again!
And take ten thousand kisses for that word—
My lord! my lord! speak, if you yet have being!
Sign to me if you cannot speak! or cast
One look! do any thing, that shows you live!
Iras. He is gone too far to hear you,
And this, you see, a lump of senseless clay,
The leavings of a soul.
Char. Remember, madam,
He charged you not to grieve.
Cleo. And I'll obey him.
I have not loved a Roman not to know
What should become his wife—his wife, my Charmion!
For 'tis to that high title I aspire;
And now I'll not die less. Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead: my noble fate
Shall knit our spousals with a tie, too strong
For Roman laws to break.
Iras. Will you then die?
Cleo. Why shouldst thou make that question?
Fly both, and bring the cure of all our ills.
Iras. Cæsar is merciful.—
Cleo. Let him be so
To those, that want his mercy: My poor lord
Made no such covenant with him to spare me,
When he was dead. Yield me to Cæsar's pride!
What! to be led in triumph through the streets,
A spectacle to base plebeian eyes,
While some dejected friend of Antony's,
Close in a corner, shakes his head, and mutters
A secret curse on her, who ruined him!
I'll none of that.
Char. Whatever you resolve,
I'll follow, even to death.
Iras. I only feared
For you, but more should fear to live without you.
Cleo. Why, now 'tis as it should be. Quick, my friends,
Dispatch! ere this the town's in Cæsar's hands:
My lord looks down concerned, and fears my stay,
Lest I should be surprised:
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels;
With them the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him, who now lies dead:
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.
Iras. The aspicks, madam?
Cleo. Must I bid you twice?
[*Ex. Char. and Iras.*
'Tis sweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To rush into the dark abode of death
And seize him first! If he be like my love,
He is not frightful sure!
We are now alone, in secrecy and silence,
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale cold lips—Octavia does not see me;
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus,
Than see him in her arms!—O welcome, welcome!

Enter CHARMION *and* IRAS, *with the aspicks, &c.*

Char. What must be done?
Cleo. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it must be decent. First, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head: he fell not basely,
Nor left his shield behind him. Only thou
Couldst triumph o'er thyself, and thou alone
Wert worthy so to triumph.
Char. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?
Cleo. Dull, that thou art! why, 'tis to meet my love,
As when I saw him first on Cydno's bank,
All sparkling like a goddess; so adorned,
I'll find him once again; my second spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste, both,
And dress the bride of Antony!
Char. 'Tis done.
Cleo. Now set me by my lord; I claim this place,
For I must conquer Cæsar, too, like him,
And win my share of the world. Hail, you dear relicks
Of my immortal love!
Oh, let no impious hand remove you hence,
But rest for ever here! let Egypt give
His death that peace, which it denied his life!
Reach me the casket.
Iras. Underneath the fruit the aspick lies.
Cleo. Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
[*Putting aside the leaves.*
Thou best of thieves! who with an easy key
Dost open life, and, unperceived by us,
Even steals us from ourselves, discharging so
Death's dreadful office better than himself,
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
That Death stands by, deceived by his own image,
And thinks himself but sleep.
Ser. The queen, where is she? [*Within.*
The town is yielded, Cæsar's at the gates.
Cleo. He comes too late to invade the rights of death.
Haste, haste, my friend, and rouse the serpent's fury.
[*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*
Coward flesh——
Wouldst thou conspire with Cæsar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to it,
And not be sent by him,
And bring myself, my soul, to Antony.
[*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody.*
Take hence: the work is done!
Ser. Break ope the door, [*Within.*
And guard the traitor well.
Char. The next is ours.
Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress.
[*They apply the aspicks.*

Cleo. Already, death, I feel thee in my veins;
I go with such a will to find my lord,
That we shall quickly meet.
A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,
And now 'tis at my head: my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vanished in a mist!
Where shall I find him, where? oh! turn me to him,
And lay me on his breast!—Cæsar, thy worst!
Now part us if thou canst. [*Dies.*

[*Iras sinks down at her feet and dies, Charmion stands behind her chair as dressing her head.*

Enter SERAPION, *two Priests,* ALEXAS, *bound, and Egyptians.*

2 *Priest.* Behold, Serapion, what havoc death has made!

Ser. 'Twas what I feared.
Charmion, is this well done?

Char. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a queen, the last
Of her great race. I follow her. [*Sinks down. Dies.*

Alex. 'Tis true,
She has done well: much better thus to die,
Than live to make a holiday in Rome.

Ser. See how the lovers lie in state together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind!
The impression of a smile, left in her face,
Shows she died pleased with him, for whom she lived,
And went to charm him in another world.
Cæsar's just entering; grief has now no leisure.
Secure that villain, as our pledge of safety,
To grace the imperial triumph. Sleep, blest pair!
Secure from human chance, long ages out,
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb:
And fame to late posterity shall tell,
No lovers lived so great, or died so well.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

ORPHAN;

OR

THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

BY

OTWAY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ACASTO, *a nobleman retired from the court, and living privately in the country.*
CASTALIO, } *his sons.*
POLYDORE, }
CHAMONT, *a young soldier of fortune, brother to Monimia.*
ERNESTO.
PAULINO.
Page.
Chaplain.
Servant.

WOMEN.

MONIMIA, *the Orphan, left under the guardianship of old Acasto.*
SERINA, *Acasto's daughter.*
FLORELLA, *Monimia's woman.*

Scene—Bohemia.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter PAULINO *and* ERNESTO.

Paul. 'Tis strange, Ernesto, this severity
Should still reign powerful in Acasto's mind,
To hate the court, where he was bred and lived,
All honours heaped on him, that power could give.
Ern. 'Tis true, he hither came a private gentleman,
But young and brave, and of a family
Ancient and noble, as the empire holds.
The honours he has gained are justly his;
He purchased them in war: thrice has he led
An army 'gainst the rebels, and as often
Returned with victory. The world has not
A truer soldier, or a better subject.
Paul. It was his virtue at first made me serve him;
He is the best of masters and of friends:
I know he has lately been invited thither,
Yet still he keeps his stubborn purpose; cries
He is old, and willingly would be at rest.
I doubt there's deep resentment in his mind,
For the late slight his honour suffered there.
Ern. Has he not reason? When, for what he had borne,
Long, hard, and painful toil, he might have claimed
Places in honour, and employment high;
A huffing, shining, flattering, cringing coward,
A canker-worm of peace, was raised above him.
Paul. Yet still he holds just value for the king,
Nor ever names him but with highest reverence.
'Tis noble that.

Ern. Oh! I have heard him wanton in his praise,
Speak things of him might charm the ears of envy.
Paul. Oh, may he live, till Nature's self grows old,
And from her womb no more can bless the earth!
For, when he dies, farewell all honour, bounty,
All generous encouragement of arts;
For Charity herself becomes a widow.
Ern. No; he has two sons, that were ordained to be
As well his virtues' as his fortune's heirs.
Paul. They're both of nature mild, and full of sweetness;
They came twins from the womb, and still they live,
As if they would go twins, too, to the grave:
Neither has any thing he calls his own,
But of each other's joys, as griefs, partaking;
So very honestly, so well they love,
As they were only for each other born.
Ern. Never was parent in an offspring happier;
He has a daughter too, whose blooming age
Promises goodness equal to her beauty.
Paul. And as there is a friendship 'twixt the brethren,
So has her infant nature chosen too
A faithful partner of her thoughts and wishes,
And kind companion of her harmless pleasures.
Ern. You mean the beauteous orphan, fair Monimia.
Paul. The same, the daughter of the brave Chamont;
He was our lord's companion in the wars;
Where such a wondrous friendship grew between them,
As only death could end. Chamont's estate
Was ruined in our late and civil discords;
Therefore, unable to advance her fortune,
He left his daughter to our master's care;
To such a care, as she scarce lost her father.
Ern. Her brother to the emperor's wars went early,
To seek a fortune, or a noble fate;
Whence he, with honour, is expected back,
And mighty marks of that great prince's favour.
Paul. Our master never would permit his sons
To launch for fortune in the uncertain world;
But warns them to avoid both courts and camps,
Where dilatory Fortune plays the jilt
With the brave, noble, honest, gallant man,
To throw herself away on fools and knaves.
Ern. They both have forward, generous, active spirits.
'Tis daily their petition to their father,
To send them forth where glory's to be gotten:
They cry, they're weary of their lazy home,
Restless to do something, that fame may talk of.
To-day they chased the boar, and near this time
Should be returned.
Paul. Oh, that's a royal sport!
We yet may see the old man in a morning,
Lusty as health, come ruddy to the field,
And there pursue the chase, as if he meant
To o'ertake time, and bring back youth again.
Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Garden.*

Enter Castalio, Polydore, *and Page.*

Cast. Polydore, our sport
Has been to-day much better for the danger;
When, on the brink, the foaming boar I met,
And in his side thought to have lodged my spear,
The desperate savage rushed within my force,
And bore me headlong with him down the rock.
Pol. But then——
Cast. Ay, then, my brother, my friend, Polydore,
Like Perseus mounted on his winged steed,
Came on, and down the dangerous precipice leap'd,
To save Castalio. 'Twas a godlike act!
Pol. But, when I came, I found you conqueror.
Oh, my heart danced to see your danger past!
The heat and fury of the chase was cold,
And I had nothing in my mind but joy.
Cast. So, Polydore, methinks, we might in war
Rush on together; thou shouldst be my guard,
And I be thine; what is it could hurt us then?
Now half the youth of Europe are in arms,
How fulsome must it be to stay behind,
And die of rank diseases here at home?
Pol. No! let me purchase in my youth renown,
To make me loved and valued, when I am old;
I would be busy in the world, and learn,
Not like a coarse and useless dunghill weed,
Fixed to one spot, and rot just as I grow.
Cast. Our father
Has taken himself a surfeit of the world,
And cries, 'It is not safe that we should taste it.'
I own I have duty very powerful in me;
And though I'd hazard all to raise my name,
Yet he's so tender, and so good a father,
I could not do a thing to cross his will.
Pol. Castalio, I have doubts within my heart,
Which you, and only you, can satisfy.
Will you be free and candid to your friend?
Cast. Have I a thought my Polydore should not know?
What can this mean?
Pol. Nay, I'll conjure you too;
By all the strictest bonds of faithful friendship,
To shew your heart as naked in this point,
As you would purge you of your sins to heaven.
Cast. I will.
Pol. And should I chance to touch it nearly, bear it
With all the sufferance of a tender friend.
Cast. As calmly as the wounded patient bears
The artist's hand, that ministers his cure.
Pol. That's kindly said. You know our father's ward,

The fair Monimia. Is your heart at peace?
Is it so guarded, that you could not love her?
Cast. Suppose I should?
Pol. Suppose you should not, brother?
Cast. You'd say, I must not.
Pol. That would sound too roughly
'Twixt friends and brothers, as we two are.
Cast. Is love a fault?
Pol. In one of us it may be.
What if I love her?
Cast. Then I must inform you.
I loved her first, and cannot quit the claim,
But will preserve the birth-right of my passion.
Pol. You will?
Cast. I will.
Pol. No more, I've done.
Cast. Why not?
Pol. I told you I had done:
But you, Castalio, would dispute it.
Cast. No;
Not with my Polydore; though I must own
My nature obstinate, and void of sufferance:
Love reigns a very tyrant in my heart,
Attended on his throne by all his guards
Of furious wishes, fears, and nice suspicions.
I could not bear a rival in my friendship,
I am so much in love, and fond of thee.
Pol. Yet you will break this friendship.
Cast. Not for crowns.
Pol. But for a toy you would, a woman's toy;
Unjust Castalio!
Cast. Prithee, where's my fault?
Pol. You love Monimia.
Cast. Yes.
Pol. And you would kill me,
If I'm your rival.
Cast. No; sure we are such friends,
So much one man, that our affections, too,
Must be united, and the same as we are.
Pol. I dost upon Monimia.
Cast. Love her still;
Win and enjoy her.
Pol. Both of us cannot.
Cast. No matter
Whose chance it prove; but let's not quarrel for it.
Pol. You would not wed Monimia, would you?
Cast. Wed her!
No; were she all desire could wish, as fair
As would the vainest of her sex be thought,
With wealth beyond what woman's pride could waste,
She should not cheat me of my freedom. Marry!
When I am old, and weary of the world,
I may grow desperate,
And take a wife to mortify withal.
Pol. It is an elder brother's duty so
To propagate his family and name:
You would not have yours die and buried with you?
Cast. Mere vanity, and silly dotage all.
No, let me live at large, and when I die——
Pol. Who shall possess the estate you leave?
Cast. My friend,
If he survives me; if not, my king,
Who may bestow it again on some brave man,
Whose honesty and services deserve one.
Pol. 'Tis kindly offered.
Cast. By yon heaven, I love
My Polydore beyond all worldly joys;
And would not shock his quiet, to be blest
With greater happiness than man e'er tasted.
Pol. And by that heaven, eternally I swear,
To keep the kind Castalio in my heart.
Whose shall Monimia be?
Cast. No matter whose.
Pol. Were you not with her privately last night?
Cast. I was, and should have met her here again;
But the opportunity shall now be thine;
Myself will bring thee to the scene of love:
But have a care, by friendship I conjure thee,
That no false play be offered to thy brother.
Urge all thy powers to make thy passion prosper:
But wrong not mine.
Pol. Heaven blast me, if I do.
Cast. If it prove thy fortune, Polydore, to conquer,
(For thou hast all the arts of soft persuasion)
Trust me, and let me know thy love's success,
That I may ever after stifle mine.
Pol. Though she be dearer to my soul than rest
To weary pilgrims, or to misers gold,
To great men power, or wealthy cities pride,
Rather than wrong Castalio, I'd forget her.
For if ye, powers, have happiness in store,
When ye would shower down joys on Polydore,
In one great blessing all your bounty send,
That I may never lose so dear a friend.

[*Exeunt Castalio and Polydore.*

Enter MONIMIA.

Mon. So soon returned from hunting? This fair day
Seems as if sent to invite the world abroad.
Passed not Castalio and Polydore this way?
Page. Madam, just now.
Mon. Sure some ill fate's upon me.
Distrust and heaviness sit round my heart,
And apprehension shocks my timorous soul.
Why was not I laid in my peaceful grave
With my poor parents, and at rest as they are?
Instead of that, I'm wandering into cares.
Castalio! Oh, Castalio! thou hast caught
My foolish heart; and, like a tender child,
That trusts his play-thing to another hand,
I fear its harm, and fain would have it back.
Come near, Cordelio. I must chide you, sir.
Page. Why, madam, have I done you any wrong?

Mon. I never see you now; you have been kinder,
Sat by my bed, and sung me pretty songs;
Perhaps I've been ungrateful. Here's money for you:
Will you oblige me? Shall I see you oftener?
Page. Madam, I'd serve you with my soul:
But in the morning when you call me to you,
As by your bed I stand, and tell you stories,
I am ashamed to see your swelling breasts,
It makes me blush, they are so very white.
Mon. Oh, men! for flattery and deceit renowned!
Thus, when ye are young, ye learn it all, like him,
Till as your years increase, that strengthens too,
To undo poor maids, and make our ruin easy.
Tell me, Cordelio, for thou oft hast heard
Their friendly converse, and their bosom secrets;
Sometimes, at least, have they not talked of me?
Page. Oh, madam, very wickedly they have talked!
But I am afraid to name it; for, they say,
Boys must be whipped, that tell their masters' secrets.
Mon. Fear not, Cordelio; it shall ne'er be known;
For I'll preserve the secret as 'twere mine.
Polydore cannot be so kind as I.
I'll furnish thee with all thy harmless sports,
With pretty toys, and thou shalt be my page.
Page. And truly, madam, I had rather be so.
Methinks you love me better than my lord;
For he was never half so kind as you are.
What must I do?
Mon. Inform me how thou hast heard
Castalio, and his brother, use my name.
Page. With all the tenderness of love;
You were the subject of their last discourse.
At first I thought it would have fatal proved;
But as the one grew hot, the other cooled,
And yielded to the frailty of his friend;
At last, after much struggling, 'twas resolved——
Mon. What, good Cordelio?
Page. Not to quarrel for you.
Mon. I would not have them; by my dearest hope,
I would not be the argument of strife.
But surely my Castalio wont forsake me,
And make a mockery of my easy love.
Went they together?
Page. Yes, to seek you, madam.
Castalio promised Polydore to bring him
Where he alone might meet you,
And fairly try the fortune of his wishes.
Mon. Am I then grown so cheap, just to be made
A common stake, a prize for love in jest?
Was not Castalio very loth to yield it?
Or was it Polydore's unruly passion,
That heightened the debate?
Page. The fault was Polydore's.
Castalio played with love, and smiling shewed
The pleasure, not the pangs of his desire.
He said, no woman's smiles should buy his freedom;
And marriage is a mortifying thing.
Mon. Then I am ruined! If Castalio's false,
Where is there faith and honour to be found?
Ye gods, that guard the innocent, and guide
The weak, protect, and take me to your care.
Oh, but I love him! There's the rock will wreck me!
Why was I made with all my sex's softness,
Yet want the cunning to conceal its follies?
I'll see Castalio, tax him with his falsehoods,
Be a true woman, rail, protest my wrongs;
Resolve to hate him, and yet love him still.

Enter CASTALIO *and* POLYDORE.

He comes, the conqueror comes! lie still, my heart,
And learn to bear thy injuries with scorn.
Cast. Madam, my brother begs he may have leave
To tell you something, that concerns you nearly.
I leave you, as becomes me, and withdraw.
Mon. My lord, Castalio!
Cast. Madam?
Mon. Have you purposed
To abuse me palpably? What means this usage?
Why am I left with Polydore alone?
Cast. He best can tell you. Business of importance
Calls me away; I must attend my father.
Mon. Will you then leave me thus?
Cast. But for a moment.
Mon. It has been otherwise; the time has been,
When business might have staid, and I been heard.
Cast. I could for ever hear thee; but this time
Matters of such odd circumstances press me,
That I must go—— [*Exit.*
Mon. Then go, and, if it be possible, for ever.
Well, my lord Polydore, I guess your business,
And read the ill-natured purpose in your eyes.
Pol. If to desire you more than misers wealth,
Or dying men an hour of added life;
If softest wishes, and a heart more true
Than ever suffered yet for love disdained,
Speak an ill nature, you accuse me justly.
Mon. Talk not of love, my lord! I must not hear it.
Pol. Who can behold such beauty and be silent?
Desire first taught us words. Man, when created,
At first alone long wandered up and down,
Forlorn, and silent as his vassal-beasts;
But when a heaven-born maid, like you, appeared,
Strange pleasures filled his eyes, and fired his heart,
Unloosed his tongue, and his first talk was love.

Mon. The first created pair indeed were blessed;
They were the only objects of each other,
Therefore he courted her, and her alone:
But in this peopled world of beauty, where
There's roving room, where you may court, and ruin
A thousand more, why need you talk to me?
Pol. Oh! I could talk to thee for ever. Thus
Eternally admiring, fix and gaze
On those dear eyes; for every glance they send
Darts through my soul, and almost gives enjoyment.
Mon. How can you labour thus for my undoing?
I must confess, indeed, I owe you more
Than ever I can hope or think to pay.
There always was a friendship 'twixt our families;
And therefore, when my tender parents died,
Whose ruined fortunes too expired with them,
Your father's pity and his bounty took me,
A poor and helpless orphan, to his care.
Pol. 'Twas heaven ordained it so, to make me happy.
Hence with this peevish virtue! 'tis a cheat,
And those, who taught it first, were hypocrites.
Come, these soft tender limbs were made for yielding.
Mon. Here on my knees, by Heaven's blest power I swear, [*Kneels.*
If you persist, I ne'er henceforth will see you,
But rather wander through the world a beggar,
And live on sordid scraps at proud men's doors;
For though to fortune lost, I'll still inherit
My mother's virtues, and my father's honour.
Pol. Intolerable vanity! your sex
Was never in the right! ye are always false
Or silly; even your dresses are not more
Fantastic than your appetites; you think
Of nothing twice. Opinion you have none.
To-day ye are nice, to-morrow none so free;
Now smile, then frown; now sorrowful, then glad;
Now pleased, now not; and all you know not why!
Virtue you affect; inconstancy's your practice;
And when your loose desires once get dominion,
No hungry churl feeds coarser at a feast;
Every rank fool goes down.
Mon. Indeed, my lord,
I own my sex's follies; I have them all.
And, to avoid its fault, must fly from you.
Therefore, believe me, could you raise me high
As most fantastic woman's wish could reach,
And lay all nature's riches at my feet;
I'd rather run a savage in the woods
Amongst brute beasts, grow wrinkled and deformed,
As wildness and most rude neglect could make me,
So I might still enjoy my honour safe
From the destroying wiles of faithless men.—— [*Exit.*
Pol. Who'd be that sordid foolish thing, called man,
To cringe thus, fawn, and flatter for a pleasure,
Which beasts enjoy so very much above him?
The lusty bull ranges through all the field,
And from the herd singling his female out,
Enjoys her, and abandons her at will.
It shall be so; I'll yet possess my love;
Wait on, and watch her loose unguarded hours;
Then, when her roving thoughts have been abroad,
And brought in wanton wishes to her heart,
In the very minute, when her virtue nods,
I'll rush upon her in a storm of love,
Beat down her guard of honour all before me,
Surfeit on joys, till even desire grows sick;
Then, by long absence, liberty regain,
And quite forget the pleasure and the pain.
[*Exeunt Pol. and Page.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Saloon.—Enter ACASTO, CASTALIO, *and* POLYDORE.

Acast. To-day has been a day of glorious sport.
When you, Castalio, and your brother left me,
Forth from the thickets rushed another boar,
So large, he seemed the tyrant of the woods,
With all his dreadful bristles raised up high,
They seemed a grove of spears upon his back;
Foaming, he came at me, where I was posted,
Best to observe which way he'd lead the chase,
Whetting his huge large tusks, and gaping wide,
As if he already had me for his prey;
Till brandishing my well-poised javelin high,
With this bold executing arm, I struck
The ugly, brindled monster to the heart.
Cast. The actions of your life were always wondrous.
Acast. No flattery, boy! an honest man cant live by it;
It is a little sneaking art, which knaves
Use to cajole and sotten fools withal.
If thou hast flattery in thy nature, out with it,
Or send it to a court, for there 'twill thrive.
Pol. Why there?
Acast. 'Tis, next to money, current there;
To be seen daily in as many forms
As there are sorts of vanities, and men;
The supercilious statesman has his sneer,
To soothe a poor man off with, that cant bribe him;
The grave dull fellow of small business soothes
The humourist, and will needs admire his wit.

Who, without spleen, could see a hot-brained atheist,
Thanking a surly doctor for his sermon?
Or a grave counsellor meet a smooth young lord,
Squeese him by the hand, and praise his good complexion?
Pol. Courts are the places, where best manners flourish;
Where the deserving ought to rise, and fools
Make shew. Why should I vex and chafe my spleen,
To see a gaudy coxcomb shine, when I
Have seen enough to soothe him in his follies,
And ride him to advantage as I please?——
Acast. Who merit, ought indeed to rise in the world;
But no wise man, that's honest, should expect it.
What man of sense wold rack his generous mind,
To practise all the base formalities
And forms of business? force a grave starched face,
When he is a very libertine in his heart?
Seem not to know this or that man in public,
When privately perhaps they meet together,
And lay the scene of some brave fellow's ruin?
Such things are done.
Cast. Your lordship's wrongs have been
So great, that you with justice may complain;
But suffer us, whose younger minds ne'er felt
Fortune's deceits, to court her as she's fair.
Were she a common mistress, kind to all,
Her worth would cease, and half the world grow idle.
Acast. Go to, yé are fools, and know me not; I've learned,
Long since, to bear, revenge, or scorn my wrongs,
According to the value of the doer.
You both would fain be great, and to that end
Desire to do things worthy your ambition.
Go to the camp, preferment's noblest mart,
Where honour ought to have the fairest play, you'll find
Corruption, envy, discontent, and faction,
Almost in every band. How many men
Have spent their blood in their dear country's service,
Yet now pine under want, whilst selfish slaves,
That e'en would cut their throats, whom now they fawn on,
Like deadly locusts, eat the honey up,
Which those industrious bees so hardly toiled for.
Cast. These precepts suit not with my active mind;
Methinks I would be busy.
Pol. So would I,
Not loiter out my life at home, and know
No farther than one prospect gives me leave.
Acast. Busy your minds then, study arts and men;
Learn how to value merit, though in rags,
And scorn a proud ill-mannered knave in office.

Enter SERINA.

Ser. My lord, my father!
Acast. Blessings on my child,
My little cherub! what hast thou to ask me?
Ser. I bring you, sir, most glad and welcome news.
The young Chamont, whom you have so often wished for,
Is just arrived and entering.
Acast. By my soul,
And all my honours, he is most dearly welcome;
Let me receive him like his father's friend.

Enter CHAMONT.

Welcome, thou relict of the best loved man!
Welcome, from all the turmoils and the hazards
Of certain danger and uncertain fortune!
Welcome, as happy tidings after fears!
Cha. Words would but wrong the gratitude I owe you;
Should I begin to speak, my soul is so full,
That I should talk of nothing else all day.

Enter MONIMIA.

Mon. My brother!
Cha. Oh my sister! let me hold thee
Long in my arms. I have not beheld thy face
These many days; by night I have often seen thee
In gentle dreams, and satisfied my soul
With fancied joys, 'till morning cares awaked me.
Another sister! sure it must be so;
Though I remember well I had but one:
But I feel something in my heart that prompts,
And tells me, she has claim and interest there.
Acast. Young soldier, you have not only studied war,
Courtship, I see, has been your practice too,
And may not prove unwelcome to my daughter.
Cha. Is she your daughter! then my heart told true,
nd I am at least her brother by adoption;
For you have made yourself to me a father,
And by that patent I have leave to love her.
Ser. Monimia, thou hast told me men are false,
Will flatter, feign, and make an art of love:
Is Chamont so? No, sure, he is more than man,
Something that is near divine, and truth dwells in him.
Acast. Thus happy, who would envy pompous power,
The luxury of courts, or wealth of cities?
Let there be joy through all the house this day!
In every room let plenty flow at large!
It is the birth-day of my royal master.
You have not visited the court, Chamont,
Since your return?
Cha. I have no business there;
I have not slavish temperance enough
To attend a favourite's heels, and watch his smiles,
Bear an ill office done me to my face,

And thank the lord, that wronged me, for his favour.
Acast. This you could do. [*To his sons.*
Cast. I would serve my prince.
Acast. Who would serve him?
Cast. I would, my lord.
Pol. And I; both would.
Acast. Away!
He needs not any servants such as you.
Serve him! he merits more than man can do!
He is so good, praise cannot speak his worth;
So merciful, sure he never slept in wrath;
So just, that were he but a private man,
He could not do a wrong. How would you serve him?
Cast. I would serve him with my fortune here at home,
And serve him with my person in his wars,
Watch for him, fight for him, bleed for him.
Pol. Die for him,
As every true-born loyal subject ought.
Acast. Let me embrace you both. Now, by the souls
Of my brave ancestors, I am truly happy!
For this be ever blest my marriage-day,
Blest be your mother's memory, that bore you;
And doubly blest be that auspicious hour,
That gave ye birth! Yes, my aspiring boys,
Ye shall have business, when your master wants you.
You cannot serve a nobler: I have served him;
In this old body yet the marks remain
Of many wounds. I have, with this tongue, proclaimed
His right, even in the face of rank rebellion;
And, when a foul-mouthed traitor once profaned
His sacred name, with my good sabre drawn,
Even at the head of all his giddy rout,
I rushed, and clove the rebel to the chine.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lord, the expected guests are just arrived.
Acast. Go you, and give them welcome and reception.
[*Exeunt Castalio, Polydore, Serina, &c.*
Cha. My lord, I stand in need of your assistance
In something, that concerns my peace and honour.
Acast. Spoke like the son of that brave man I loved:
So freely, friendly, we conversed together.
Whate'er it be, with confidence impart it;
Thou shalt command my fortune and my sword.
Cha. I dare not doubt your friendship, nor your justice;
Your bounty shewn to what I hold most dear,
My orphan sister, must not be forgotten.
Acast. Prithee no more of that, it grates my nature.
Cha. When our dear parents died, they died together,
One fate surprised them, and one grave received them;
My father, with his dying breath, bequeathed
Her to my love. My mother, as she lay
Languishing by him, called me to her side,
Took me in her fainting arms, wept, and embraced me:
Then pressed me close, and, as she observed my tears,
Kissed them away. Said she, 'Chamont, my son,
'By this, and all the love I ever shewed thee,
'Be careful of Monimia; watch her youth;
'Let not her wants betray her to dishonour:
'Perhaps kind heaven may raise some friend'—
Then sighed,
Kissed me again; so blessed us, and expired.
Pardon my grief!
Acast. It speaks an honest nature.
Cha. The friend heaven raised was you; you took her up
An infant, to the desart world exposed,
And proved another parent.
Acast. I have not wronged her.
Cha. Far be it from my fears.
Acast. Then why this argument?
Cha. My lord, my nature's jealous, and you'll bear it.
Acast. Go on.
Cha. Great spirits bear misfortunes hardly.
Good offices claim gratitude; and pride,
Where power is wanting, will usurp a little,
And make us, rather than be thought behindhand,
Pay over-price.
Acast. I cannot guess your drift;
Distrust you me?
Cha. No, but I fear her weakness
May make her pay her debt at any rate;
And, to deal freely with your lordship's goodness,
I have heard a story lately much disturbs me.
Acast. Then first charge her; and if the offence be found
Within my reach, though it should touch my nature,
In my own offspring, by the dear remembrance
Of thy brave father, whom my heart rejoiced in,
I would prosecute it with severest vengeance.
[*Exit.*
Cha. I thank you from my soul.
Mon. Alas! my brother!
What have I done? and why do you abuse me?
My heart quakes in me; in your settled face,
And clouded brow, methinks I see my fate.
You will not kill me!
Cha. Prithee, why dost thou talk so?
Mon. Look kindly on me, then: I cannot bear
Severity; it daunts, and does amaze me.
My heart is so tender, should you charge me roughly,
I should but weep, and answer you with sobbing;
But use me gently, like a loving brother,
And search through all the secrets of my soul.

Cha. Fear nothing; I will shew myself a brother,
A tender, honest, and a loving brother.
You have not forgot our father?
Mon. I shall never.
Cha. Then you'll remember too, he was a man,
That lived up to the standard of his honour,
And prized that jewel more than mines of wealth.
He'd not have done a shameful thing but once,
Though kept in darkness from the world, and hidden,
He could not have forgiven it to himself.
This was the only portion that he left us;
And I more glory in it, than if possest
Of all, that ever fortune threw on fools.
'Twas a large trust, and must be managed nicely.
Now, if by any chance, Monimia,
You have soiled this gem, and taken from its value,
How will you account with me?
Mon. I challenge envy,
Malice, and all the practices of hell,
To censure all the actions of my past
Unhappy life, and taint me if they can!
Cha. I'll tell thee, then; three nights ago, as I
Lay musing in my bed, all darkness round me,
A sudden damp struck to my heart, cold sweat
Dewed all my face, and trembling seized my limbs.
My bed shook under me, the curtains started,
And to my tortured fancy there appeared
The form of thee, thus beauteous as thou art;
Thy garments flowing loose, and in each hand
A wanton lover, who by turns caressed thee,
With all the freedom of unbounded pleasure.
I snatched my sword, and in the very moment
Darted it at the phantom; straight it left me.
Then rose, and called for lights, when, oh, dire omen!
I found my weapon had the arras pierced,
Just where that famous tale was interwoven,
How the unhappy Theban slew his father.
Mon. And for this cause my virtue is suspected!
Because in dreams your fancy has been ridden,
I must be tortured waking!
Cha. Have a care!
Labour not to be justified too fast.
Hear all, and then let justice hold the scale.
What followed was the riddle, that confounds me.
Through a close lane, as I pursued my journey,
And meditating on the last night's vision,
I spied a wrinkled hag, with age grown double,
Picking dry sticks, and mumbling to herself;
Her eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red;
Cold palsy shook her head, her hands seemed withered,
And o'er her crooked shoulders had she wrapped
The tattered remnant of an old striped hanging,
Which served to keep her carcase from the cold;
So there was nothing of a piece about her.
Her lower weeds were all o'er coarsely patched
With different coloured rags, black, red, white, yellow,
And seemed to speak variety of wretchedness.
I asked her of my way, which she informed me;
Then craved my charity, and bade me hasten
To save a sister: at that word I started!
Mon. The common cheat of beggars; every day
They flock about our doors, pretend to gifts
Of prophecy, and telling fools their fortunes.
Cha. Oh! but she told me such a tale, Monimia,
As in it bore great circumstance of truth:
Castalio and Polydore, my sister!
Mon. Ha!
Cha. What, altered! does your courage fail you!
Now, by my father's soul, the witch was honest.
Answer me, if thou hast not lost to them
Thy honour, at a sordid game?
Mon. I will,
I must, so hardly my misfortune loads me;
That both have offered me their loves, most true.
Cha. And 'tis as true too, they have both undone thee.
Mon. Though they both with earnest vows
Have pressed my heart, if e'er in thought I yielded
To any but Castalio,——
Cha. But Castalio!
Mon. Still will you cross the line of my discourse!
Yes, I confess, that he has won my soul
By generous love, and honourable vows,
Which he this day appointed to complete,
And make himself by holy marriage mine.
Cha. Art thou then spotless? Hast thou still preserved
Thy virtue white, without a blot, untainted?
Mon. When I'm unchaste may Heaven reject my prayers!
Or more, to make me wretched, may you know it!
Cha. Oh, then, Monimia, art thou dearer to me
Than all the comforts, ever yet blest man.
But let not marriage bait thee to thy ruin.
Trust not a man; we are by nature false,
Dissembling, subtle, cruel, and inconstant.
When a man talks of love, with caution trust him;
But if he swears, he'll certainly deceive thee.
I charge thee, let no more Castalio soothe thee!
Avoid it, as thou wouldst preserve the peace
Of a poor brother, to whose soul thou art precious.
Mon. I will.
Cha. Appear as cold, when next you meet, as great ones,
When merit begs; then shalt thou see how soon
His heart will cool, and all his pains grow easy.
[Exit.
Mon. Yes, I will try him; torture him severely;
For, oh, Castalio! thou too much hast wronged me,

In leaving me to Polydore's ill usage.
He comes; and for once, oh, love, stand neuter,
Whilst a hard part's performed! for I must attempt to
Wound his soft nature, though my heart aches for it. [*Exit.*

Enter CASTALIO.

Cast. Monimia, Monimia!——She's gone;
And seemed to part with anger in her eyes.
I am a fool, and she has found my weakness;
She uses me already like a slave,
Fast bound in chains, to be chastised at will.
'Twas not well done to trifle with my brother;
I might have trusted him with all the secret,
Opened my silly heart, and shewn it bare.——
But then he loves her too; but not like me:
I am a doating honest slave, designed
For bondage, marriage bonds, which I have sworn
To wear. It is the only thing I e'er
Hid from his knowledge, and he'll sure forgive
The first transgression of a wretched friend,
Betrayed to love, and all its little follies. [*Exit.*

Enter POLYDORE *and Page at the door.*

Pol. Here place yourself, and watch my brother thoroughly.
If he should chance to meet Monimia, make
Just observation on each word and action;
Pass not one circumstance without remark:
Sir, 'tis your office; do it, and bring me word.
[*Exit Pol.*

Enter MONIMIA *and* CASTALIO.

Cast. Monimia, my angel! 'twas not kind
To leave me like a turtle here alone,
To droop and mourn the absence of my mate.
When thou art from me, every place is desert,
And I, methinks, am savage and forlorn;
Thy presence only 'tis can make me blest,
Heal my unquiet mind, and tune my soul.
Mon. Oh, the bewitching tongues of faithless men!
'Tis thus the false hyæna makes her moan,
To draw the pitying traveller to her den.
Your sex are so, such false dissemblers all,
With sighs and plaints ye entice poor women's hearts,
And all, that pity you, are made your prey.
Cast. What means my love? Oh, how have I deserved
This language, from the sovereign of my joys?
Stop, stop those tears, Monimia, for they fall,
Like baneful dew from a distempered sky;
I feel them chill me to my very heart.
Mon. Oh, you are false, Castalio, most forsworn!
Attempt no farther to delude my faith;
My heart is fixed, and you shall shake it no more.
Cast. Who told you so? What ill-bred villain durst
Profane the sacred business of my love?

Mon. Your brother, knowing on what terms I'm here,
The unhappy object of your father's charity,
Licentiously discoursed to me of love,
And durst affront me with his brutal passion.
Cast. 'Tis I have been to blame, and only I;
False to my brother, and unjust to thee.
For, oh! he loves thee too, and this day owned it,
Taxed me with mine, and claimed a right above me.
Mon. And was your love so very tame, to shrink?
Or, rather than lose him, abandon me?
Cast. I, knowing him precipitate and rash,
To calm his heat, and to conceal my happiness,
Seemed to comply with his unruly will;
Talked as he talked, and granted all he asked;
Lest he in rage might have our loves betrayed,
And I for ever had Monimia lost.
Mon. Could you then? did you? can you own it too?
'Twas poorly done, unworthy of yourself!
And I can never think you meant me fair.
Cast. Is this Monimia? surely no; till now
I ever thought her dove-like, soft, and kind.
Who trusts his heart with woman is surely lost.
You were made fair on purpose to undo us,
While greedily we snatch the alluring bait,
And ne'er distrust the poison, that it hides.
Mon. When love ill-placed would find a means to break——
Cast. It never wants pretences or excuse.
Mon. Man therefore was a lord-like creature made,
Rough as the winds, and as inconstant too;
A lofty aspect given him for command,
Easily softened, when he would betray.
Like conquering tyrants, you our breasts invade,
While you are pleased to forage for a while;
But soon you find new conquests out, and leave
The ravaged province ruinate and waste.
If so, Castalio, you have served my heart,
I find that desolation is settled there,
And I shall ne'er recover peace again.
Cast. Who can hear this and bear an equal mind!
Since you will drive me from you, I must go;
But, oh, Monimia! When thou hast banished me,
No creeping slave, though tractable and dull
As artful woman for her ends would choose,
Shall ever doat as I have done: for, oh!
No tongue my pleasure nor my pain can tell,
'Tis heaven to have thee, and without thee hell.
Mon. Castalio, stay! we must not part. I find
My rage ebbs out, and love flows in apace.
These little quarrels, love must needs forgive,
They rouse up drowsy thoughts, and wake the soul.
Oh! charm me with the music of thy tongue!
I'm ne'er so blest, as when I hear thy vows,
And listen to the language of thy heart.

Cast. Where am I! surely paradise is round me,
Sweets planted by the hand of Heaven grow here,
And every sense is full of thy perfection.
To hear thee speak might calm a madman's frenzy,
Till by attention he forgot his sorrows;
But to behold thy eyes, thy amazing beauties,
Might make him rage again with love, as I do.
Thou Nature's whole perfection in one piece!
Sure, framing thee, Heaven took unusual care,
As its own beauty it designed thee fair;
And formed thee by the best loved angel there.
Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Garden.*

Enter POLYDORE *and Page.*

Pol. WERE they so kind? Express it to me all
In words; 'twill make me think I saw it too.
Page. At first I thought they had been mortal foes;
Monimia raged, Castalio grew disturbed;
Each thought the other wronged; yet both so haughty,
They scorned submission: though love all the while
The rebel played, and scarce could be contained.
Pol. But what succeeded?
Page. Oh, 'twas wondrous pretty!
For, of a sudden, all the storm was past,
A gentle calm of love succeeded it;
Monimia sighed and blushed, Castalio swore;
As you, my lord, I well remember, did
To my young sister, in the orange grove,
When I was first preferred to be your page.
Pol. Happy Castalio! Now, by my great soul,
My ambitious soul, that languishes for glory,
I'll have her yet, by my best hopes I will!
She shall be mine, in spite of all her arts.
But for Castalio why was I refused?
Has he supplanted me by some foul play?
Traduced my honour? Death! he durst not do it.
It must be so: we parted, and he met her,
Half to compliance brought by me; surprised
Her sinking virtue, till she yielded quite.
So poachers basely pick up tired game,
While the fair hunter is cheated of his prey.
Boy!
Page. My lord!
Pol. Go to your chamber, and prepare your lute:
Find out some song to please me, that describes
Women's hypocrisies, their subtle wiles,
Betraying smiles, feigned tears, inconstancies;
Their painted outsides, and corrupted minds;
The sum of all their follies, and their falsehoods.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Oh, the unhappiest tidings tongue e'er told!
Pol. The matter!
Serv. Oh! your father, my good master,
As with his guests he sat, in mirth raised high,
And chased the goblet round the joyful board,
A sudden trembling seized on all his limbs;
His eyes distorted grew; his visage pale;
His speech forsook him; life itself seemed fled,
And all his friends are waiting now about him.

Enter ACASTO, *leaning on two.*

Acast. Support me; give me air; I'll yet recover.
'Twas but a slip decaying nature made;
For she grows weary near her journey's end.
Where are my sons? Come near, my Polydore;
Your brother; where's Castalio?
Serv. My lord,
I've searched, as you commanded, all the house:
He and Monimia are not to be found.
Acast. Not to be found! then where are all my friends? 'Tis well;
I hope they'll pardon an unhappy fault
My unmannerly infirmity has made!
Death could not come in a more welcome hour;
For I'm prepared to meet him, and, methinks,
Would live and die with all my friends about me.

Enter CASTALIO *and* MONIMIA.

Cast. Angels preserve my dearest father's life,
Bless it with long uninterrupted days!
Oh, may he live till time itself decay,
'Till good men wish him dead, or I offend him!
Acast. Thank you, Castalio; give me both your hands,
And bear me up; I'd walk.—So, now, methinks,
I appear as great as Hercules himself,
Supported by the pillars he had raised.
Cast. My lord, your chaplain.
Acast. Let the good man enter.

Enter Chaplain.

Chap. Heaven guard your lordship, and restore your health.
Acast. I have provided for thee, if I die.
No fawning! 'tis a scandal to thy office.
My sons, as thus united ever live;
And for the estate you'll find, when I am dead,
I have divided it betwixt you both,
Equally parted, as you shared my love;
Only to sweet Monimia I have bequeathed
Ten thousand crowns; a little portion for her,
To wed her honourably as she's born.
Be not less friends because you are brothers; shun
The man that's singular; his mind's unsound,
His spleen o'erweighs his brains; but, above all,

Avoid the politic, the factious fool,
The busy, buzzing, talking, hardened knave,
The quaint smooth rogue, that sins against his reason,
Calls saucy loud suspicion public zeal,
And mutiny, the dictates of his spirit:
Be very careful how you make new friends.
Men read not morals now: 'twas a custom:
But all are to their father's vices born;
And in their mother's ignorance are bred.
Let marriage be the last mad thing you do,
For all the sins and follies of the past.
If you have children, never give them knowledge;
'Twill spoil their fortune; fools are all the fashion;
If you have religion, keep it to yourselves;
Atheists will else make use of toleration,
And laugh you out of it. Never shew religion,
Except you mean to pass for knaves of conscience,
And cheat believing fools, that think ye honest.

Enter SERINA.

Ser. My father!
Acast. My heart's darling!
Ser. Let my knees
Fix to the earth. Ne'er let my eyes have rest,
But wake and weep, till Heaven restore my father.
Acast. Rise to my arms, and thy kind prayers are answered.
For thou art a wondrous extract of all goodness,
Born for my joy, and no pains felt when near thee.
Chamont!

Enter CHAMONT.

Cha. My lord, may it prove not an unlucky omen.
Many, I see, are waiting round about you,
And I am come to ask a blessing too!
Acast. Mayest thou be happy!
Cha. Where?
Acast. In all thy wishes.
Cha. Confirm me so, and make this fair one mine;
I am unpractised in the trade of courtship,
And know not how to deal out love with art:
Onsets in love seem best like those in war,
Fierce, resolute, and done with all the force;
So I would open my whole heart at once,
And pour out the abundance of my soul.
Acast. What says Serina? Canst thou love a soldier?
One born to honour, and to honour bred?
One that has learned to treat even foes with kindness;
To wrong no man's good fame, nor praise himself?
Ser. Oh! name not love, for that's allied to joy,
And joy must be a stranger to my heart,
When you are in danger. May Chamont's good fortune
Render him lovely to some happier maid!
Whilst I, at friendly distance, see him blest,
Praise the kind gods, and wonder at his virtues.
Acast. Chamont, pursue her, conquer and possess her,
And, as my son, the third of all my fortune
Shall be thy lot.
But keep thy eyes from wandering, man of frailty.
Beware the dangerous beauty of the wanton;
Shun their enticements; ruin, like a vulture,
Waits on their conquests: falsehood too's their business;
They put false beauty off to all the world,
Use false endearments to the fools that love them,
And, when they marry, to their silly husbands
They bring false virtue, broken fame and fortune.
Mon. Hear ye that, my lord?
Pol. Yes, my fair monitor, old men always talk thus.
Acast. Chamont, you told me of some doubts, that pressed you;
Are you yet satisfied that I'm your friend?
Cha. My lord, I would not lose that satisfaction
For any blessing I could wish for.
As to my fears, already I have lost them;
They ne'er shall vex me more, nor trouble you.
Acast. I thank you. Daughter, you must do so too.
My friends, 'tis late;
Now my disorder seems all past and over,
And I, methinks, begin to feel new health.
Cast. Would you but rest, it might restore you quite.
Acast. Yes, I'll to bed; old men must humour weakness:
Let me have music, then, to lull and chase
This melancholy thought of death away.
Good-night, my friends; Heaven guard ye all! good-night!
To-morrow early we'll salute the day,
Find out new pleasures, and redeem lost time.
[*Exeunt all but Chamont and Chaplain.*
Cha. Hist, hist, Sir Gravity, a word with you.
Chap. With me, sir!
Cha. If you're at leisure, sir, we'll waste an hour.
'Tis yet too soon to sleep, and 'twill be charity
To lend your conversation to a stranger.
Chap. Sir, you are a soldier?
Cha. Yes.
Chap. I love a soldier.
And had been one myself, but that my parents
Would make me what you see me: yet I'm honest,
For all I wear black.
Cha. And that is a wonder.
Have you had long dependence on this family?
Chap. I have not thought it so, because my time is
Spent pleasantly. My lord's not haughty nor imperious,

Nor I gravely whimsical; he has good nature,
And I have manners.
His sons too are civil to me, because
I do not pretend to be wiser than they are.
I meddle with no man's business but my own;
I rise in a morning early, study moderately,
Eat and drink chearfully, live soberly,
Take my innocent pleasure freely;
So meet with respect, and am not the jest of the family.
Cha. I'm glad you are so happy.
A pleasant fellow this, and may be useful. [*Aside.*
Knew you my father, the old Chamont?
Chap. I did, and was most sorry, when we lost him.
Cha. Why? didst thou love him?
Chap. Every body loved him; besides he was my master's friend.
Cha. I could embrace thee for that very notion.
If thou didst love my father, I could think
Thou wouldst not be an enemy to me.
Chap. I can be no man's foe.
Cha. Then prithee tell me,
Think'st thou the lord Castalio loves my sister?
Nay, never start. Come, come, I know thy office
Opens thee all the secrets of the family;
Then, if thou'rt honest, use this freedom kindly.
Chap. Love your sister!
Cha. Ay, love her.
Chap. Sir, I never asked him,
And wonder you should ask it me.
Cha. Nay, but thou art an hypocrite; is there not one
Of all thy tribe that's honest? In your schools
The pride of your superiors makes ye slaves;
Ye all live loathsome, sneaking, servile lives;
Not free enough to practice generous truth,
Though ye pretend to teach it to the world.
Chap. I would deserve a better thought from you.
Cha. If thou wouldst have me not contemn thy office
And character, think all thy brethren knaves,
Thy trade a cheat, and thou its worst professor,
Inform me; for I tell thee, priest, I'll know.
Chap. Either he loves her, or he much has wronged her.
Cha. How! wronged her? Have a care, for this may lay
A scene of mischief to undo us all.
But tell me, wronged her, saidst thou?
Chap. Ay, sir, wronged her.
Cha. This is a secret worth a monarch's fortune:
What shall I give thee for it? Thou dear physician
Of sickly souls, unfold this riddle to me,
And comfort mine——
Chap. I would hide nothing from you willingly.
Cha. Nay, then again thou art honest. Would'st thou tell me?
Chap. Yes, if I durst.
Cha. Why, what affrights thee?
Chap. You do,
Who are not to be trusted with the secret.
Cha. Why? I am no fool.
Chap. So indeed you say.
Cha. Prithee be serious then.
Chap. You see I am so,
And hardly shall be mad enough to-night
To trust you with my ruin,
Cha. Art thou then
So far concerned in it? What has been thy office?
Curse on that formal steady villain's face!
Just so do all bawds look: nay, bawds, they say,
Can pray upon occasions, talk of heaven,
Turn up their goggling eye-balls, rail at vice,
Dissemble, lie, and preach like any priest.
Art thou a bawd?
Chap. Sir, I am not often used thus.
Cha. Be just then.
Chap. So I shall be to the trust,
That is laid upon me.
Cha. By the reverenced soul
Of that great honest man, that gave me being,
Tell me but what thou knowest concerns my honour,
And if I e'er reveal it to thy wrong,
May this good sword ne'er do me right in battle!
May I ne'er know that blessed peace of mind,
That dwells in good and pious men like thee!
Chap. I see your temper's moved, and I will trust you.
Cha. Wilt thou?
Chap. I will; but if it ever escape you——
Cha. It never shall.
Chap. Swear then.
Cha. I do, by all
That's dear to me, by the honour of my name,
And by that power I serve, it never shall.
Chap. Then this good day, when all the house was busy,
When mirth and kind rejoicing filled each room,
As I was walking in the grove, I met them.
Cha. What! met them in the grove together? Tell me
How, walking, standing, sitting, lying, ha!
Chap. I, by their own appointment, met them there,
Received their marriage-vows, and joined their hands,
Cha. How, married!
Chap. Yes, sir.
Cha. Then my soul's at peace.
But why would you so long delay to give it.
Chap. Not knowing what reception it may find
With old Acasto; may be I was too cautious
To trust the secret from me.
Cha. What's the cause
I cannot guess, though it is my sister's honour,
I do not like this marriage,
Huddled in the dark, and done at too much venture;
The business looks with an unlucky face.

Keep still the secret; for it ne'er shall escape me,
Not ev'n to them, the new matched pair. Farewell.
Believe my truth, and know me for thy friend.
[*Exit.*

Enter CASTALIO *and* MONIMIA.

Cast. Young Chamont and the chaplain? sure 'tis they!
No matter what's contrived, or who consulted,
Since my Monimia's mine; though this sad look
Seems no good boding omen to her bliss;
Else prithee tell me why that look cast down?
Why that sad sigh, as if thy heart was breaking?
Mon. Castalio, I am thinking what we have done.
The heavenly powers were sure displeased to-day;
For at the ceremony as we stood,
And as your hand was kindly joined with mine,
As the good priest pronounced the sacred words,
Passion grew big, and I could not forbear,
Tears drowned my eyes, and trembling seized my soul.
What should that mean?
Cast. Oh, thou art tender all!
Gentle and kind as sympathising nature!
When a sad story has been told, I have seen
Thy little breasts, with soft compassion swelled,
Move up and down, and heave like dying birds.
But now let fear be banished, think no more
Of danger; for there's safety in my arms;
Let them receive thee. Heaven grows jealous now;
Sure she's too good for any mortal creature!
I could grow wild, and praise thee even to madness.
But wherefore do I dally with my bliss?
The night's far spent, and day draws on apace;
To bed, my love, and wake till I come thither.
Pol. So hot, my brother! [*Polydore at the door.*
Mon. 'Twill be impossible;
You know your father's chamber is next to mine,
And the least noise will certainly alarm him.
Cast. Impossible! impossible! alas:
Is it impossible to live one hour without thee?
Let me behold those eyes; they'll tell me truth.
Hast thou no longing? art thou still the same
Cold, icy virgin? No; thou art altered quite:
Haste, haste to bed, and let loose all thy wishes.
Mon. 'Tis but one night, my lord; I pray be ruled.
Cast. Try if thou hast power to stop a flowing tide,
Or in a tempest make the seas be calm;
And, when that is done, I'll conquer my desires.
No more, my blessing. What shall be the sign?
When shall I come? for to my joys I'll steal,
As if I ne'er had paid my freedom for them.
Mon. Just three soft strokes upon the chamber door;
And at that signal you shall gain admittance:
But speak not the least word; for if you should,
'Tis surely heard, and all will be betrayed.
Cast. Oh! doubt it not, Monimia; our joys
Shall be as silent as the ecstatic bliss
Of souls, that by intelligence converse!
Immortal pleasures shall our senses drown,
Thought shall be lost, and every power dissolved.
Away, my love; first take this kiss. Now haste.
I long for that to come, yet grudge each minute past. [*Exit. Mon.*
My brother wandering too so late this way!
Pol. Castalio!
Cast. My Polydore, how dost thou?
How does our father? Is he well recovered?
Pol. I left him happily reposed to rest;
He's still as gay as if his life were young.
But how does fair Monimia?
Cast. Doubtless, well:
A cruel beauty, with her conquest pleased,
Is always joyful, and her mind in health.
Pol. Is she the same Monimia still she was?
May we not hope she's made of mortal mould?
Cast. She's not woman else:
Though I am grown weary of this tedious hoping;
We have in a barren desert strayed too long.
Pol. Yet may relief be unexpected found,
And love's sweet manna cover all the field.
Met ye to-day?
Cast. No; she has still avoided me:
Her brother, too, is jealous of her grown,
And has been hinting something to my father.
I wish I had never meddled with the matter:
And would enjoin thee, Polydore——
Pol. To what?
Cast. To leave this peevish beauty to herself.
Pol. What, quit my love? As soon I would quit my post
In fight, and, like a coward, run away.
No, by my stars, I'll chase her, till she yields
To me, or meets her rescue in another.
Cast. Nay, she has beauty, that might shake the leagues
Of mighty kings, and set the world at odds;
But I have wondrous reasons on my side,
That would persuade thee, were they known.
Pol. Then speak them:
What are they? Came ye to her window here,
To learn them now? Castalio, have a care;
Use honest dealing with a friend and brother.
Believe me, I am not with my love so blinded,
But can discern your purpose to abuse me.
Quit your pretences to her.
Cast. Grant I do;
You love capitulations, Polydore,
And but upon conditions would oblige me.
Pol. You say you have reasons; why are they concealed?
Cast. To-morrow I may tell you.
Pol. Why not now?
Cast. It is a matter of such consequence,
As I must well consult ere I reveal.
But prithee cease to think I would abuse thee,

'Till more be known.
Pol. When you, Castalio, cease
To meet Monimia unknown to me,
And then deny it slavishly, I'll cease
To think Castalio faithless to his friend.
Did not I see you part this very moment?
Cast. It seems you have watched me, then?
Pol. I scorn the office.
Cast. Prithee avoid a thing thou mayest repent.
Pol. That is henceforward making leagues with you.
Cast. Nay, if you are angry, Polydore, good-night. [*Exit.*
Pol. Good-night, Castalio, if you are in such haste.
He little thinks I have overheard the appointment;
But to his chamber's gone to wait a while,
Then come and take possession of my love.
This is the utmost point of all my hopes;
Or now she must, or never can be mine.
O, for a means now, how to counterplot,
And disappoint this happy elder brother!
In every thing we do or undertake
He soars above me, mount what height I can,
And keeps the start he got of me in birth.
Cordelio!

Enter Page.

Page. My lord!
Pol. Come hither, boy.
Thou hast a pretty, forward, lying face,
And mayest in time expect preferment. Canst thou
Pretend to secrecy, cajole and flatter
Thy master's follies, and assist his pleasures?
Page. My lord, I could do any thing for you,
And ever be a very faithful boy.
Command, whate'er's your pleasure I'll observe;
Be it to run, or watch, or to convey
A letter to a beauteous lady's bosom;
At least, I am not dull, and soon should learn.
Pol. 'Tis pity, then, thou should'st not be employed.
Go to my brother, he is in his chamber now,
Undressing, and preparing for his rest:
Find out some means to keep him up awhile;
Tell him a pretty story, that may please
His ear; invent a tale, no matter what:
If he should ask of me, tell him I am gone
To bed, and sent you there to know his pleasure,
Whether he will hunt to-morrow. Well said, Polydore,
Dissemble with thy brother! that's one point. [*Aside.*
But do not leave him, till he is in bed,
Or if he chance to walk again this way,
Follow and do not quit him, but seem fond
To do him little offices of service.
Perhaps at last it may offend him; then
Retire, and wait till I come in. Away:
Succeed in this, and be employed again.
Page. Doubt not, my lord. He has been always kind
To me; would often set me on his knee,
Then give me sweetmeats, call me pretty boy,
And ask me what the maids talked of at nights.
Pol. Run quickly, then, and prosp'rous be thy wishes. [*Exit Page.*
Here I am alone, and fit for mischief; now
To cheat this brother, will it be honest that?
I heard the sign she ordered him to give.
O, for the art of Proteus, but to change
The unhappy Polydore to blest Castalio!
She is not so well acquainted with him yet,
But I may fit her arms as well as he.
Then, when I am happily possessed of more
Than sense can think, all loosened into joy,
To hear my disappointed brother come,
And give the unregarded signal; Oh,
What a malicious pleasure will that be!
'Just three soft strokes against the chamber door;
'But speak not the least word, for if you should,
''Tis surely heard, and we are both betrayed.'
How I adore a mistress, that contrives
With care to lay the business of her joys;
One that has wit to charm the very soul,
And give a double relish to delight!
Blest heavens, assist me but in this dear hour,
And my kind stars be but propitious now,
Dispose of me hereafter as you please.
Monimia! Monimia! [*Gives the sign.*
[*Maid at the window.*] Who's there?
Pol. 'Tis I.
Maid. My lord Castalio?
Pol. The same.
How does my love, my dear Monimia?
Maid. Oh!
She wonders much at your unkind delay;
You have staid so long, that at each little noise
The wind but makes, she asks if you are coming.
Pol. Tell her I'm here, and let the door be opened. [*Maid descends.*
Now boast, Castalio, triumph now, and tell
Thyself strange stories of a promised bliss.
[*The door unbolts.*
It opens! Ha! what means my trembling flesh?
Limbs do your office, and support me well;
Bear me to her, then—fail me if you can! [*Exit.*

Enter CASTALIO *and Page.*

Page. Indeed, my lord, 'twill be a lovely morning:
Pray let us hunt.
Cast. Go, you are an idle prattler.
I'll stay at home to-morrow; if your lord
Thinks fit, he may command my hounds. Go, leave me,
I must to bed.
Page. I'll wait upon your lordship,
If you think fit, and sing you to repose.
Cast. No, my kind boy, the night is too far wasted;
My senses are quite disrobed of thought,
And ready all with me to go to rest.

Good-night. Commend me to my brother.
Page. Oh!
You never heard the last new song I learned!
It is the finest, prettiest song indeed,
Of my lord and my lady, you know who, that were caught
Together, you know where. My lord, indeed it is.
Cast. You must be whipped, youngster, if you get such songs as those are.
What means this boy's impertinence to-night?
Page. What, what must I sing, pray, my dear lord?
Cast. Psalms, child, psalms.
Page. Oh, dear me! boys that go to school learn psalms:
But pages, that are better bred, sing lampoons.
Cast. Well, leave me. I am weary.
Page. Oh! but you promised me, the last time I told you what colour my lady Monimia's stockings were of, and that she gartered them above knee, that you would give me a little horse to go a hunting upon, so you did. I'll tell you no more stories, except you keep your word with me.
Cast. Well, go, you trifler, and to-morrow ask me.
Page. Indeed, my lord, I can't abide to leave you.
Cast. Why, wert thou instructed to attend me?
Page. No, no, indeed, my lord, I was not;
But I know what I know.
Cast. What dost thou know? Death! what can all this mean?
Page. Oh! I know who loves somebody.
Cast. What's that to me, boy?
Page. Nay, I know who loves you too.
Cast. That's a wonder! prithee tell it me.
Page. 'Tis,—'tis—I know who—but will
You give me the horse, then?
Cast. I will, my child.
Page. It is my lady Monimia, look you; but don't you tell her I told you; she'll give me no more play-things then. I heard her say so, as she lay a-bed, man.
Cast. Talk'd she of me, when in her bed, Cordelio?
Page. Yes, and I sung her the song you made, too; and she did so sigh, and so look with her eyes; and her breasts did so lift up and down, I could have found in my heart to have beat them, for they made me ashamed.
Cast. Hark! what's that noise?
Take this, begone, and leave me.
You knave, you little flatterer, get you gone!
[*Exit Page.*
Surely it was a noise! hist—only fancy;
For all is hushed, as Nature were retired,
And the perpetual motion standing still,
So much she from her work appears to cease.
And every warring element's at peace:
All the wild herds are in the coverts couched;
The fishes to their banks or ooze repaired,
And to the murmurs of the waters sleep;
The feeling air's at rest, and feels no noise,
Except of some soft breeze among the trees,
Rocking the harmless birds that rest upon them.
'Tis now, that, guided by my love, I go
To take possession of my Monimia's charms.
Sure Polydore's by this time gone to bed.
At midnight thus the usurer steals untracked,
To make a visit to his hoarded gold,
And feasts his eyes upon the shining mammon.
[*Knocks.*
She hears me not; sure she already sleeps;
Her wishes could not brook so long delay,
And her poor heart has beat itself to rest.
[*Knocks again.*
Monimia! my angel!—ha!—not yet——
How long's the shortest moment of delay,
To a heart impatient of its pangs like mine,
In sight of ease, and panting to the goal.
[*Knocks again.*
Once more——
Maid. [*At the window.*] Who's there,
That comes thus rudely to disturb our rest?
Cast. 'Tis I.
Maid. Who are you? What's your name?
Cast. Suppose the lord Castalio.
Maid. I know you not.
The lord Castalio has no business here.
Cast. Ha! have a care; what can this mean!
Whoe'er thou art, I charge thee to Monimia fly;
Tell her I'm here, and wait upon my doom.
Maid. Whoe'er you are, ye may repent this outrage.
My lady must not be disturbed. Good-night.
Cast. She must; tell her she shall. Go, I'm in haste,
And bring her tidings from the State of Love;
They are all in consultation met together,
How to reward my truth, and crown her vows.
Maid. Sure the man's mad!
Cast. Or this will make me so.
Obey me, or by all the wrongs I suffer,
I'll scale the window, and come in by force,
Let the sad consequence be what it will!
This creature's trifling folly makes me mad!
Maid. My lady's answer is, you may depart.
She says she knows you; you are Polydore,
Sent by Castalio, as you were to-day,
To affront and do her violence again.
Cast. I'll not believe it.
Maid. You may, sir.
Cast. Curses blast thee!
Maid. Well, 'tis a fine cool evening; and, I hope,
May cure the raging fever in your blood.
Good-night.
Cast. And farewell all that's just in women!
This is contrived; a studied trick, to abuse
My easy nature, and torment my mind.
Sure now she's bound me fast, and means to lord it,
To rein me hard, and ride me at her will,
'Till by degrees she shape me into fool,

Cast. Nay, you shall not, madam;
By yon bright heaven you shall not. All the day
I'll play the tyrant, and at night forsake thee;
'Till by afflictions, and continued cares,
I have worn thee to a homely household drudge.
Nay, If I have any too, thou shalt be made
Subservient to my looser pleasures,
For thou hast wronged Castalio.
Mon. No more;
Oh, kill me here, or tell me my offence!
I'll never quit you else; but on these knees,
Thus follow you all day, 'till they're worn bare,
And hang upon you like a drowning creature.
Castalio!———
Cast. Away! last night, last night——
Mon. It was our wedding night.
Cast. No more; forget it.
Mon. Why, do you then repent?
Cast. I do.
Mon. O, heaven!
And will you leave me thus? help, help, Florella!
[*He drags her to the door, breaks from her, and exit.*
Help me to hold this yet loved cruel man.
Oh, my heart breaks—I'm dying. Oh—stand off;
I'll not indulge this woman's weakness; still
Chafed and tormented let my heart swell on,
'Till with its injuries it burst, and shake
With the dire blow this prison to the earth.
Maid. What sad mistake has been the cause of this?
Mon. Castalio! Oh! how often has he swore,
Nature should change, the sun and stars grow dark,
Ere he would falsify his vows to me!
Make haste, confusion, then; sun, lose thy light,
And stars drop dead with sorrow to the earth;
For my Castalio's false.
Maid. Unhappy day!
Mon. False as the wind, the waters, or the weather;
Cruel as tigers o'er their trembling prey:
I feel him in my breast, he tears my heart,
And at each sigh he drinks the gushing blood;
Must I be long in pain? [*Sits down.*]
[*Exit Florella.*

Enter CHAMONT.

Cha. In tears, Monimia!
Mon. Whoe'er thou art,
Leave me alone to my beloved despair.
Cha. Lift up thy eyes, and see, who comes to cheer thee.
Tell me the story of thy wrongs, and then
See, if my soul has rest, 'till thou hast justice.
Mon. My brother!
Cha. Yes, Monimia, if thou thinkest
That I deserve the name, I am thy brother.
Mon. Oh, Castalio!
Cha. Ha!
Name me that name again! my soul's on fire
'Till I know all. There's meaning in that name;
I know he is thy husband: therefore trust me
With all the following truth!
Mon. Indeed, Chamont,
There's nothing in it but the fault of nature;
I'm often thus seized suddenly with grief,
I know not why.
Cha. You use me ill, Monimia;
And I might think, with justice, most severely
Of this unfaithful dealing with your brother.
Mon. Truly, I'm not to blame. Suppose I'm fond,
And grieve for what as much may please another?
Should I upbraid the dearest friend on earth
For the first fault? You would not do so; would you?
Cha. Not, if I'd cause to think it was a friend.
Mon. Why do you then call this unfaithful dealing?
I ne'er concealed my soul from you before:
Bear with me now, and search my wounds no farther;
For every probing pains me to the heart.
Cha. 'Tis sign there's danger in it, and must be probed.
Where's your new husband? Still that thought disturbs you?
What! only answer me with tears? Castalio!
Nay, now they stream;
Cruel, unkind Castalio! Is it not so?
Mon. I cannot speak! grief flows so fast upon me,
It chokes, and will not let me tell the cause.
Oh!
Cha. My Monimia, to my soul thou art dear
As honour to my name. Dear as the light
To eyes but just restored, and healed of blindness.
Why wilt thou not repose within my breast
The anguish, that torments thee?
Mon. Oh! I dare not.
Cha. I have no friend but thee. We must confide
In one another. Two unhappy orphans,
Alas, we are, and when I see thee grieve,
Methinks, it is a part of me, that suffers.
Mon Oh, shouldst thou know the cause of my lamenting,
Thou would'st despise the abject, lost Monimia;
I am satisfied, Chamont, that thou wouldst scorn me;
No more would praise this hated beauty: but,
When in some cell distracted, as I shall be,
Thou seest me lie; these unregarded locks,
Matted like furies' tresses; my poor limbs
Chained to the ground, and, 'stead of the delights,
Which happy lovers taste, my keeper's stripes,
A bed of straw, and a coarse wooden dish
Of wretched sustenance; when thus thou seest me
Prithee have charity and pity for me!
Let me enjoy this thought.

Cha. Why wilt thou rack
My soul so long, Monimia? Ease me quickly;
Or thou wilt run me into madness first.
Mon. Could you be secret?
Cha. Secret as the grave.
Mon. But when I have told you, will you keep your fury
Within its bonds? Will you not do some rash
And horrid mischief? For indeed, Chamont,
You would not think how hardly I've been used
From a near friend, from one, that has my soul
A slave, and therefore treats it like a tyrant.
Cha. I will be calm—but has Castalio wronged thee?
Has he already wasted all his love?
What has he done? Quickly, for I'm all trembling
With expectation of a horrid tale.
Mon. Oh! could you think it!
Cha. What?
Mon. I fear he'll kill me.
Cha. Ha!
Mon. Indeed I do; he's strangely cruel to me;
Which, if it last, I'm sure must break my heart.
Cha. What has he done?
Mon. Most barbarously used me.
Nothing so kind as he, when in my arms!
A thousand kisses, tender sighs and joys,
Not to be thought again, the night was wasted;
At dawn of day he rose, and left his conquest.
But, when we met, and I, with open arms,
Ran to embrace the lord of all my wishes,
Oh, then!
Cha. Go on!
Mon. He threw me from his breast,
Like a detested sin.
Cha. How!
Mon. As I hung too
Upon his knees, and begged to know the cause,
He dragged me like a slave upon the earth,
And had no pity on my cries.
Cha. How! did he
Dash thee disdainfully away? with scorn?
Mon. He did! and more, I fear, will ne'er be friends,
Though I still love him with unabated passion.
Cha. What, throw thee from him!
Mon. Yes, indeed he did.
Cha. So may this arm
Throw him to the earth, like a dead dog despised!
Lameness and leprosy, blindness and lunacy,
Poverty, shame, pride, and the name of villain,
Light on me, if, Castalio, I forgive thee!
Mon. Nay, now, Chamont, art thou unkind as he is!
Didst thou not promise me thou wouldst be calm?
Keep my disgrace concealed? Why shouldst thou kill him?
By all my love, this arm should do him vengeance.
Alas! I love him still, and though I ne'er
Clasp him again within these longing arms,
Yet bless him, bless him, gods! where'er he goes.

Enter ACASTO.

Acast. Sure some ill fate is towards me; in my house
I only meet with oddness and disorder;
Each vassal has a wild distracted face,
And looks as full of business as a blockhead
In times of danger. Just this very moment
I met Castalio——
Cha. Then you met a villain.
Acast. Ha!
Cha. Yes, a villain.
Acast. Have a care, young soldier,
How thou art too busy with Acasto's fame.
I have a sword, my arm's good old acquaintance;
Villain to thee!
Cha. Curse on thy scandalous age,
Which hinders me to rush upon thy throat,
And tear the root up of that cursed bramble!
Acast. Ungrateful ruffian! sure my good old friend
Was ne'er thy father; nothing of him is in thee.
What have I done in my unhappy age,
To be thus used? I scorn to upbraid thee, boy;
But I could put thee in remembrance——
Cha. Do.
Acast. I scorn it——
Cha. No, I'll calmly hear the story,
For I would fain know all, to see which scale
Weighs most—Ha! is not that good old Acasto?
What have I done? Can you forgive this folly?
Acast. Why dost thou ask it?
Cha. 'Twas the rude overflowing
Of too much passion. Pray, my lord, forgive me.
[*Kneels.*
Acast. Mock me not, youth! I can revenge a wrong.
Cha. I know it well; but, for this thought of mine,
Pity a madman's frenzy, and forget it.
Acast. I will; but henceforth prithee be more kind. [*Raises him.*
Whence came the cause?
Cha. Indeed I have been to blame;
But I'll learn better; for you have been my father.
You have been her father too—
[*Takes Mon. by the hand.*
Acast. Forbear the prologue——
And let me know the substance of thy tale.
Cha. You took her up, a little tender flower,
Just sprouted on a bank, which the next frost
Had nipped; and, with a careful loving hand,
Transplanted her into your own fair garden,
Where the sun always shines. There long she flourished,
Grew sweet to sense, and lovely to the eye;
'Till at the last a cruel spoiler came,
Cropt this fair rose, and rifled all its sweetness,
Then cast it, like a loathsome weed, away.
Acast. You talk to me in parables, Chamont,

You may have known, that I am no wordy man;
Fine speeches are the instruments of knaves,
Of fools, that use them, when they want good sense;
But honesty
Needs no disguise nor ornament. Be plain.
Cha. Your son——
Acast. I have two; and both, I hope, have honour.
Cha. I hope so too—but——
Acast. Speak.
Cha. I must inform you,
Once more, Castalio——
Acast. Still Castalio!
Cha. Yes.
Your son Castalio has wronged Monimia.
Acast. Ha! wronged her?
Cha. Married her.
Acast. I am sorry for it.
Cha. Why sorry?
By yon blest heaven, there's not a lord
But might be proud to take her to his heart!
Acast. I'll not deny it.
Cha. You dare not; all your family combined
In one damned falsehood to outdo Castalio,
Dare not deny it.
Acast. How has Castalio wronged her?
Cha. Ask that of him. I say, my sister's wronged:
Monimia, my sister, born as high
And noble as Castalio—Do her justice,
Or, by the gods, I'll lay a scene of blood,
Shall make this dwelling horrible to nature.
I'll do it. Hark you, my lord! your son Castalio;
Take him to your closet, and there teach him manners.
Acast. You shall have justice.
Cha. Nay, I will have justice.
Who'll sleep in safety, that has done me wrong?
My lord, I'll not disturb you to repeat
The cause of this; I beg you (to preserve
Your house's honour) ask it of Castalio.
Acast. I will.
Cha. 'Till then, farewell. [*Exit.*
Acast. Farewell, proud boy.
Monimia!
Mon. My lord.
Acast. You are my daughter.
Mon. I am, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe to own me.
Acast. When you complain to me, I'll prove a father. [*Exit.*
Mon. Now, I am undone for ever. Who on earth
Is there so wretched as Monimia?
First by Castalio cruelly forsaken;
I have lost Acasto now: his parting frowns
May well instruct me, rage is in his heart:
I shall be next abandoned to my fortune,
Thrust out a naked wanderer to the world,
And branded for the mischievous Monimia!
What will become of me? my cruel brother
Is framing mischiefs too, for aught I know,
That may produce bloodshed and horrid murder.
I would not be the cause of one man's death
To reign the empress of the earth; nay, more,
I would rather lose, for ever, my Castalio,
My dear unkind Castalio!

Enter POLYDORE.

Pol. Monimia, weeping!
So morning dews on new-blown roses lodge,
By the sun's amorous heat to be exhaled.
I come, my love, to kiss all sorrow from thee:
What mean these sighs? And why thus beats thy heart?
Mon. Let me alone to sorrow. 'Tis a cause
None ere shall know: but it shall with me die.
Pol. Happy, Monimia, he, to whom these sighs,
These tears, and all these languishings, are paid!
I am no stranger to your dearest secret:
I know your heart was never meant for me;
That jewel's for an elder brother's price.
Mon. My lord!
Pol. Nay, wonder not; last night I heard
His oaths, your vows, and to my torment saw
Your wild embraces; heard the appointment made;
I did, Monimia, and cursed the sound.
Wilt thou be sworn, my love? wilt thou be ne'er
Unkind again?
Mon. Banish such fruitless hopes!
Have you swore constancy to my undoing?
Will you be ne'er my friend again?
Pol. What means my love?
Mon. Away; what meant my lord
Last night?
Pol. Is that a question now to be demanded?
I hope Monimia was not much displeased.
Mon. Was it well done to treat me like a prostitute?
To assault my lodging at the dead of night,
And threaten me, if I denied admittance——
You said you were Castalio——
Pol. By those eyes
It was the same: I spent my time much better
I tell thee, ill-natured fair one, I was posted
To more advantage, on a pleasant hill
Of springing joy, and everlasting sweetness.
Mon. Ha—have a care——
Pol. Where is the danger near me?
Mon. I fear you are on a rock will wreck your quiet,
And drown your soul in wretchedness for ever:
A thousand horrid thoughts crowd on my memory.
Will you be kind, and answer me one question?
Pol. I'll trust thee with my life; on those soft breasts
Breathe out the choicest secrets of my heart,
Till I have nothing in my heart but love.
Mon. Nay, I'll conjure you by the gods and angels,
By the honour of your name, that's most concerned,

To tell me, Polydore, and tell me truly,
Where did you rest last night?
Pol. Within thy arms
I triumphed! rest had been my foe.
Mon. 'Tis done——— [*She faints.*
Pol. She faints! No help! who waits? A curse
Upon my vanity, that could not keep
The secret of my happiness in silence.
Confusion! we shall be surprised anon,
And consequently all must be betrayed.
Monimia! She breathes—Monimia——
Mon. Well———
Let mischiefs multiply! Let every hour
Of my loathed life yield me increase of horror!
Oh, let the sun to these unhappy eyes
Ne'er shine again, but be eclipsed for ever;
May every thing, I look on, seem a prodigy,
To fill my soul with terrors, till I quite
Forget I ever had humanity,
And grow a curser of the works of nature!
Pol. What means all this?
Mon. Oh, Polydore, if all
The friendship e'er you vowed to good Castalio
Be not a falsehood; if you ever loved
Your brother, you have undone yourself and me.
Pol. Which way can ruin reach the man that's rich,
As I am, in possession of thy sweetness?
Mon. Oh! I'm his wife.
Pol. What says Monimia! ha!
Speak that again.
Mon. I am Castalio's wife.
Pol. His married, wedded wife?
Mon. Yesterday's sun
Saw it performed.
Pol. And then, have I enjoyed
My brother's wife?
Mon. As surely as we both
Must taste of misery, that guilt is thine.
Pol. Must we be miserable then?
Mon. Oh!
Pol. Oh! thou mayst yet be happy.
Mon. Couldst thou be
Happy, with such a weight upon thy soul?
Pol. It may be yet a secret; I'll go try
To reconcile and bring Castalio to thee;
Whilst from the world I take myself away,
And waste my life in penance for my sin.
Mon. Then thou wouldst more undo me; heap a load
Of added sins upon my wretched head.
Wouldst thou again have me betray thy brother,
And bring pollution to his arms? Curst thought!
Oh, when shall I be mad indeed!
Pol. Nay, then,
Let us embrace, and from this very moment
Vow an eternal misery together.
Mon. And wilt thou be a very faithful wretch?
Never grow fond of cheerful peace again?
Wilt thou with me study to be unhappy,
And find out ways how to increase affliction?
Pol. We'll institute new arts, unknown before,
To vary plagues, and make them look like new ones.
First, if the fruit of our detested joy,
A child, be born, it shall be murdered———
Mon. No;
Sure that may live.
Pol. Why?
Mon. To become a thing
More wretched than its parents, to be branded
With all our infamy, and curse its birth.
Pol. That's well contrived.
Then thus I'll go,
Full of my guilt, distracted where to roam,
Like the first wretched pair expelled their paradise.
I'll find some place, where adders nest in winter,
Loathsome and venomous: where poisons hang,
Like gums, against the walls: where witches meet
By night, and feed upon some pampered imp,
Fat with the blood of babes: There I'll inhabit,
And live up to the height of desperation;
Desire shall languish like a withering flower,
And no distinction of the sex be thought of.
Horrors shall fright me from those pleasing harms,
And I'll no more be caught with beauty's charms,
But, when I'm dying, take me in thy arms.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Garden.*

CASTALIO *lying on the ground.—Soft music.*

SONG.

Come, all ye youths, whose hearts e'er bled
By cruel beauty's pride;
Bring each a garland on his head,
Let none his sorrows hide:
But hand in hand around me move,
Singing the saddest tales of love;
And see, when your complaints ye join,
If all your wrongs can equal mine.

The happiest mortal once was I;
My heart no sorrows knew;
Pity the pain with which I die,
But ask not whence it grew.
Yet if a tempting fair you find,
That's very lovely, very kind,
Though bright as heaven, whose stamp she bears,
Think of my fate, and shun her snares.

See, where the deer trot after one another,
Male, female, father, daughter, mother, son,
Brother and sister, mingled all together.
No discontent they know; but in delightful

Wildness and freedom, pleasant springs, fresh herbage,
Calm arbours, lusty health and innocence,
Enjoy their portion; if they see a man,
How will they turn together all, and gaze
Upon the monster———
Once in a season too they taste of love:
Only the beast of reason is its slave,
And in that folly drudges all the year.

Enter Acasto.

Acast. Castalio! Castalio!
Cast. Who's there
So wretched but to name Castalio?
Acast. I hope my message may succeed!
Cast. My father!
'Tis joy to see you, though where sorrow's nourished.
Acast. I'm come in beauty's cause; you'll guess the rest.
Cast. A woman! If you love my peace of mind,
Name not a woman to me; but to think
Of woman, were enough to taint my brains,
Till they ferment to madness. Oh, my father!
Acast. What ails my boy?
Cast. A woman is the thing
I would forget, and blot from my remembrance.
Acast. Forget Monimia!
Cast. She, to chuse: Monimia!
The very sound's ungrateful to my sense.
Acast. This might seem strange, but you, I've found, will hide
Your heart from me; you dare not trust your father.
Cast. No more Monimia.
Acast. Is she not your wife?
Cast. So much the worse; who loves to hear of wife?
When you would give all worldly plagues a name,
Worse than they have already, call them wife:
But a new-married wife's a teeming mischief,
Full of herself! Why, what a deal of horror
Has that poor wretch to come, that wedded yesterday!
Acast. Castalio, you must go along with me,
And see Monimia.
Cast. Sure my lord but mocks me.
Go see Monimia! Pray, my lord, excuse me,
And leave the conduct of this part of life
To my own choice.
Acast. I say, no more dispute.
Complaints are made to me, that you have wronged her.
Cast. Who has complained?
Acast. Her brother, to my face, proclaimed her wronged,
And in such terms they have warmed me.
Cast. What terms? Her brother! Heaven!
Where learned she that?
What! does she send her hero with defiance?
He durst not sure affront you!
Acast. No, not much.
But———
Cast. Speak, what said he?
Acast. That thou wert a villain;
Methinks I would not have thee thought a villain.
Cast. Shame on the ill-mannered brute!
Your age secured him; he durst not else have said so.
Acast. By my sword,
I would not see wronged, and bear it vilely:
Though I have passed my word she shall have justice.
Cast. Justice! to give her justice would undo her.
Think you this solitude I now have chosen,
Left joys, just opening to my sense, sought here
A place to curse my fate in, measured out
My grave at length, wished to have grown one piece
With this cold clay, and all without a cause?

Enter Chamont.

Cha. Where is the hero, famous and renowned
For wronging innocence and breaking vows?
Whose mighty spirit, and whose stubborn heart,
No woman can appease, nor man provoke?
Acast. I guess, Chamont, you come to seek Castalio.
Cha. I come to seek the husband of Monimia.
Cast. The slave is here.
Cha. I thought ere now to have found you
Atoning for the ills you have done Chamont;
For you have wronged the dearest part of him.
Monimia, young lord, weeps in this heart;
And all the tears, thy injuries have drawn
From her poor eyes, are drops of blood from hence.
Cast. Then you are Chamont?
Cha. Yes, and I hope no stranger
To great Castalio.
Cast. I have heard of such a man,
That has been very busy with my honour.
I own, I'm much indebted to you, sir,
And here return the villain back again,
You sent me by my father.
Cha. Thus I'll thank you. [*Draws.*
Acast. By this good sword, who first presumes to violence,
Makes me his foe—— [*Draws and interposes.*
Young man, it once was thought [*To Cast.*
I was fit guardian of my house's honour;
And you might trust your share with me——For you, [*To Cha.*
Young soldier, I must tell you, you have wronged me.
I promised you to do Monimia right,
And thought my word a pledge, I would not forfeit:
But you, I find, would fright us to performance.
Cast. Sir, in my younger years, with care you taught me,
That brave revenge was due to injured honour;

Oppose not then the justice of my sword,
Lest you should make me jealous of your love.
Cha. Into thy father's arms thou fliest for safety,
Because thou knowest that place is sanctified
With the remembrance of an ancient friendship.
Cast. I am a villain, if I will not seek thee,
Till I may be revenged for all the wrongs,
Done me by that ungrateful fair, thou pleadest for.
Cha. She wronged thee! by the fury in my heart,
Thy father's honour's not above Monimia's;
Nor was thy mother's truth and virtue fairer.
Acast. Boy, don't disturb the ashes of the dead
With thy capricious follies. The remembrance
Of the loved creature, that once filled these arms——
Cha. Has not been wronged.
Cast. It shall not.
Cha. No, nor shall
Monimia, though a helpless orphan, destitute
Of friends and fortune, though the unhappy sister
Of poor Chamont, whose sword is all his portion,
Be opprest by thee, thou proud imperious traitor.
Cast. Ha! set me free.
Cha. Come both.

Enter SERINA.

Ser. Alas! alas!
The cause of these disorders! my Chamont,
Who is't has wronged thee?
Cast. Now, where art thou fled
For shelter?
Cha. Come from thine, and see what safeguard
Shall then betray my fears.
Ser. Cruel Castalio,
Sheath up thy angry sword, and don't affright me.
Chamont, let once Serina calm thy breast:
If any of my friends have done thee injuries,
I'll be revenged, and love thee better for it.
Cast. Sir, if you'd have me think you did not take
This opportunity to shew your vanity,
Let's meet some other time, when by ourselves
We fairly may dispute our wrongs together.
Cha. Till then, I am Castalio's friend.
Cast. Serina,
Farewell: I wish much happiness attend you.
Ser. Chamont's the dearest thing I have on earth;
Give me Chamont, and let the world forsake me.
Cha. Witness the gods, how happy I'm in thee!
No beauteous blossom of the fragrant spring,
Though the fair child of nature, newly born,
Can be so lovely. Angry, unkind Castalio,
Suppose I should a while lay by my passions,
And be a beggar in Monimia's cause,
Might I be heard?
Cast. Sir, 'twas my last request,
You would, though I find you will not be satisfied;
So, in a word, Monimia is my scorn;
She basely sent you here to try my fears;
That was your business;
No artful prostitute, in falsehoods practised,
To make advantage of her coxcomb's follies,
Could have done more.—Disquiet vex her for it!
Cha. Farewell. [*Exit Cha. and Ser.*
Cast. Farewell—My father, you seem troubled.
Acast. Would I'd been absent, when this boisterous brave
Came to disturb thee thus. I'm grieved I hindered
Thy just resentment. But Monimia———
Cast. Damn her.
Acast. Don't curse her.
Cast. Did I?
Acast. Yes.
Cast. I'm sorry for it.
Acast. Methinks, if, as I guess, the fault's but small,
It might be pardoned.
Cast. No.
Acast. What has she done?
Cast. That she's my wife, may heaven and you forgive me.
Acast. Be reconciled then.
Cast. No.
Acast. Go see her.
Cast. No.
Acast. I'll send and bring her hither.
Cast. No.
Acast. For my sake,
Castalio, and the quiet of my age.
Cast. Why will you urge a thing my nature starts at?
Acast. Prithee forgive her.
Cast. Lightnings first shall blast me.
I tell you, were she prostrate at my feet,
Full of her sex's best dissembled sorrows,
And all that wond'rous beauty of her own,
My heart might break, but it should never soften.

Enter FLORELLA.

Flor. My lord, where are you! Oh, Castalio!
Acast. Hark.
Cast. What's that?
Flor. Oh, shew me quickly, where's Castalio!
Acast. Why, what's the business?
Flor. Oh, the poor Monimia!
Cast. Ha!
Acast. What's the matter?
Flor. Hurried by despair,
She flies with fury over all the house,
Through every room of each apartment, crying,
'Where's my Castalio? Give me my Castalio!
Except she see you, sure she'll grow distracted.
Cast. Ha! will she? Does she name Castalio?
And with such tenderness? Conduct me quickly
To the poor lovely mourner. Oh, my father!
Acast. Then wilt thou go? Blessings attend thy purpose.!
Cast. I cannot hear Monimia's soul's in sadness,
And be a man; my heart will not forgot her;
But do not tell the world you saw this of me.

Acast. Delay not then, but haste and cheer thy love.
Cast. Oh! I will throw my impatient arms about her,
In her soft bosom sigh my soul to peace,
Till through the panting breast she finds the way
To mould my heart, and make it what she will.
Monimia! oh! [*Exeunt Acasto and Cast.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber. Enter Monimia.

Mon. Stand off, and give me room!
I will not rest till I have found Castalio,
My wishes' lord, comely as the rising day,
Amidst ten thousand eminently known!
Flowers spring up where'er he treads; his eyes,
Fountains of brightness, cheering all about him!
When will they shine on me?—Oh, stay my soul!
I cannot die in peace till I have seen him.

Castalio *within.*

Cast. Who talks of dying with a voice so sweet,
That life's in love with it?
Mon. Hark! 'tis he that answers.
So, in a camp, though at the dead of night,
If but the trumpet's cheerful noise is heard,
All at the signal leap from downy rest,
And every heart awakes, as mine does now.
Where art thou?
Cast. [*Entering.*] Here, my love.
Mon. No nearer, lest I vanish.
Cast. Have I been in a dream, then, all this while?
And art thou but the shadow of Monimia?
Why dost thou fly me thus?
Mon. Oh, were it possible, that we could drown
In dark oblivion but a few past hours,
We might be happy.
Cast. Is it then so hard, Monimia, to forgive
A fault, where humble love, like mine, implores thee?
For I must love thee, though it prove my ruin.
Which way shall I court thee?
What shall I do to be enough thy slave,
And satisfy the lovely pride that's in thee?
I'll kneel to thee, and weep a flood before thee.
Yet prithee, tyrant, break not quite my heart;
But when my task of penitence is done,
Heal it again, and comfort me with love.
Mon. If I am dumb, Castalio, and want words
To pay thee back this mighty tenderness,
It is because I look on thee with horror,
And cannot see the man I have wronged.
Cast. Thou hast not wronged me.
Mon. Ah! alas, thou talk'st
Just as thy poor heart thinks! Have not I wronged thee?
Cast. No.
Mon. Still thou wander'st in the dark, Castalio;
But wilt, ere long, stumble on horrid danger.
Cast. What means my love?
Mon. Could'st thou but forgive me——
Cast. What?
Mon. For my fault last night: alas, thou can'st not!
Cast. I can, and do.
Mon. Thus crawling on the earth,
Would I that pardon meet; the only thing
Can make me view the face of heaven with hope.
Cast. Then, let's draw near.
Mon. Ah, me!
Cast. So, in the fields,
When the destroyer has been out for prey,
The scattered lovers of the feathered kind,
Seeking, when danger's past, to meet again,
Make moan, and call, by such degrees approach;
'Till, joining thus, they bill, and spread their wings,
Murmuring love, and joy their fears are over.
Mon. Yet, have a care; be not too fond of peace,
Lest, in pursuance of the goodly quarry,
Thou meet a disappointment that distracts thee.
Cast. My better angel, then do thou inform me,
What danger threatens me, and where it lies:
Why didst thou (prithee smile, and tell me why)
When I stood waiting underneath thy window,
Quaking with fierce and violent desires;
The dropping dews fell cold upon my head,
Darkness inclosed, and the winds whistled round,
Which, with my mournful sighs, made such a music,
As might have moved the hardest heart; why wert thou
Deaf to my griefs, and senseless of my pains?
Mon. Did not I beg thee to forbear inquiry?
Readst thou not something in my face, that speaks
Wonderful change, and horror from within me?
Cast. Then there is something yet, which I have not known:
What dost thou mean by horror and forbearance
Of mine inquiry? Tell me, I beg thee, tell me,
And don't betray me to a second madness!
Mon. Must I?
Cast. If, labouring in the pangs of death,
Thou wouldst do any thing to give me ease,
Unfold this riddle ere my thoughts grow wild,
And let in fears of ugly form upon me.
Mon. My heart won't let me speak it; but remember,
Monimia, poor Monimia, tells you this,
We ne'er must meet again——
Cast. What means my destiny?
For all my good or evil fate dwells in thee!
Ne'er meet again!
Mon. No, never.
Cast. Where's the power
On earth, that dare not look like thee, and say so?
Thou art my heart's inheritance; I served
A long and painful faithful slavery for thee:

And who shall rob me of the dear bought blessing?
Mon. Time will clear all; but now, let this content you.
Heaven has decreed, and therefore I'm resolved
(With torment I must tell it thee, Castalio)
Ever to be a stranger to thy love,
In some far distant country waste my life,
And, from this day, to see thy face no more.
Cast. Where am I? Sure I wander amidst enchantment,
And never more shall find the way to rest;
But, oh, Monimia! art thou indeed resolved
To punish me with everlasting absence?
Why turnest thou from me? I am alone already;
Methinks I stand upon a naked beach,
Sighing to winds, and to the seas complaining,
Whilst afar off the vessel sails away,
Where all the treasure of my soul's embarked.
Wilt thou not turn? Oh! could those eyes but speak,
I should know all, for love is pregnant in them;
They swell, they press their beams upon me still:
Wilt thou not speak? If we must part for ever,
Give me but one kind word to think upon,
And please myself withal, whilst my heart's breaking.
Mon. Ah, poor Castalio! [*Exit Monimia.*
Cast. Pity, by the gods,
She pities me! then thou wilt go eternally,
What means all this? Why all this stir to plague
A single wretch? If but your word can shake
This world to atoms, why so much ado
With me? Think me but dead, and lay me so.

Enter POLYDORE.

Pol. To live, and live a torment to myself,
What dog would bear it, that knew but his condition?
We have little knowledge, and that makes us cowards,
Because it cannot tell us what's to come.
Cast. Who's there?—
Pol. Why, what art thou?
Cast. My brother Polydore?
Pol. My name is Polydore.
Cast. Canst thou inform me——
Pol. Of what!
Cast. Of my Monimia!
Pol. No. Good-day.
Cast. In haste!
Methinks my Polydore appears in sadness.
Pol. Indeed, and so to me does my Castalio.
Cast. Do I?
Pol. Thou dost.
Cast. Alas, I have wond'rous reason!
I am strangely altered, brother, since I saw thee.
Pol. Why!
Cast. Oh! to tell thee, would but put thy heart
To pain. Let me embrace thee but a little,
And weep upon thy neck; I would repose
Within thy friendly bosom all my follies;
For thou wilt pardon them, because they are mine.
Pol. Be not too credulous; consider first;
Friends may be false. Is there no friendship false?
Cast. Why dost thou ask me that? Does this appear
Like a false friendship, when, with open arms,
And streaming eyes, I run upon thy breast?
Oh! 'tis in thee alone I must have comfort!
Pol. I fear, Castalio, I have none to give thee.
Cast. Dost thou not love me, then?
Pol. Oh, more than life:
I never had a thought of my Castalio,
Might wrong the friendship we have vowed together.
Hast thou dealt so by me?
Cast. I hope I have.
Pol. Then tell me why this mourning, this disorder?
Cast. Oh, Polydore, I know not how to tell thee;
Shame rises in my face, and interrupts
The story of my tongue.
Pol. I grieve, my friend
Knows any thing, which he is ashamed to tell me;
Or didst thou e'er conceal thy thoughts from Polydore?
Cast. Oh, much too oft!
But let me here conjure thee,
By all the kind affection of a brother,
(For I am ashamed to call myself thy friend)
Forgive me——
Pol. Well, go on.
Cast. Our destiny contrived
To plague us both with one unhappy love.
Thou, like a friend, a constant, generous friend,
In its first pangs didst trust me with thy passion,
Whilst I still smoothed my pain with smiles before thee,
And made a contract I ne'er meant to keep.
Pol. How!
Cast. Still new ways I studied to abuse thee,
And kept thee as a stranger to my passion,
'Till yesterday I wedded with Monimia.
Pol. Ah, Castalio, was that well done!
Cast. No; to conceal it from thee was much a fault.
Pol. A fault! when thou hast heard
The tale I tell, what wilt thou call it then?
Cast. How my heart throbs!
Pol. First for thy friendship, traitor,
I cancel it thus; after this day, I'll ne'er
Hold trust or converse with the false Castalio:
This, witness Heaven!
Cast. What will my fate do with me?
I've lost all happiness, and know not why.
What means this, brother?
Pol. Perjured, treacherous wretch,
Farewell!
Cast. I'll be thy slave, and thou shalt use me
Just as thou wilt, do but forgive me.

Pol. Never.
Cast. Oh! think a little what thy heart is doing:
How, from our infancy, we, hand in hand,
Have trod the path of life in love together;
One bed hath held us, and the same desires,
The same aversions, still employed our thoughts:
When e'er had I a friend, that was not Polydore's?
Or Polydore a foe, that was not mine?
Even in the womb we embraced; and wilt thou now,
For the first fault, abandon and forsake me,
Leave me, amidst afflictions, to myself,
Plunged in the gulf of grief, and none to help me?
Pol. Go to Monimia, in her arms thoul't find
Repose; she has the art of healing sorrows.
Cast. What arts?
Pol. Blind wretch! thou husband! there is a question!
Go to her fulsome bed, and wallow there:
'Till some hot ruffian, full of lust and wine,
Come storm thee out, and shew thee what's thy bargain.
Cast. Hold there, I charge thee.
Pol. Is she not a——
Cast. Whore?
Pol. Ay, whore; I think that word needs no explaining.
Cast. Alas! I can forgive even this, to thee!
But let me tell thee, Polydore, I am grieved
To find thee guilty of such low revenge,
To wrong that virtue, which thou couldst not ruin.
Pol. It seems I lie, then?
Cast. Should the bravest man
That e'er wore conquering sword, but dare to whisper
What thou proclaim'st, he were the worst of liars:
My friend may be mistaken.
Pol. Damn the evasion!
Thou meanest the worst; and he is a base-born villain,
That said I lied.
Cast. Do, draw thy sword, and thrust it through my heart;
There is no joy in life, if thou art lost,
A base-born villain!
Pol. Yes; thou never cam'st
From old Acasto's loins; the midwife put
A cheat upon my mother, and instead
Of a true brother, in a cradle by me,
Placed some coarse peasant's cub, and thou art he.
Cast. Thou art my brother still.
Pol. Thou liest.
Cast. Nay then—— [*He draws.*
Yet I am calm.
Pol. A coward's always so.
Cast. Ah!—ah—that stings home—Coward!
Pol. Ay, base-born coward! villain!
Cast. This to thy heart, then, though my mother bore thee.

[*Fight; Polydore drops his sword, and runs on Castalio's.*
Pol. Now, my Castalio is again my friend.
Cast. What have I done? my sword is in thy breast!
Pol. So I would have it be, thou best of men,
Thou kindest brother, and thou truest friend.
Cast. Ye gods, we are taught, that all your works are justice,
You are painted merciful, and friends to innocence:
If so, then why these plagues upon my head?
Pol. Blame not the heavens; here lies thy fate, Castalio;
They are not the gods, 'tis Polydore has wronged thee;
I have stained thy bed; thy spotless marriage joys
Have been polluted by thy brother's lust.
Cast. By thee!
Pol. By me, last night, the horrid deed
Was done, when all things slept but rage and incest.
Cast. Now, where's Monimia? Oh!

Enter Monimia.

Mon. I am here, who calls me?
Methought I heard a voice,
Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains,
When all his little flock's at feed before him.
But what means this? Here's blood.
Cast. Ay, brother's blood.
Art thou prepared for everlasting pains?
Pol. Oh, let me charge thee, by the eternal justice,
Hurt not her tender life!
Cast. Not kill her? Rack me,
Ye powers above, with all your choicest torments,
Horror of mind, and pains yet uninvented,
If I not practise cruelty upon her,
And wreak revenge some way yet never known.
Mon. That task myself have finished; I shall die
Before we part; I have drank a healing draught
For all my cares, and never more shall wrong thee.
Pol. O she's innocent!
Cast. Tell me that story,
And thou wilt make a wretch of me indeed.
Pol. Hadst thou, Castalio, used me like a friend,
This ne'er had happened; hadst thou let me know
Thy marriage, we had all now met in joy;
But, ignorant of that,
Hearing the appointment made, enraged to think
Thou hadst outdone me in successful love,
I, in the dark, went and supplied thy place;
Whilst, all the night, 'midst our triumphant joys,
The trembling, tender, kind, deceived Monimia,
Embraced, caressed, and called me her Castalio.
Cast. And all this is the work of my own fortune;

None but myself could e'er have been so cursed!
My fatal love, alas! has ruined thee,
Thou fairest, goodliest frame the gods e'er made,
Or ever human eyes and hearts adored.
I've murdered too my brother.
Why wouldst thou study ways to damn me farther,
And force the sin of parricide upon me?
Pol. 'Twas my own fault, and thou art innocent;
Forgive the barbarous trespass of my tongue;
'Twas a hard violence: I could have died
With love of thee, even when I used thee worst;
Nay, at each word, that my distraction uttered,
My heart recoiled, and 'twas half death to speak them.
Mon. Now, my Castalio, the most dear of men,
Wilt thou receive pollution to thy bosom,
And close the eyes of one, that has betrayed thee?
Cast. Oh, I am the unhappy wretch, whose cursed fate
Has weighed thee down into destruction with him.
Why then, thus kind to me?
Mon. When I am laid low in the grave, and quite forgotten,
Mayst thou be happy in a fairer bride;
But none can ever love thee like Monimia.
When I am dead, as presently I shall be,
(For the grim tyrant grasps my heart already)
Speak well of me; and, if thou find ill tongues
Too busy with my fame, don't hear me wronged;
'Twill be a noble justice to the memory
Of a poor wretch, once honoured with thy love.
How my head swims! 'tis very dark. Good-night.
[*Dies.*
Cast. If I survive thee—what a thought was that?
Thank Heaven, I go prepared against that curse.

Enter CHAMONT, *disarmed and seized by* ACASTO *and Servants.*

Cha. Gape earth, and swallow me to quick destruction,
If I forgive your house! if I not live
An everlasting plague to thee, Acasto,
And all thy race. Ye've overpowered me now;
But hear me, Heaven!—Ah, here's a scene of death!
My sister, my Monimia breathless!——Now,
Ye powers above, if ye have justice, strike,
Strike bolts through me, and through the cursed Castalio!
Acast. My Polydore!
Pol. Who calls?
Acast. How camest thou wounded?
Cast. Stand off, thou hot-brained, boisterous, noisy ruffian,
And leave me to my sorrows!
Cha. By the love
I bore her living, I will ne'er forsake her;
But here remain, till my heart burst with sobbing.
Cast. Vanish, I charge thee, or—
[*Draws a dagger.*
Cha. Thou canst not kill me;
That would be kindness, and against thy nature.
Acast. What means Castalio? Sure thou wilt not pull
More sorrows on thy aged father's head.
Tell me, I beg you, tell me the sad cause
Of all this ruin.
Pol. That must be my task:
But 'tis too long for one in pain to tell;
You'll in my closet find the story written
Of all our woes. Castalio is innocent,
And so is Monimia; only I am to blame.
Enquire no farther.
Cast. Thou, unkind Chamont,
Unjustly hast pursued me with thy hate,
And sought the life of him, that never wronged thee:
Now, if thou wilt embrace a nobler vengeance,
Come, join with me, and curse——
Cha. What?
Cast. First, thyself,
As I do, and the hour, that gave thee birth:
Confusion and disorder seize the world,
To spoil all trust and converse amongst men!
'Twixt families engender endless feuds,
In countries needless fears, in cities factions,
In states rebellion, and in churches schism!
Till all things move against the course of nature,
Till form's dissolved, the chain of causes broken,
And the original of being lost!
Acast. Have patience.
Cast. Patience! preach it to the winds,
The roaring seas, or raging fires! the knaves
That teach it, laugh at ye, when ye believe them.
Strip me of all the common needs of life,
Scald me with leprosy, let friends forsake me,
I'll bear it all; but cursed to the degree
That I am now, 'tis this must give me patience:
Thus I find rest, and shall complain no more.
[*Stabs himself.*
Pol. Castalio! oh!
Cast. I come.
Chamont, to thee my birth-right I bequeath;
Comfort my mourning father, heal his griefs,
[*Acasto faints into the arms of a servant.*
For I perceive they fall with weight upon him.
And, for Monimia's sake, whom thou wilt find
I never wronged, be kind to poor Serina.
Now, all I beg, is, lay me in one grave
Thus with my love. Farewell. I now am—nothing.
[*Dies.*
Cha. Take care of good Acasto, whilst I go
To search the means, by which the fates have plagued us.
'Tis thus that Heaven its empire does maintain;
It may afflict, but man must not complain.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

VENICE PRESERVED;

OR,

A PLOT DISCOVERED.

BY

OTWAY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DUKE OF VENICE.
PRIULI, *father of Belvidera.*
BEDAMAR.
JAFFIER, *husband of Belvidera.*
PIERRE, *friend of Jaffier.*
RENAULT, ELIOT, SPINOSA, THEODORE, } *Conspirators.*

WOMEN.

BELVIDERA.

Two Women, attendants on Belvidera.
The Council of ten.
Officer, Guard, Friar.
Executioner, and Rabble.

Scene—Venice.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Venice.*

Enter PRIULI *and* JAFFIER.

Pri. No more! I'll hear no more! Begone and leave me.
Jaf. Not hear me! By my suffering but you shall!
My lord, my lord! I'm not that abject wretch,
You think me. Patience! where's the distance throws
Me back so far, but I may boldly speak
In right, though proud oppression will not hear me?
Pri. Have you not wronged me?
Jaf. Could my nature e'er
Have brooked injustice, or the doing wrongs,
I need not now thus low have bent myself,
To gain a hearing from a cruel father.
Wronged you!
Pri. Yes, wronged me! In the nicest point,
The honour of my house, you have done me wrong.
You may remember (for I now will speak,
And urge its baseness) when you first came home
From travel, with such hopes as made you looked on,
By all men's eyes, a youth of expectation,
Pleased with your growing virtue, I received you;
Courted, and sought to raise you to your merits:
My house, my table, nay, my fortune too,
My very self was yours; you might have used me
To your best service; like an open friend
I treated, trusted, you, and thought you mine:
When, in requital of my best endeavours,
You treacherously practised to undo me;
Seduced the weakness of my age's darling,
My only child, and stole her from my bosom.
Oh Belvidera!
Jaf. 'Tis to me you owe her!
Childless you had been else, and in the grave
Your name extinct; no more Priuli heard of.
You may remember, scarce five years are past,
Since in your brigantine you sailed to see
The Adriatic wedded by our duke;
And I was with you: your unskilful pilot

Dashed us upon a rock; when to your boat
You made for safety; entered first yourself;
The affrighted Belvidera, following next,
As she stood trembling on the vessel's side,
Was by a wave washed off into the deep;
When instantly I plunged into the sea,
And, buffetting the billows to her rescue,
Redeemed her life with half the loss of mine.
Like a rich conquest, in one hand I bore her,
And with the other dashed the saucy waves,
That thronged and pressed to rob me of my prize.
I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms:
Indeed you thanked me; but a nobler gratitude
Rose in her soul: for from that hour she loved me,
Till for her life she paid me with herself.

Pri. You stole her from me; like a thief you stole her,
At dead of night! that cursed hour you chose,
To rifle me of all my heart held dear.
May all your joys in her prove false, like mine;
A sterile fortune, and a barren bed,
Attend you both; continual discord make
Your days and nights bitter and grievous: still
May the hard hand of a vexatious need
Oppress and grind you; till at last you find
The curse of disobedience all your portion!

Jaf. Half of your curse you have bestowed in vain;
Heaven has already crowned our faithful loves
With a young boy, sweet as his mother's beauty:
May he live to prove more gentle than his grandsire,
And happier than his father!

Pri. Rather live
To bait thee for his bread, and din your ears
With hungry cries; whilst his unhappy mother
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.

Jaf. You talk as if 'twould please you.

Pri. It would, by heaven!
Once she was dear indeed; the drops that fell
From my sad heart, when she forgot her duty,
The fountain of my life was not so precious—
But she is gone, and, if I am a man,
I will forget her.

Jaf. Would I were in my grave!

Pri. And she too with thee:
For, living here, you're but my cursed remembrancers,
I once was happy.

Jaf. You use me thus, because you know my soul
Is fond of Belvidera. You perceive
My life feeds on her, therefore thus you treat me.
Oh! could my soul ever have known satiety,
Were I that thief, the doer of such wrongs
As you upbraid me with, what hinders me
But I might send her back to you with contumely,
And court my fortune, where she would be kinder?

Pri. You dare not do it.

Jaf. Indeed, my lord, I dare not.
My heart, that awes me, is too much my master:
Three years are past, since first our vows were plighted,
During which time, the world must bear me witness,
I've treated Belvidera like your daughter,
The daughter of a senator of Venice:
Distinction, place, attendance, and observance,
Due to her birth, she always has commanded.
Out of my little fortune I've done this;
Because (though hopeless e'er to win your nature)
The world might see I loved her for herself;
Not as the heiress of the great Priuli.

Pri. No more.

Jaf. Yes, all, and then adieu for ever.
There's not a wretch, that lives on common charity,
But's happier than me: for I have known
The luscious sweets of plenty; every night
Have slept with soft content about my head,
And never waked, but to a joyful morning:
Yet now must fall, like a full ear of corn,
Whose blossom 'scaped, yet's withered in the ripening.

Pri. Home, and be humble; study to retrench;
Discharge the lazy vermin of thy hall,
Those pageants of thy folly:
Reduce the glittering trappings of thy wife
To humble weeds, fit for thy little state:
Then, to some suburb cottage both retire;
Drudge to feed loathsome life; get brats and starve—
Home, home, I say.—— [*Exit.*

Jaf. Yes, if my heart would let me——
This proud, this swelling heart: home I would go,
But that my doors are hateful to my eyes,
Filled and dammed up with gaping creditors;
Watchful as fowlers, when their game will spring.
I've now not fifty ducats in the world,
Yet still I am in love, and pleased with ruin.
Oh! Belvidera! Oh! she is my wife——
And we will bear our wayward fate together,
But ne'er know comfort more.

Enter PIERRE.

Pier. My friend, good morrow.
How fares the honest partner of my heart?
What, melancholy! not a word to spare me?

Jaf. I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damned starving quality,
Called honesty, got footing in the world.

Pier. Why, powerful villany first set it up,
For its own ease and safety. Honest men
Are the soft easy cushions, on which knaves
Repose and fatten. Were all mankind villains,
They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice,

Cut-throats rewards: each man would kill his brother
Himself; none would be paid or hanged for murder.
Honesty! 'twas a cheat invented first
To bind the hands of bold deserving rogues,
That fools and cowards might sit safe in power,
And lord it uncontrouled above their betters.
Jaf. Then honesty is but a notion?
Pier. Nothing else;
Like wit, much talked of, not to be defined.
He, that pretends to most, too, has least share in it.
'Tis a ragged virtue: Honesty! no more of it.
Jaf. Sure thou art honest?
Pier. So, indeed, men think me;
But they are mistaken, Jaffier: I am a rogue
As well as they;
A fine, gay, bold faced villain, as thou seest me.
'Tis true, I pay my debts, when they're contracted;
I steal from no man; would not cut a throat,
To gain admission to a great man's purse,
Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend
To get his place or fortune; I scorn to flatter
A blown-up fool above me, or crush the wretch beneath me;
Yet, Jaffier, for all this, I am a villain.
Jaf. A villain!
Pier. Yes, a most notorious villain;
To see the sufferings of my fellow-creatures,
And own myself a man: to see our senators
Cheat the deluded people with a shew
Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of.
They say, by them our hands are free from fetters;
Yet, whom they please, they lay in basest bonds;
Bring, whom they please, to infamy and sorrow;
Drive us, like wrecks, down the rough tide of power,
While no hold's left to save us from destruction.
All that bear this are villains, and I one,
Not to rouse up at the great call of nature,
And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
That make us slaves, and tell us, 'tis our charter.
Jaf. Oh, Aquilina! Friend, to lose such beauty!
The dearest purchase of thy noble labours!
She was thy right by conquest, as by love.
Pier. Oh! Jaffier! I had so fixed my heart upon her,
That, wheresoe'er I framed a scheme of life,
For time to come, she was my only joy,
With which I wished to sweeten future cares:
I fancied pleasures; none but one, that loves
And doats as I did, can imagine like them:
When in the extremity of all these hopes,
In the most charming hour of expectation,
Then, when our eager wishes soared the highest,
Ready to stoop and grasp the lovely game,
A haggard owl, a worthless kite of prey,
With his foul wings, sailed in, and spoiled my quarry.
Jaf. I know the wretch, and scorn him as thou hatest him.
Pier. Curse on the common good, that's so protected,
Where every slave, that heaps up wealth enough
To do much wrong, becomes the lord of right!
I, who believed no ill could e'er come near me,
Found in the embraces of my Aquilina
A wretched, old, but itching senator;
A wealthy fool, that had bought out my title;
A rogue, that uses beauty like a hamb-shin,
Barely to keep him warm; that filthy cuckoo too
Was, in my absence, crept into my nest,
And spoiling all my brood of noble pleasure.
Jaf. Didst thou not chase him thence?
Pier. I did, and drove
The rank old bearded Hirco stinking home.
The matter was complained of in the senate,
I summoned to appear, and censured basely,
For violating something they called privilege——
This was the recompence of all my service.
Would I'd been rather beaten by a coward!
A soldier's mistress, Jaffier, is his religion;
When that's profaned, all other ties are broken:
That even dissolves all former bonds of service;
And from that hour I think myself as free
To be the foe, as e'er the friend, of Venice——
Nay, dear revenge, whene'er thou call'st, I'm ready.
Jaf. I think no safety can be here for virtue,
And grieve, my friend, as much as thou, to live
In such a wretched state as this of Venice,
Where all agree to spoil the public good;
And villains fatten with the brave man's labours.
Pier. We have neither safety, unity, nor peace,
For the foundation's lost of common good;
Justice is lame, as well as blind, amongst us;
The laws (corrupted to their ends that make them)
Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny,
That every day starts up, to enslave us deeper.
Now, could this glorious cause but find out friends
To do it right, oh, Jaffier! then mightest thou
Not wear these seals of woe upon thy face;
The proud Priuli should be taught humanity,
And learn to value such a son as thou art.
I dare not speak, but my heart bleeds this moment.
Jaf. Cursed be the cause, though I, thy friend, be part on't!
Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom,
For I am used to misery, and perhaps
May find a way to sweeten it to thy spirit.
Pier. Too soon 'twill reach thy knowledge——
Jaf. Then from thee
Let it proceed. There's virtue in thy friendship,
Would make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,
Strengthen my constancy, and welcome ruin.
Pier. Then thou art ruined!
Jaf. That I long since knew;
I and ill fortune have been long acquainted.

Pier. I passed this very moment by thy doors,
And found them guarded by a troop of villains:
The sons of public rapine were destroying.
They told me, by the sentence of the law,
They had commission to seize all thy fortune:
Nay, more, Priuli's cruel hand had signed it.
Here stood a ruffian with a horrid face,
Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
Tumbled into a heap for public sale;
There was another, making villainous jests
At thy undoing: he had taken possession
Of all thy ancient, most domestic, ornaments,
Rich hangings intermixed and wrought with gold;
The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
Received thee to the arms of Belvidera,
The scene of all thy joys, was violated
By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains,
And thrown amongst the common lumber.
Jaf. Now thank heaven——
Pier. Thank heaven! for what?
Jaf. That I am not worth a ducat.
Pier. Curse thy dull stars, and the worse fate of Venice,
Where brothers, friends, and fathers, are all false;
Where there's no truth, no trust; where innocence
Stoops under vile oppression, and vice lords it.
Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last
Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch
That's doomed to banishment, came weeping forth,
Shining through tears, like April suns in showers,
That labour to o'ercome the cloud that loads them;
Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she leaned,
Kindly looked up, and at her grief grew sad,
As if they catched the sorrows, that fell from her;
Even the lewd rabble, that were gathered round
To see the sight, stood mute, when they beheld her,
Governed their roaring throats, and grumbled pity;
I could have hugged the greasy rogues: they pleased me.
Jaf. I thank thee for this story, from my soul;
Since now I know the worst, that can befal me.
Ah, Pierre! I have a heart, that could have borne
The roughest wrong, my fortune could have done me;
But, when I think what Belvidera feels,
The bitterness her tender spirit tastes of,
I own myself a coward: bear my weakness:
If, throwing thus my arms about thy neck,
I play the boy, and blubber in thy bosom.
Oh! I shall drown thee with my sorrows.
Pier. Burn,
First burn and level Venice to thy ruin!
What! starve, like beggars' brats, in frosty weather,
Under a hedge, and whine ourselves to death!
Thou, or thy cause, shall never want assistance,
Whilst I have blood or fortune fit to serve thee:
Command my heart! thou art every way its master.
Jaf. No, there's a secret pride in bravely dying.
Pier. Rats die in holes and corners; dogs run mad:
Man knows a braver remedy for sorrow—
Revenge, the attribute of gods; they stamped it
With their great image on our natures. Die!
Consider well the cause, that calls upon thee:
And, if thou art base enough, die then. Remember,
Thy Belvidera suffers; Belvidera!
Die—damn first—What! be decently interred
In a church-yard, and mingle thy brave dust
With stinking rogues, that rot in winding-sheets,
Surfeit-slain fools, the common dung of the soil!
Jaf. Oh!
Pier. Well said, out with it, swear a little—
Jaf. Swear! by sea and air; by earth, by heaven and hell,
I will revenge my Belvidera's tears.
Hark thee, my friend—Priuli—is—a senator.
Pier. A dog.
Jaf. Agreed.
Pier. Shoot him.
Jaf. With all my heart.
No more; where shall we meet at night?
Pier. I'll tell thee;
On the Rialto, every night at twelve,
I take my evening's walk of meditation;
There we two will meet, and talk of precious
Mischief——
Jaf. Farewell.
Pier. At twelve.
Jaf. At any hour; my plagues
Will keep me waking. [*Exit Pierre.*
Tell me why, good Heaven,
Thou madest me what I am, with all the spirit,
Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires,
That fill the happiest man? Ah, rather, why
Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate,
Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burthens?
Why have I sense to know the curse, that's on me?
Is this just dealing, nature?—Belvidera!

Enter BELVIDERA.

Poor Belvidera!
Bel. Lead me, lead me, my virgins,
To that kind voice. My lord, my love, my refuge!
Happy my eyes, when they behold thy face!
My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating
At sight of thee, and bound with sprightly joys.
Oh smile! as when our loves were in the spring,
And cheer my fainting soul.
Jaf. As when our loves
Were in the spring! Has then our fortune changed?
Art thou not Belvidera, still the same,
Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee?

If thou art altered, where shall I have harbour?
Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain?
Bel. Does this appear like change, or love decaying,
When thus I throw myself into thy bosom,
With all the resolution of strong truth!
Beats not my heart, as 'twould alarum thine
To a new charge of bliss?—I joy more in thee,
Than did thy mother, when she hugged thee first,
And blessed the Gods for all her travail past.
Jaf. Can there in woman be such glorious faith?
Sure all ill stories of thy sex are false!
Oh woman! lovely woman! Nature made thee
To temper man: we had been brutes without you!
Angels are painted fair to look like you:
There's in you all, that we believe of heaven;
Amazing brightness, purity and truth,
Eternal joy, and everlasting love.
Bel. If love be treasure, we'll be wondrous rich;
I have so much, my heart will surely break with it:
Vows can't express it. When I would declare
How great my joys, I'm dumb with the big thought;
I swell, and sigh, and labour with my longing.
O! lead me to some desert wide and wild,
Barren as our misfortunes, where my soul
May have its vent, where I may tell aloud
To the high heavens, and every list'ning planet,
With what a boundless stock my bosom's fraught;
Where I may throw my eager arms about thee,
Give loose to love, with kisses kindling joy;
And let off all the fire, that's in my heart.
Jaf. Oh, Belvidera! doubly I am a beggar:
Undone by fortune, and in debt to thee.
Want, worldly want, that hungry meagre fiend,
Is at my heels, and chaces me in view.
Canst thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs,
Framed for the tender offices of love,
Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty?
When banished by our miseries abroad
(As suddenly we shall be), to seek out
In some far climate, where our names are strangers,
For charitable succour; wilt thou then,
When in a bed of straw we shrink together,
And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads;
Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then
Hush my cares thus, and shelter me with love?
Bel. Oh! I will love thee, even in madness love thee;
Though my distracted senses should forsake me,
I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart
Should 'swage itself, and be let loose to thine.
Though the bare earth be all our resting-place,
Its roots our food, some clift our habitation,
I'll make this arm a pillow for thy head;
And, as thou sighing liest, and swelled with sorrow,
Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest;
Then praise our God, and watch thee till the morning.
Jaf. Hear this, you heavens! and wonder how you made her:
Reign, reign, ye monarchs, that divide the world;
Busy rebellion ne'er will let you know
Tranquillity and happiness like mine!
Like gaudy ships the obsequious billows fall,
And rise again, to lift you in your pride;
They wait but for a storm, and then devour you;
I, in my private bark already wrecked,
Like a poor merchant driven to unknown land,
That had by chance packed up his choicest treasure
In one dear casket, and saved only that;
Since I must wander further on the shore,
Thus hug my little, but my precious store,
Resolved to scorn and trust my fate no more.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter Pierre *and* Aquilina.

Aqui. By all thy wrongs, thou art dearer to my arms
Than all the wealth of Venice. Prithee stay,
And let us love to-night.
Pier. No: there's fool,
There's fool about thee. When a woman sells
Her flesh to fools, her beauty's lost to me;
They leave a taint, a sully—where they have passed;
There's such a baneful quality about them,
E'en spoils complexions with their nauseousness;
They infect all they touch: I cannot think
Of tasting any thing a fool has pulled.
Aqui. I loathe and scorn that fool thou mean'st, as much
Or more than thou canst; but the beast has gold,
That makes him necessary; power too,
To qualify my character, and poise me
Equal with peevish virtue, that beholds
My liberty with envy. In their hearts
They're loose as I am; but an ugly power
Sits in their faces, and frights pleasure from them.
Pier. Much good may it do you, madam, with your senator.
Aqui. My senator! Why, canst thou think that wretch
E'er filled thy Aquilina's arms with pleasure?
Thinkest thou, because I sometimes give him leave

To foil himself at what he is unfit for;
Because I force myself to endure and suffer him,
Thinkest thou, I love him? No; by all the joys
Thou ever gavest me, his presence is my penance.
The worst thing an old man can be is a lover,
A mere *memento mori* to poor woman.
I never lay by his decrepid side,
But all that night I pondered on my grave.
Pier. Would he were well sent thither!
Aqui. That's my wish too:
For then, my Pierre, I might have cause, with pleasure,
To play the hypocrite. Oh! how I could weep
Over the dying dotard, and kiss him too,
In hopes to smother him quite; then, when the time
Was come to pay my sorrows at the funeral,
(For he has already made me heir to treasures
Would make me out-act a real widow's whining)
How could I frame my face to fit my mourning!
With wringing hands attend him to his grave;
Fall swooning on his hearse; take mad possession
Even of the dismal vault, where he lay buried;
There, like the Ephesian matron, dwell, till thou,
My loveliest soldier, comest to my deliverance;
Then, throwing up my veil, with open arms
And laughing eyes, run to new-dawning joy.
Pier. No more: I've friends to meet me here to-night,
And must be private. As you prize my friendship,
Keep up your coxcomb; let him not pry, nor listen,
Nor frisk about the house, as I have seen him,
Like a tame mumping squirrel with a bell on;
Curs will be abroad to bite him, if you do.
Aqui. What, friends to meet! Mayn't I be of your council?
Pier. How! a woman ask questions out of bed!
Go to your senator; ask him what passes
Amongst his brethren; he'll hide nothing from you:
But pump not me for politics. No more!
Give order, that whoever in my name
Comes here, receive admittance. So good-night.
Aqui. Must we ne'er meet again? embrace no more?
Is love so soon and utterly forgotten?
Pier. As you henceforward treat your fool, I'll think on't.
Aqui. Cursed be all fools—I die, if he forsakes me;
And how to keep him, Heaven or hell instruct me! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Rialto.*

Enter JAFFIER.

Jaf. I am here; and thus, the shades of night around me,
I look as if all hell were in my heart,
And I in hell. Nay surely 'tis so with me!
For every step I tread, methinks some fiend
Knocks at my breast, and bids me not be quiet.
I've heard how desperate wretches, like myself,
Have wandered out at this dead time of night,
To meet the foe of mankind in his walk.
Sure I'm so cursed, that, though of Heaven forsaken,
No minister of darkness cares to tempt me.
Hell, hell! why sleepest thou?

Enter PIERRE.

Pier. Sure I've staid too long:
The clock has struck, and I may lose my proselyte.
Speak, who goes there?
Jaf. A dog, that comes to howl
At yonder moon. What's he, that asks the question?
Pier. A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures,
And ne'er betray their masters: never fawn
On any, that they love not. Well met, friend:
Jaffier?
Jaf. The same. O Pierre, thou art come in season;
I was just going to pray.
Pier. Ah, that's mechanic!
Priests make a trade on't, and yet starve by it, too.
No praying; it spoils business, and time's precious.
Where's Belvidera?——
Jaf. For a day or two
I've lodged her privately, till I see farther,
What fortune will do for me. Prithee, friend,
If thou wouldst have me fit to hear good counsel,
Speak not of Belvidera——
Pier. Not of her!
Jaf. Oh, no!
Pier. Not name her? May be I wish her well.
Jaf. Whom well?
Pier. Thy wife; thy lovely Belvidera.
I hope a man may wish his friend's wife well,
And no harm done.
Jaf. You are merry, Pierre.
Pier. I am so:
Thou shalt smile too, and Belvidera smile:
We'll all rejoice. Here's something to buy pins;
Marriage is chargeable. [*Gives him a purse.*
Jaf. I but half wished
To see the devil, and he's here already. Well!
What must this buy? Rebellion, murder, treason?
Tell me, which way I must be damned for this.
Pier. When last we parted, we had no qualms like these,
But entertained each other's thoughts like men,
Whose souls were well acquainted. Is the world
Reformed, since our last meeting? What new miracles
Have happened? Has Priuli's heart relented?
Can he be honest?
Jaf. Kind Heaven, let heavy curses
Gall his old age; cramps, aches, rack his bones.

And bitterest disquiet wring his heart!
Oh! let him live, till life become his burden!
Let him groan under it long, linger an age
In the worst agonies and pangs of death,
And find its ease, but late!
Pier. Nay, couldst thou not
As well, my friend, have stretched the curse to all
The senate round, as to one single villain?
Jaf. But curses stick not: Could I kill with cursing,
By Heaven I know not thirty heads in Venice
Should not be blasted. Senators should rot,
Like dogs on dunghills: But their wives and daughters
Die of their own diseases. Oh! for a curse
To kill with!
Pier. Daggers, daggers are much better.
Jaf. Ha!
Pier. Daggers.
Jaf. But where are they?
Pier. Oh! a thousand
May be disposed of, in honest hands, in Venice.
Jaf. Thou talkest in clouds.
Pier. But yet a heart, half wronged
As thine has been, would find the meaning, Jaffier.
Jaf. A thousand daggers, all in honest hands!
And have not I a friend will stick one here!
Pier. Yes, if I thought thou wert not to be cherished
To a nobler purpose, I would be that friend;
But thou hast better friends; friends, whom thy wrongs
Have made thy friends; friends, worthy to be called so.
I'll trust thee with a secret: There are spirits
This hour at work. But, as thou art a man,
Whom I have picked and chosen from the world,
Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter;
And when I've told thee that, which only gods,
And men like gods, are privy to, then swear,
No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom.
Jaf. When thou wouldst bind me, is there need of oaths?
For thou'rt so near my heart, that thou may'st see
Its bottom, sound its strength and firmness to thee.
Is coward, fool, or villain in my face?
If I seem none of these, I dare believe
Thou wouldst not use me in a little cause,
For I am fit for honour's toughest task,
Nor ever yet found fooling was my province;
And for a villanous inglorious enterprize,
I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine
Before thee, set it to what point thou wilt.
Pier. Nay, 'tis a cause thou wilt be fond of, Jaffier;
For it is founded on the noblest basis;
Our liberties, our natural inheritance.
There's no religion, no hypocrisy in it;
We'll do the business, and ne'er fast and pray for it;
Openly act a deed, the world shall gaze
With wonder at; and envy, when 'tis done.
Jaf. For liberty!
Pier. For liberty, my friend.
Thou shalt be freed from base Priuli's tyranny,
And thy sequestered fortunes healed again:
I shall be free from those opprobrious wrongs,
That press me now, and bend my spirit downward;
All Venice free, and every growing merit
Succeed to its just right: fools shall be pulled
From wisdom's seat: those baleful unclean birds,
Those lazy owls, who, perched near fortune's top,
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledged virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious.
Jaf. What can I do?
Pier. Canst thou not kill a senator?
Jaf. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill him,
For herding with that nest of fools and knaves.
By all my wrongs, thou talkest as if revenge
Were to be had; and the brave story warms me.
Pier. Swear, then!
Jaf. I do, by all those glittering stars,
And yon great ruling planet of the night;
By all good powers above, and ill below;
By love and friendship, dearer than my life,
No power or death shall make me false to thee.
Pier. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my heart.
A council is held hard by, where the destruction
Of this great empire is hatching: there I'll lead thee.
But be a man! for thou'rt to mix with men,
Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
And rule it when 'tis wildest.
Jaf. I give thee thanks
For this kind warning. Yes, I'll be a man;
And charge thee, Pierre, whene'er thou seest my fears
Betray me less, to rip this heart of mine
Out of my breast, and shew it for a coward's.
Come, let's be gone! for, from this hour, I chase
All little thoughts, all tender human follies,
Out of my bosom: Vengeance shall have room:
Revenge!
Pier. And liberty!
Jaf. Revenge! revenge! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to Aquilina's House, the Greek Courtezan.*

Enter Renault.

Ren. Why was my choice ambition? the worst ground
A wretch can build on! It is, indeed, at distance.
A goodly prospect, tempting to the view;
The height delights us, and the mountain top

Looks beautiful, because 'tis nigh to heaven;
But we ne'er think how sandy the foundation,
What storm will batter, and what tempest shake us.
Who's there?

Enter SPINOSA.

Spin. Renault, good-morrow, for by this time
I think the scale of night has turned the balance,
And weighs up morning. Has the clock struck twelve?
Ren. Yes; Clocks will go as they are set: but man,
Irregular man's ne'er constant, never certain:
I have spent at least three precious hours of darkness
In waiting dull attendance; 'tis the curse
Of diligent virtue to be mixed, like mine,
With giddy tempers, souls but half resolved.
Spin. Hell seize that soul amongst us it can frighten.
Ren. What's then the cause, that I am here alone?
Why are we not together?

Enter ELIOT.

O, sir, welcome!
You are an Englishman: when treason's hatching,
One might have thought you'd not have been behindhand.
In what whore's lap have you been lolling?
Give but an Englishman his whore and ease,
Beef, and a sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever.
Eli. Frenchman, you are saucy.
Ren. How!

Enter BEDAMAR *the Ambassador*, THEODORE, BRAMVEIL, DURAND, BRABE, REVILLIDO, MEZZANA, TERNON, RETROSI, *Conspirators.*

Bed. At difference? fie!
Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and rogues
Fall out and brawl: should men of your high calling,
Men separated by the choice of Providence
From the gross heap of mankind, and set here
In this assembly as in one great jewel,
To adorn the bravest purpose it e'er smiled on;
Should you, like boys, wrangle for trifles?
Ren. Boys!
Bed. Renault, thy hand.
Ren. I thought I'd given my heart
Long since to every man, that mingles here;
But grieve to find it trusted with such tempers,
That can't forgive my froward age its weakness.
Bed. Eliot, thou once had'st virtue. I have seen
Thy stubborn temper bend with godlike goodness,
Not half thus courted: 'Tis thy nation's glory
To hug the foe, that offers brave alliance.
One more embrace, my friends—we'll all embrace.
United thus, we are the mighty engine
Must twist this rooted empire from its basis.
Totters it not already?
Eli. Would it were tumbling!
Bed. Nay, it shall down; this night we seal its ruin.

Enter PIERRE.

Oh, Pierre! thou art welcome.
Come to my breast! for, by its hopes, thou look'st
Lovelily dreadful, and the fate of Venice
Seems on thy sword already. Oh, my Mars!
The poets, that first feigned the god of war,
Sure prophesied of thee.
Pier. Friend, was not Brutus
(I mean that Brutus, who, in open senate,
Stabbed the first Cæsar that usurped the world)
A gallant man?
Ren. Yes, and Catiline too;
Though story wrong his fame: for he conspired
To prop the reeling glory of his country:
His cause was good.
Bed. And our's as much above it,
As, Renault, thou art superior to Cethegus,
Or Pierre to Cassius.
Pier. Then to what we aim at.
When do we start? or must we talk for ever?
Bed. No, Pierre, the deed's near birth; fate seems to have set
The business up, and given it to our care;
I hope there's not a heart or hand amongst us,
But is firm and ready.
All. All.
We will die with Bedamar.
Bed. O men!
Matchless! as will your glory be hereafter:
The game is for a matchless prize, if won,
If lost, disgraceful ruin.
Ren. What can lose it?
The public stock's a beggar; one Venetian
Trusts not another. Look into their stores
Of general safety: empty magazines,
A tattered fleet, a murmuring unpaid army,
Bankrupt nobility, a harassed commonalty,
A factious, giddy, and divided senate,
Is all the strength of Venice: let's destroy it;
Let's fill their magazines with arms to awe them;
Man out their fleet, and make their trade maintain it;
Let loose the murmuring army on their masters,
To pay themselves with plunder; lop their nobles
To the base roots, whence most of them first sprung;
Enslave the rout, whom smarting will make humble;
Turn out their droning senate, and possess
That seat of empire, which our souls were framed for.
Pier. Ten thousand men are armed at your nod.
Commanded all by leaders fit to guide
A battle for the freedom of the world:

This wretched state has starved them in its service;
And, by your bounty quickened, they are resolved
To serve your glory, and revenge their own:
They've all their different quarters in this city,
Watch for the alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy.
Bed. I doubt not, friend, but thy unwearied diligence
Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease;
After this night it is resolved we meet
No more, till Venice owns us for her lords.
Pier. How lovelily the Adriatic whore,
Dressed in her flames, will shine! Devouring flames!
Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom,
And hiss in her foundation.
Bed. Now, if any
Amongst us, that owns this glorious cause,
Have friends or interest he would wish to save,
Let it be told: the general doom is sealed;
But I'd forego the hopes of a world's empire,
Rather than wound the bowels of my friend.
Pier. I must confess, you there have touched my weakness.
I have a friend; hear it! such a friend,
My heart was ne'er shut to him. Nay, I'll tell you:
He knows the very business of this hour;
But he rejoices in the cause, and loves it:
We've changed a vow to live and die together,
And he's at hand to ratify it here.
Ren. How! all betrayed!
Pier. No—I've nobly dealt with you;
I've brought my all into the public stock:
I've but one friend, and him I'll share amongst you:
Receive and cherish him; or if, when seen
And searched, you find him worthless, as my tongue
Has lodged this secret in his faithful breast,
To ease your fears, I wear a dagger here
Shall rip it out again, and give you rest.
Come forth, thou only good I e'er could boast of!

Enter Jaffier, *with a Dagger.*

Bed. His presence bears the shew of manly virtue.
Jaf. I know you'll wonder all, that thus, uncalled,
I dare approach this place of fatal councils;
But I'm amongst you, and, by Heaven, it glads me
To see so many virtues thus united,
To restore justice and dethrone oppression.
Command this sword, if you would have it quiet,
Into this breast; but, if you think it worthy
To cut the throats of reverend rogues in robes,
Send me into the cursed assembled senate:
It shrinks not, though I meet a father there.
Would you behold this city flaming? here is
A hand, shall bear a lighted torch at noon
To the arsenal, and set its gates on fire.
Ren. You talk this well, sir.
Jaf. Nay—by Heaven, I'll do this.
Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces:
You fear me a villain, and, indeed, 'tis odd
To hear a stranger talk thus, at first meeting,
Of matters that have been so well debated;
But, I come ripe with wrongs, as you with councils!
I hate this senate, am a foe to Venice;
A friend to none, but men resolved, like me,
To push on mischief. Oh! did you but know me,
I need not talk thus!
Bed. Pierre, I must embrace him.
My heart beats to this man, as if it knew him.
Ren. I never loved these huggers.
Jaf. Still I see
The cause delights ye not. Your friends survey me
As I were dangerous——But I come armed
Against all doubts, and to your trust will give
A pledge, worth more than all the world can pay for.
My Belvidera! Hoa! my Belvidera!
Bed. What wonder is next?
Jaf. Let me entreat you,
As I have henceforth hopes to call you friends,
That all but the ambassador, and this
Grave guide of councils, with my friend, that owns me,
Withdraw a while, to spare a woman's blushes.
[*Exeunt all but Bed. Ren. Jaf. Pier.*

Enter Belvidera.

Bed. Pierre, whither will this ceremony lead us?
Jaf. My Belvidera! Belvidera!
Bel. Who,
Who calls so loud at this late peaceful hour?
That voice was wont to come in gentle whispers
And fill my ears with the soft breath of love.
Thou hourly image of my thoughts, where art thou?
Jaf. Indeed 'tis late.
Bel. Oh! I have slept and dreamt,
And dreamt again. Where hast thou been, thou loiterer?
Though my eyes closed, my arms have still been opened,
Stretched every way betwixt my broken slumbers,
To search, if thou wert come to crown my rest:
There's no repose without thee: Oh! the day
Too soon will break, and wake us to our sorrow.
Come, come to bed, and bid thy cares good-night.
Jaf. Oh, Belvidera! we must change the scene,
In which the past delights of life were tasted:
The poor sleep little; we must learn to watch
Our labours late, and early every morning,
Midst winter frosts, thin clad, and fed with sparing,
Rise to our toils, and drudge away the day.

Bel. Alas! where am I! whither is it you lead me?
Methinks I read distraction in your face,
Something less gentle than the fate you tell me.
You shake and tremble too! your blood runs cold!
Heavens guard my love, and bless his heart with patience!
Jaf. That I have patience, let our fate bear witness,
Who has ordained it so, that thou and I,
(Thou, the divinest good man e'er possessed,
And I, the wretchedest of the race of man)
This very hour, without one tear, must part.
Bel. Part! must we part? Oh! am I then forsaken?
Will my love cast me off? Have my misfortunes
Offended him so highly, that he'll leave me!
Why drag you from me? Whither are you going,
My dear! my life! my love!
Jaf. Oh, friends!
Bel. Speak to me.
Jaf. Take her from my heart,
She'll gain such hold else, I shall ne'er get loose.
I charge thee, take her, but with tenderest care
Relieve her troubles, and assuage her sorrows.
Ren. Rise, madam, and command amongst your servants.
Jaf. To you, sirs, and your honours, I bequeath her,
And with her this; when I prove unworthy——
[*Gives a dagger.*
You know the rest—Then, strike it to her heart!
And tell her, he, who three whole happy years
Lay in her arms, and each kind night repeated
The passionate vows of still increasing love,
Sent that reward for all her truth and sufferings.
Bel. Nay, take my life, since he has sold it cheaply!
Or send me to some distant clime, your slave;
But let it be far off, lest my complainings
Should reach his guilty ears, and shake his peace,
Jaf. No, Belvidera, I have contrived thy honour.
Trust to my faith, and be but fortune kind
To me, as I'll preserve that faith unbroken:
When next we meet, I'll lift thee to a height
Shall gather all the gazing world about thee,
To wonder what strange virtue placed thee there.
But, if we ne'er meet more—
Bel. O! thou unkind one!
Ne'er meet more! have I deserved this from you?
Look on me, tell me, speak, thou fair deceiver!
Why am I separated from thy love?
If I am false, accuse me, but if true,
Don't, prithee don't, in poverty forsake me;
But pity the sad heart, that's torn with parting.
Yet hear me, yet recal me——
[*Exeunt Ren. Bed. and Bel.*
Jaf. Oh! my eyes,
Look not that way, but turn yourselves a while
Into my heart, and be weaned altogether!
My friend, where art thou?
Pier. Here, my honour's brother.
Jaf. Is Belvidera gone?
Pier. Renault has led her
Back to her own apartment; but, by Heaven,
Thou must not see her more, till our work's over.
Jaf. No!
Pier. Not for your life.
Jaf. Oh, Pierre, wert thou but she,
How I would pull thee down into my heart,
Gaze on thee, till my eye-strings cracked with love!
Till all my sinews, with its fire extended,
Fixed me upon the rack of ardent longing!
Then, swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
Come, like a panting turtle, to thy breast;
On thy soft bosom hovering, bill and play,
Confess the cause why last I fled away;
Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er,
And never follow false ambition more. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter BELVIDERA.

Bel. I'm sacrificed! I'm sold! betrayed to shame!
Inevitable ruin has enclosed me!
No sooner was I to my bed repaired,
To weigh and, weeping, ponder my condition;
But the old hoary wretch, to whose false care
My peace and honour were entrusted, came,
(Like Tarquin) ghastly, with infernal lust.
Oh, thou Roman Lucrece!
Thou could'st find friends, to vindicate thy wrong!
I never had but one, and he's proved false!
He, that should guard my virtue, has betrayed it!
Left me! Undone me! Oh, that I could hate him!
Where shall I go? Oh! whither, whither, wander?

Enter JAFFIER.

Jaf. Can Belvidera want a resting-place,
When these poor arms are ready to receive her?
Oh! 'tis in vain to struggle with desires!
Strong is my love to thee; for, every moment
I'm from thy sight, the heart within my bosom
Mourns, like a tender infant in its cradle,
Whose nurse had left it. Come, and with the songs
Of gentle love, persuade it to its peace.
Bel. I fear the stubborn wanderer will not own me;
'Tis grown a rebel, to be ruled no longer;
Scorns the indulgent bosom, that first lulled it,
And, like a disobedient child, disdains

The soft authority of Belvidera.
Jaf. There was a time——
Bel. Yes, yes, there was a time,
When Belvidera's tears, her cries, and sorrows,
Were not despised; when, if she chanced to sigh,
Or looked but sad——there was indeed a time,
When Jaffier would have taken her in his arms,
Eased her declining head upon his breast,
And never left her, till he found the cause.
But let her now weep seas;
Cry, till she rend the earth; sigh, till she burst
Her heart asunder; still he bears it all,
Deaf as the winds, and as the rocks unshaken.
Jaf. Have I been deaf? Am I that rock unmoved,
Against whose root, tears beat, and sighs are sent,
In vain? have I beheld thy sorrows calmly?
Witness against me, Heavens, have I done this?
Then bear me in a whirlwind back again,
And let that angry dear one ne'er forgive me.
Oh! thou too rashly censurest my love!
Could'st thou but think how I have spent this night,
Dark, and alone, no pillow to my head,
Rest in my eyes, nor quiet in my heart,
Thou would'st not, Belvidera, sure thou would'st not,
Talk to me thus; but, like a pitying angel,
Spreading thy wings, come settle on my breast,
And hatch warm comforts there, ere sorrows freeze it.
Bel. Why then, poor mourner, in what baleful corner
Hast thou been talking, with that witch, the night?
On what cold stone hast thou been stretched along,
Gathering the grumbling winds about thy head,
To mix with theirs, the accent of thy woes?
Oh! now I find the cause my love forsakes me;
I am no longer fit to bear a share
In his concernments—My weak female virtue
Must not be trusted: 'tis too frail and tender.
Jaf. Oh, Portia, Portia! What a soul was thine?
Bel. That Portia was a woman; and when Brutus,
Big with the fate of Rome, (Heaven guard thy safety!)
Concealed from her the labours of his mind,
She let him see her blood was great as his,
Flowed from a spring as noble, and a heart
Fit to partake his troubles as his love.
Fetch, fetch that dagger back, the dreadful dower,
Thou gavest last night in parting with me;—strike it
Here to my heart; and, as the blood flows from it,
Judge if it run not pure, as Cato's daughter's.
Jaf. Thou art too good, and I indeed unworthy,
Unworthy so much virtue. Teach me how
I may deserve such matchless love as thine,
And see with what attention I'll obey thee.
Bel. Do not despise me: that's the all, I ask.
Jaf. Despise thee! Hear me——
Bel. Oh! thy charming tongue
Is but too well acquainted with my weakness;
Knows, let it name but love, my melting heart
Dissolves within my breast; till, with closed eyes,
I reel into thy arms, and all is forgotten.
Jaf. What shall I do?
Bel. Tell me; be just, and tell me,
Why dwells that busy cloud upon thy face?
Why am I made a stranger? Why that sigh,
And I not know the cause? Why, when the world
Is wrapped in rest, why chuses then my love
To wander up and down in horrid darkness,
Loathing his bed, and these desiring arms?
Why are these eyes blood-shot with tedious watching?
Why starts he now; and looks, as if he wished
His fate were finished? Tell me, ease my fear;
Lest, when we next time meet, I want the power
To search into the sickness of thy mind,
But talk as wildly then as thou look'st now.
Jaf. Oh, Belvidera!
Bel. Why was I last night delivered to a villain?
Jaf. Ha! a villain?
Bel. Yes, to a villain! Why at such an hour
Meets that assembly, all made up of wretches,
That look as hell had drawn them into league?
Why, I in this hand, and in that a dagger,
Was I delivered with such dreadful ceremonies?
'To you, sirs, and to your honours I bequeath her,
And with her this: Whene'er I prove unworthy—
You know the rest—then strike it to her heart.'
Oh! why is that rest concealed from me?—Must I
Be made the hostage of a hellish trust!
For such I know I am; that's all my value.
But, by the love and loyalty I owe thee,
I'll free thee from the bondage of these slaves;
Straight to the senate, tell them all I know,
All that I think, all that my fears inform me.
Jaf. Is this the Roman virtue? this the blood
That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter?
Would she have e'er betrayed her Brutus?
Bel. No:
For Brutus trusted her. Wert thou so kind,
What would not Belvidera suffer for thee?
Jaf. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all.
Bel. Look not upon me as I am, a woman:
But as a bone, thy wife, thy friend; who long
Has had admission to thy heart, and there
Studied the virtues of thy gallant nature.
Thy constancy, thy courage, and thy truth,
Have been my daily lesson: I have learned them,
And, bold as thou, can suffer or despise
The worst of fates for thee, and with thee share them.
Jaf. Oh, you divinest powers, look down and hear

My prayers! instruct me to reward this virtue!
Yet think a little, ere thou tempt me further;
Think I have a tale to tell will shake thy nature,
Melt all this boasted constancy, thou talk'st of,
Into vile tears and despicable sorrows:
Then, if thou should'st betray me!——
Bel. Shall I swear?
Jaf. No, do not swear: I would not violate
Thy tender nature, with so rude a bond:
But as thou hop'st to see me live my days,
And love thee long, lock this within thy breast;
I have bound myself, by all the strictest sacraments,
Divine and human——
Bel. Speak!
Jaf. To kill thy father——
Bel. My father!
Jaf. Nay, the throats of the whole senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera. He, amongst us,
That spares his father, brother, or his friend,
Is damned. How rich and beauteous will the face
Of ruin look, when these wide streets run blood!
I, and the glorious partners of my fortune,
Shouting and striding o'er the prostrate dead,
Still to new waste; whilst thou, far off in safety,
Smiling, shalt see the wonders of our daring,
And, when night comes, with praise and love receive me.
Bel. Oh!
Jaf. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought!
For if thou dost——
Bel. I know it; thou wilt kill me.
Do, strike thy sword into this bosom: lay me
Dead on the earth, and then thou wilt be safe.
Murder my father! though his cruel nature
Has persecuted me to my undoing;
Driven me to basest wants; can I behold him,
With smiles of vengeance, butchered in his age?
The sacred fountain of my life destroyed?
And can'st thou shed the blood, that gave me being?
Nay, be a traitor too, and sell thy country?
Can thy great heart descend so vilely low,
Mix with hired slaves, bravoes, and common stabbers,
Nose-slitters, alley-lurking villains! join
With such a crew, and take a ruffian's wages,
To cut the throats of wretches as they sleep?
Jaf. Thou wrong'st me, Belvidera! I have engaged,
With men of souls, fit to reform the ills
Of all mankind: there's not a heart amongst them
But's stout as death, yet honest as the nature
Of man first made, ere fraud and vice were fashion.
Bel. What's he, to whose curst hands last night thou gavest me?
Was that well done? Oh! I could tell a story,
Would rouse thy lion-heart out of its den,
And make it rage with terrifying fury.
Jaf. Speak on, I charge thee.
Bel. O my love! if e'er
Thy Belvidera's peace deserved thy care,
Remove me from this place. Last night! last night!
Jaf. Distract me not, but give me all the truth!
Bel. No sooner wert thou gone, and I alone,
Left in the power of that old son of mischief;
No sooner was I laid on my sad bed,
But that vile wretch approached me. Then my heart
Throbbed with its fears: Oh, how I wept and sighed,
And shrunk and trembled! wished in vain for him,
That should protect me! Thou, alas! wert gone.
Jaf. Patience, sweet heaven, 'till I make vengeance sure!
Bel. He drew the hideous dagger forth, thou gavest him,
And with upbraiding smiles, he said, 'Behold it!
This is the pledge of a false husband's love.'
And in my arms then pressed, and would have clasped me;
But with my cries, I scared his coward heart,
Till he withdrew, and muttered vows to hell.
These are thy friends! with these thy life, thy honour,
Thy love, all staked, and all will go to ruin.
Jaf. No more: I charge thee keep this secret close.
Clear up thy sorrows; look as if thy wrongs
Were all forgot, and treat him like a friend,
As no complaint were made. No more; retire,
Retire, my life, and doubt not of my honour;
I'll heal its failings, and deserve thy love.
Bel. Oh! Should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt
In anger leave me, and return no more.
Jaf. Return no more! I would not live without thee
Another night, to purchase the creation.
Bel. When shall we meet again?
Jaf. Anon; at twelve
I'll steal myself to thy expecting arms:
Come like a travelled dove, and bring thee peace.
Bel. Indeed!
Jaf. By all our loves.
Bel. Tis hard to part:
But sure no falsehood ever looked so fairly.
Farewell! remember twelve. [*Exit.*
Jaf. Let heaven forget me,
When I remember not thy truth, thy love!
How cursed is my condition, tossed and jostled
From every corner; fortune's common fool,
The jest of rogues, an instrumental ass,
For villains to lay loads of shame upon,
And drive about just for their ease and scorn.

Enter PIERRE.

Pier. Jaffier!
Jaf. Who calls?
Pier. A friend, that could have wished
To have found thee otherwise employed. What, hunt
A wife on the dull soil! Sure a staunch husband
Of all hounds is the dullest. Wilt thou never,

Never be weaned from caudles and confections?
What feminine tales hast thou been listening to,
Of unaired shirts, catarrhs and tooth-ach, got
By thin-soaled shoes? Damnation! that a fellow,
Chosen to be a sharer in the destruction
Of a whole people, should sneak thus into corners,
To ease his fulsome lusts, and fool his mind.
Jaf. May not a man then trifle out ar hour
With a kind woman, and not wrong his calling?
Pier. Not in a cause like ours.
Jaf. Then, friend, our cause
Is in a damned condition: for I'll tell thee,
That canker-worm, called lechery, has touched it:
'Tis tainted vilely. Would'st thou think it? Renault
(That mortified old withered winter rogue)
Loves simple fornication like a priest;
I found him out for watering at my wife;
He visited her last night, like a kind guardian:
Faith! she has some temptation, that's the truth on't.
Pier. He durst not wrong his trust?
Jaf. 'Twas something late, though,
To take the freedom of a lady's chamber.
Pier. Was she in bed?
Jaf. Yes, faith, in virgin sheets,
White as her bosom, Pierre, dished neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.
Oh! how the old fox stunk, I warrant thee,
When the rank fit was on him!
Pier. Patience guide me!
He used no violence?
Jaf. No; no; out on it, violence!
Played with her neck; brushed her with his grey beard:
Struggled and touzed; tickled her, till she squeaked a little,
May be, or so—but not a jot of violence——
Pier. Damn him.
Jaf. Ay, so say I: but hush, no more of it.
All hitherto is well, and I believe
Myself no monster yet: though no man knows
What fate he is born to. Sure it is near the hour
We all should meet for our concluding orders:
Will the ambassador be here in person?
Pier. No, he has sent commission to that villain Renault,
To give the executing charge:
I'd have thee be a man, if possible,
And keep thy temper; for a brave revenge
Ne'er comes too late.
Jaf. Fear not, I am as cool as patience.
Had he completed my dishonour, rather
Than hazard the success our hopes are ripe for,
I'd bear it all with mortifying virtue.
Pier. He's yonder, coming this way through the hall;
His thoughts seem full.
Jaf. Prithee retire, and leave me
With him alone; I'll put him to some trial;
See how his rotten part will bear the touching.
Pier. Be careful, then. [*Exit.*
Jaf. Nay, never doubt, but trust me.
What! be a devil, take a damning oath
For shedding native blood! Can there be a sin
In merciful repentance? Oh, this villain!

Enter RENAULT.

Ren. Perverse and peevish! What a slave is man
To let his itching flesh thus get the better of him!
Dispatch the tool her husband—that were well.
Who's there?
Jaf. A man.
Ren. My friend, my near ally,
The hostage of your faith, my beauteous charge, is very well.
Jaf. Sir, are you sure of that?
Stands she in perfect health? beats her pulse even?
Neither too hot nor cold?
Ren. What means that question?
Jaf. Oh, women have fantastic constitutions,
Inconstant in their wishes, always wavering,
And never fixed. Was it not boldly done,
Even at first sight, to trust the thing I loved
(A tempting treasure too) with youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine? but thou art honest.
Ren. Who dares accuse me?
Jaf. Cursed be he, that doubts
Thy virtue! I have tried it, and declare,
Were I to chuse a guardian of my honour,
I'd put it in thy keeping: for I know thee.
Ren. Know me!
Jaf. Ay, know thee. There's no falsehood in thee;
Thou look'st just as thou art. Let us embrace!
Now, would'st thou cut my throat, or I cut thine?
Ren. You dare not do it.
Jaf. You lie, sir.
Ren. How!
Jaf. No more,
'Tis a base world, and must reform, that's all.

Enter SPINOSA, THEODORE, ELIOT, REVILLIDO, DURAND, BROMVEIL, *and the rest of the Conspirators.*

Ren. Spinosa, Theodore!
Spin. The same.
Ren. You are welcome.
Spin. You are trembling, sir.
Ren. 'Tis a cold night, indeed, and I am aged;
Full of decay and natural infirmities:
[*Pier. re-enters.*
We shall be warm, my friends, I hope to-morrow.
Pier. 'Twas not well done; thou should'st have stroaked him,
And not have galled him.
Jaf. Damn him, let him chew on it.
Heaven! Where am I? beset with cursed fiends
That wait to damn me! What a devil's man,
When he forgets his nature—hush, my heart.

Ren. My friends, 'tis late; are we assembled all?
Where's Theodore?
Theod. At hand.
Ren. Spinosa.
Spin. Here.
Ren. Bramveil.
Brom. I'm ready.
Ren. Durand and Brabe.
Dur. Command us.
We are prepared.
Omnes. All; all.
Ren. Mezzano, Revillido,
Ternon, Retrosi! Oh! you are men, I find,
Fit to hold your fate, and meet her summons.
To-morrow's rising sun must see you all
Decked in your honours. Are the soldiers ready?
Pier. All, all.
Ren. You, Durand, with your thousand, must possess
St. Mark's; you, captain, know your charge already;
'Tis to secure the ducal palace: You,
Brabe, with an hundred more, must gain the Secque:
With the like number, Bramveil, to the Procurale;
Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
'Till in each place you post sufficient guards:
Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet.
Jaf. Oh! reverend cruelty! damned bloody villain! [*Aside.*
Ren. During this execution, Durand, you
Must in the midst keep your battalia fast;
And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon
That may command the streets; whilst Revillido,
Messano, Ternon, and Retrosi guard you.
This done, we'll give the general alarm,
Apply petards, and force the arsenal gates;
Then fire the city round in several places,
Or with our cannon (if it do resist)
Batter to ruin. But above all I charge you,
Shed blood enough; spare neither sex nor age,
Name nor condition; if there live a senator
After to-morrow, though the dullest rogue,
That e'er said nothing, we have lost our ends.
If possible, let's kill the very name
Of senator, and bury it in blood.
Jaf. Merciless, horrid slave—Ay, blood enough!
Shed blood enough, old Renault! how thou charmest me!
Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell, till fate
Join us again, or separate us for ever:
First let's embrace. Heaven knows, who next shall thus
Wing ye together; but let's all remember,
We wear no common cause upon our swords:
Let each man think, that on his single virtue
Depends the good and fame of all the rest;
Eternal honour, or perpetual infamy.
Let us remember through what dreadful hazards
Propitious fortune hitherto has led us:
How often on the brink of some discovery
Have we stood tottering, yet still kept our ground
So well, that the busiest searchers ne'er could follow
Those subtle tracks, which puzzled all suspicion.
You droop, sir.
Jaf. No; with most profound attention
I've heard it all, and wonder at thy virtue.
Ren. Though there be yet few hours 'twixt them and ruin,
Are not the senate lulled in full security,
Quiet and satisfied, as fools are always?
Never did so profound repose fore-run
Calamity so great. Nay, our good fortune
Has blinded the most piercing of mankind,
Strengthened the fearfullest, charmed the most suspectful,
Confounded the most subtle: for we live,
We live, my friends, and quickly shall our life
Prove fatal to these tyrants. Let's consider,
That we destroy oppression, avarice,
A people nursed up equally with vices
And loathsome lusts, which nature most abhors,
And such as without shame she cannot suffer.
Jaf. Oh, Belvidera! take me to thy arms,
And shew me where's my peace, for I have lost it! [*Exit.*
Ren. Without the least remorse, then, let's resolve
With fire and sword to exterminate these tyrants;
And when we shall behold those cursed tribunals,
Stained by the tears and sufferings of the innocent,
Burning with flames rather from Heaven than ours,
The raging, furious, and unpitying soldier
Pulling his reeking daggers from the bosoms
Of gasping wretches; death in every quarter;
With all, that sad disorder can produce,
To make a spectacle of horror; then,
Then let us call to mind, my dearest friends,
That there is nothing pure upon the earth;
That the most valued things have most allays,
And that in change of all these vile enormities,
Under whose weight this wretched country labours,
The means are only in our hands to crown them.
Pier. And may those powers above, that are propitious
To gallant minds, record this cause and bless it!
Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish for,
Should there, my friends, be found among us one,
False to this glorious enterprise, what fate,
What vengeance, were fit for such a villain?
Eli. Death here without repentance, hell hereafter.
Ren. Let that be my lot, if, as here I stand,
Listed by fate among her darling sons,
Though I had one only brother, dear by all
The strictest ties of nature; though one hour

Had given us birth, one fortune fed our wants,
One only love, and that but of each other,
Still filled our minds; could I have such a friend
Joined in this cause, and had but ground to fear
He meant foul play; may this right hand drop from me,
If I'd not hazard all my future peace,
And stab him to the heart before you. Who,
Who would do less? Would'st thou not, Pierre, the same?
Pier. You've singled me, sir, out for this hard question,
As if it were started only for my sake:
Am I the thing you fear? Here, here's my bosom,
Search it with all your swords. Am I a traitor?
Ren. No; but I fear your late commended friend
Is little less. Come, sirs, 'tis now no time
To trifle with our safety. Where's this Jaffier?
Spin. He left the room just now, in strange disorder.
Ren. Nay, there is danger in him; I observed him;
During the time I took for explanation,
He was transported from most deep attention,
To a confusion which he could not smother;
His looks grew full of sadness and surprise,
All which betrayed a wavering spirit in him,
That laboured with reluctancy and sorrow.
What's requisite for safety must be done
With speedy execution; he remains
Yet in our power: I, for my own part, wear
A dagger——
Pier. Well.
Ren. And I could wish it——
Pier. Where?
Ren. Buried in his heart.
Pier. Away; we're yet all friends;
No more of this, 'twill breed ill blood among us.
Spin. Let us all draw our swords, and search the house,
Pull him from the dark hole, where he sits brooding
O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him.
Pier. Who talks of killing? Who is he, will shed the blood,
That's dear to me? is it you, or you, sir?
What, not one speak! how you stand, gaping all
On your grave oracle, your wooden god there!
Yet not a word! Then, sir, I'll tell you a secret;
Suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue.
[*To Ren.*
Ren. A coward!—— [*Handles his sword.*
Pier. Put up thy sword, old man;
Thy hand shakes at it. Come, let's heal this breach;
I am too hot, we yet may all live friends.
Spin. Till we are safe, our friendship cannot be so.
Pier. Again! Who's that?
Spin. 'Twas I.
The. And I.
Ren. And I.
Om. And all.
Ren. Who are on my side?
Spin. Every honest sword.
Let's die like men, and not be sold like slaves.
Pier. One such word more, by Heaven I'll to the senate,
And hang ye all, like dogs, in clusters.
Why peep your coward swords half out their shells?
Why do you not all brandish them like mine?
You fear to die, and yet dare talk of killing!
Ren. Go to the senate, and betray us! haste!
Secure thy wretched life; we fear to die
Less than thou darest be honest.
Pier. That's rank falsehood.
Fearest not thou death! Fie, there's a knavish itch
In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting.
Had Jaffier's wife proved kind, he'd still been true.
Faugh! how that stinks! thou die! thou kill my friend!
Or thou! or thou! with that lean withered face!
Away, disperse all to your several charges,
And meet to-morrow where your honour calls you.
I'll bring that man, whose blood you so much thirst for,
And you shall see him venture for you fairly—
Hence! hence, I say. [*Exit Renault angrily.*
Spin. I fear we have been to blame,
And done too much.
The. 'Twas too far urged against the man you loved.
Rev. Here take our swords, and crush them with your feet.
Spin. Forgive us, gallant friend.
Pier. Nay, now you've found
The way to melt, and cast me as you will.
I'll fetch this friend, and give him to your mercy:
Nay, he shall die, if you will take him from me.
For your repose, I'll quit my heart's best jewel;
But would not have him torn away by villains,
And spiteful villany.
Spin. No, may you both
For ever live, and fill the world with fame.
Pier. Now ye are too kind. Where rose all this discord?
Oh, what a dangerous precipice have we 'scaped!
How near a fall was all we had long been building!
What an eternal blot had stained our glories,
If one, the bravest and the best of men,
Had fallen a sacrifice to rash suspicion,
Butchered by those, whose cause he came to cherish!
Oh! could you know him all, as I have known him;
How good he is, how just, how true, how brave,
You would not leave this place till you had seen him;
Humbled yourselves before him, kissed his feet.

And gained remission for the worst of follies.
Come but to-morrow, all your doubts shall end,
And to your loves me better recommend,
That I've preserved your fame, and saved my friend. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Rialto.*

Enter JAFFIER *and* BELVIDERA.

Jaf. WHERE dost thou lead me? Every step I move,
Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb
Of a racked friend! Oh, my charming ruin!
Where are we wandering?
Bel. To eternal honour.
To do a deed, shall chronicle thy name
Among the glorious legends of those few,
That have saved sinking nations. Thy renown
Shall be the future song of all the virgins,
Who, by thy piety, have been preserved
From horrid violation. Every street
Shall be adorned with statues to thy honour;
And at thy feet this great inscription written,
Remember him, that propped the fall of Venice.
Jaf. Rather, remember him, who, after all
The sacred bonds of oaths, and holier friendship,
In fond compassion to a woman's tears,
Forgot his manhood, virtue, truth, and honour,
To sacrifice the bosom, that relieved him.
Why wilt thou damn me?
Bel. Oh, inconstant man!
How will you promise! how will you deceive!
Do, return back, replace me in my bondage,
Tell all thy friends how dangerously thou lovest me,
And let thy dagger do its bloody office.
Oh! that kind dagger, Jaffier, how 'twill look
Struck through my heart, drenched in my blood to the hilt!
Whilst these poor dying eyes shall, with their tears,
No more torment thee; then thou wilt be free:
Or, if thou think'st it nobler, let me live,
Till I'm a victim to the hateful lust
Of that infernal devil, that old fiend,
That's damned himself, and would undo mankind.
Last night, my love!
Jaf. Name it not again!
It shews a beastly image to my fancy,
Will wake me into madness. Oh, the villain!
That durst approach such purity as thine
On terms so vile: Destruction, swift destruction,
Fall on my coward head, and make my name
The common scorn of fools, if I forgive him!
If I forgive him? If I not revenge
With utmost rage, and most unstaying fury,
Thy sufferings, thou dear darling of my life.
Bel. Delay no longer then, but to the senate,
And tell the dismallest story ever uttered:
Tell them what bloodshed, rapines, desolations,
Have been prepared: how near's the fatal hour.
Save thy poor country, save the reverend blood
Of all its nobles, which to-morrow's dawn,
Must else see shed. Save the poor tender lives
Of all those little infants, which the swords
Of murderers are whetting for this moment.
Think, thou already hearest their dying screams;
Think, that thou see'st their sad distracted mothers,
Kneeling before thy feet, and begging pity:
With torn dishevelled hair, and streaming eyes,
Their naked mangled breasts, besmeared with blood;
And even the milk, with which their fondled babes
Softly they hushed, dropping in anguish from them;
Think thou seest this, and then consult thy heart.
Jaf. Oh!
Bel. Think too, if you lose this present minute,
What miseries the next day brings upon thee:
Imagine all the horrors of that night;
Murder and rapine, waste, and desolation,
Confusedly raging: Think, what then may prove
My lot; the ravisher may then come safe,
And 'midst the terror of the public ruin,
Do a damned deed; perhaps may lay a train
To catch thy life: Then where will be revenge,
The dear revenge, that's due to such a wrong?
Jaf. By all heaven's powers, prophetic truth dwells in thee!
For every word thou speakest, strikes through my heart,
Like a new light, and shews it, how it has wandered.
Just what thou hast made me, take me, Belvidera,
And lead me to the place, where I am to say
This bitter lesson; where I must betray
My truth, my virtue, constancy, and friends.
Must I betray my friend? Ah! take me quickly;
Secure me well before that thought's renewed;
If I relapse once more, all is lost for ever.
Bel. Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera?
Jaf. No; thou art my soul itself; wealth, friendship, honour,
All present joys, and earnest of all future,
Are summed in thee. Methinks, when in thy arms,
Thus leaning on thy breast, one minute's more
Than a long thousand years of vulgar hours.
Why was such happiness not given me pure?
Why dashed with cruel wrongs, and bitter warnings?
Come, lead me forward, now, like a tame lamb
To sacrifice. Thus, in his fatal garlands

Decked fine and pleased, the wanton skips and plays,
Trots by the enticing flattering priestess' side,
And much transported with its little pride,
Forgets his dear companions of the plain;
Till, by her bound, he's on the altar slain,
Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the pain.

Enter Officer and Six Guards.

Offi. Stand! who goes there?
Bel. Friends.
Jaf. Friends, Belvidera! Hide me from my friends!
By Heaven, I would rather see the face of hell,
Than meet the man I love.
Offi. But what friends are you?
Bel. Friends to the senate, and to the state of Venice.
Offi. My orders are to seize on all I find
At this late hour, and bring them to the council,
Who are now sitting.
Jaf. Sir, you shall be obeyed.
Hold, brute, stand off! none of your paws upon me.
Now, the lot 's cast, and, Fate, do what thou wilt.
[*Exeunt guarded.*

SCENE II.

The Senate-House, where appear sitting the Duke of VENICE, PRIULI, ANTONIO, *and eight other Senators.*

Duke. Antonio, Priuli, senators of Venice,
Speak, why are we assembled here this night?
What have you to inform us of, concerns
The state of Venice' honour, or its safety?
Pri. Could words express the story I have to tell you,
Fathers, these tears were useless; these sad tears,
That fall from my old eyes; but these is cause
We all should weep, tear off these purple robes,
And wrap ourselves in sackcloth, sitting down
On the sad earth, and cry aloud to heaven:
Heaven knows, if yet there be an hour to come,
Ere Venice be no more.
All Sen. How!
Pri. Nay, we stand
Upon the very brink of gaping ruin,
Within this city's formed a dark conspiracy,
To massacre us all, our wives and children,
Kindred and friends, our palaces and temples
To lay in ashes; nay, the hour too fixed;
The swords, for aught I know, drawn e'en this moment,
And the wild waste begun. From unknown hands
I had this warning; but, if we are men,
Let us not be tamely butchered, but do something
That may inform the world, in after ages,
Our virtue was not ruined, though we were.

[*A noise without.*
Room, room, make room for some prisoners——
Sen. Let us raise the city,

Enter Officer and Guards.

Duke. Speak, there. What disturbance?
Offi. Two prisoners have the guards seized in the street,
Who say, they come to inform this reverend senate
About the present danger.

Enter JAFFIER *and Officer.*

All. Give them entrance—Well, who are you?
Jaf. A villain.
Ant. Short and pithy.
The man speaks well.
Jaf. Would every man, that hears me,
Would deal so honestly, and own his title.
Duke. 'Tis rumoured, that a plot has been contrived
Against this state; and you have a share in it too.
If you are a villain, to redeem your honour
Unfold the truth, and be restored with mercy.
Jaf. Think not, that I to save my life came hither;
I know its value better; but in pity
To all those wretches, whose unhappy dooms
Are fixed and sealed. You may see here before you,
The sworn and covenanted foe of Venice:
But use me as my dealings may deserve,
And I may prove a friend.
Duke. The slave capitulates!
Give him the torture!
Jaf. That you dare not do:
Your fear wont let you, not the longing itch
To hear a story, which you dread the truth of—
Truth, which the fear of smart shall ne'er get from me.
Cowards are scared with threatenings; boys are whipt
Into confessions: but a steady mind
Acts of itself, ne'er asks the body counsel.
Give him the torture! Name but such a thing
Again, by heaven I'll shut these lips for ever.
Not all your racks, your engines, or your wheels,
Shall force a groan away, that you may guess at.
Ant. A bloody-minded fellow, I'll warrant;
A damned bloody-minded fellow.
Duke. Name your conditions.
Jaf. For myself full pardon,
Besides the lives of two and twenty friends,
Whose names are here enrolled—Nay, let their crimes
Be ne'er so monstrous, I must have the oaths
And sacred promise of this reverend council,
The thing I ask be ratified. Swear this,
And I'll unfold the secret of your danger.
All. We'll swear.
Duke. Propose the oath.
Jaf. By all the hopes

Ye have of peace and happiness hereafter,
Swear.
All. We all swear.
Jaf. To grant me what I have asked,
Ye swear?
All. We swear.
Jaf. And, as ye keep the oath,
May you, and your posterity be blessed,
Or cursed for ever.
Jaf. Then here's the list, and with it the full disclose
Of all, that threatens you. [*Delivers a paper.*
Now, Fate, thou hast caught me.
Ant. Why, what a dreadful catalogue of cutting throats is here! I'll warrant you, not one of these fellows but has a face like a lion. I dare not so much as read their names over.
Duke. Give order, that all diligent search be made
To seize these men; their characters are public;
The paper intimates their rendezvous
To be at the house of a famed Grecian courtezan,
Called Aquilina; see that place secured.
You, Jaffier, must with patience bear, till morning,
To be our prisoner.
Jaf. Would the chains of death
Had bound me safe, e'er I had known this minute!
I've done a deed will make my story hereafter
Quoted in competition with all ill ones:
The history of my wickedness shall run
Down thro' the low traditions of the vulgar,
And boys be taught to tell the tale of Jaffier.
Duke. Captain, withdraw your prisoner.
Jaf. Sir, if possible,
Lead me, where my own thoughts themselves may lose me;
Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget myself, and this day's guilt and falsehood.
Cruel remembrance! how shall I appease thee? [*Exit guarded.*
Offi. [*Without.*] More traitors; room, room, room, make room there.
Duke. How is this? guards!
Where are our guards? Shut up the gates, the treason's
Already at our doors.

Enter Officer.

Offi. My lords, more traitors,
Seized in the very act of consultation;
Furnished with arms and instruments of mischief.
Bring in the prisoners.

Enter PIERRE, RENAULT, THEODORE, ELIOT, REVELLIDO, *and other Conspirators, in fetters.*

Pier. You, my lords, and fathers
(As you are pleased to call yourselves) of Venice,
If you sit here to guide the course of justice,
Why these disgraceful chains upon the limbs,
That have so often laboured in your service?
Are these the wreaths of triumph ye bestow
On those, that bring you conquest home, and honours?
Duke. Go on; you shall be heard, sir.
Ant. And be hanged too, I hope.
Pier. Are these the trophies I have deserved for fighting
Your battles with confederated powers?
When winds and seas conspired to overthrow you,
And brought the fleets of Spain to your own harbours;
When you, great Duke, shrunk trembling in your palace,
And saw your wife, the Adriatic, ploughed,
Like a lewd whore, by bolder prows than yours,
Stepped not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians
The task of honour, and the way to greatness?
Raised you from your capitulating fears
To stipulate the terms of sued-for peace?
And this my recompence! if I am a traitor,
Produce my charge; or shew the wretch that's base
And brave enough, to tell me I am a traitor.
Duke. Know you one Jaffier?
[*Consp. murmur.*
Pier. Yes, and know his virtue.
His justice, truth, his general worth, and sufferings
From a hard father, taught me first to love him.

Enter JAFFIER *guarded.*

Duke. See him brought forth.
Pier. My friend too bound! nay, then,
Our fate has conquered us, and we must fall.
Why droops the man, whose welfare's so much mine,
They are but one thing? These reverend tyrants, Jaffier,
Call us traitors. Art thou one, my brother?
Jaf. To thee, I am the falsest, veriest slave,
That e'er betrayed a generous, trusting friend,
And gave up honour to be sure of ruin.
All our fair hopes, which morning was to have crowned,
Has this cursed tongue o'erthrown.
Pier. So, then, all's over:
Venice has lost her freedom, I my life.
No more. Farewell.
Duke. Say; will you make confession
Of your vile deeds, and trust the senate's mercy?
Pier. Cursed be your senate! cursed your constitution!
The curse of growing factions and divisions,
Still vex your councils, shake your public safety,
And make the robes of government you wear,
Hateful to you, as these base chains to me!
Duke. Pardon, or death?
Pier. Death! honourable death!
Ren. Death's the best thing we ask, or you can give;

No shameful bonds, but honourable death.
Duke. Break up the council. Captain, guard your prisoners.
Jaffier, you are free, but these must wait for judgment. [*Exeunt all the Senators.*
Pier. Come, where's my dungeon? Lead me to my straw:
It will not be the first time I've lodged hard,
To do the senate service.
Jaf. Hold, one moment.
Pier. Who's he disputes the judgment of the senate?
Presumptuous rebel—on— [*Strikes Jaffier.*
Jaf. By Heaven, you stir not!
I must be heard; I must have leave to speak.
Thou hast disgraced me, Pierre, by a vile blow:
Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice?
But use me as thou wilt, thou cans't not wrong me,
For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries:
Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy,
With pity and with charity behold me;
Shut not thy heart against a friend's repentance;
But, as there dwells a godlike nature in thee,
Listen with mildness to my supplications!
Pier. What whining monk art thou? what holy cheat,
That would encroach upon my credulous ears,
And cant'st thus vilely? Hence! I know thee not;
Dissemble and be nasty. Leave, hypocrite.
Jaf. Not know me, Pierre!
Pier. No, I know thee not! What art thou?
Jaf. Jaffier, thy friend, thy once-loved valued friend!
Tho' now deservedly scorned, and used most hardly.
Pier. Thou, Jaffier! thou my once-loved valued friend!
By Heavens thou lyest; the man so called, my friend,
Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant;
Noble in mind, and in his person lovely;
Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart:
But thou! a wretched, base, false, worthless coward,
Poor, even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect;
All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee.
Prithee avoid; nor longer cling thus round me,
Like something baneful, that my nature's chilled at.
Jaf. I have not wronged thee, by these tears I have not,
But still am honest, true, and, hope too, valiant;
My mind still full of thee, therefore still noble.
Let not thy eyes then shun me, nor thy heart
Detest me utterly. Oh! look upon me,
Look back, and see my sad, sincere submission!
How my heart swells, as e'en 'twould burst my bosom;
Fond of its goal, and labouring to be at thee.
What shall I do? what say, to make thee hear me?
Pier. Hast thou not wronged me? Dar'st thou call thyself
That once-loved, valued friend of mine,
And swear thou hast not wronged me? Whence these chains?
Whence the vile death, which I may meet this moment?
Whence this dishonour, but from thee, thou false one?
Jaf. All's true; yet grant one thing, and I've done asking.
Pier. What's that?
Jaf. To take thy life, on such conditions
The council have proposed: thou, and thy friends,
May yet live long, and to better treated.
Pier. Life! ask my life! Confess! record myself
A villain, for the privilege to breathe!
And carry up and done this cursed city,
A discontented and repining spirit,
Burthensome to itself, a few years longer;
To lose it, may be, at last, in a lewd quarrel
For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou art!
No, this vile world and I have long been jangling,
And cannot part on better terms than now,
When only men, like thee, are fit to live in it.
Jaf. By all that's just———
Pier. Swear by some other powers,
For thou hast broke that sacred oath too lately.
Jaf. Then, by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
Till to thyself, at least, thou art reconciled,
However thy resentment deal with me.
Pier. Not leave me!
Jaf. No; thou shalt not force me from thee.
Use me reproachfully, and like a slave;
Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs
On my poor head: I'll bear it all with patience,
Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty;
Lie at thy feet, and kiss them, though they spurn me;
Till, wounded by my sufferings, thou relent,
And raise me to thy arms, with dear forgiveness.
Pier. Art thou not———
Jaf. What?
Pier. A traitor?
Jaf. Yes.
Pier. A villain.
Jaf. Granted.
Pier. A coward, a most scandalous coward;
Spiritless, void of honour; one, who has sold
Thy everlasting fame for shameless life!
Jaf. All, all, and more, much more: my faults are numberless,
Pier. And would'st thou have me live on terms like thine?
Base, as thou art false———
Jaf. No; 'tis to me, that is granted:
The safety of thy life was all I aimed at,
In recompence for faith and trust so broken.

Pier. I scorn it more, because preserved by thee;
And as, when first my foolish heart took pity
On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries,
Relieved thy wants, and raised thee from the state
Of wretchedness, in which thy fate had plunged thee,
To rank thee in my list of noble friends;
All I received, in surety for thy truth,
Were unregarded oaths, and this, this dagger,
Given with a worthless pledge, thou since has stolen:
So I restore it back to thee again;
Swearing by all those powers, which thou hast violated,
Never from this cursed hour to hold communion,
Friendship, or interest, with thee, though our years
Were to exceed those limited the world.
Take it—farewell—for now I owe thee nothing.
Jaf. Say thou wilt live, then,
Pier. For my life, dispose it
Just as thou wilt, because 'tis what I'm tired with.
Jaf. Oh, Pierre!
Pier. No more.
Jaf. My eyes won't lose the sight of thee,
But languish after thee, and ache with gazing.
Pier. Leave me—Nay, then, thus, thus I throw thee from me;
And curses, great as is thy falshood, catch thee!
[*Exit.*
Jaf. Amen.
He's gone, my father, friend, preserver,
And here's the portion he has left me:
[*Holds the dagger up.*
This dagger. Well remembered! with this dagger,
I gave a solemn vow of dire importance;
Parted with this, and Belvidera together.
Have a care, memory! drive that thought no farther:
No, I'll esteem it, as a friend's last legacy;
Treasure it up within this wretched bosom,
Where it may grow acquainted with my heart,
That, when they meet, they start not from each other.
So now for thinking—A blow! called traitor, villain,
Coward, dishonourable coward!
Oh! for a long sound sleep, and so forget it.
Down, busy devil!

Enter BELVIDERA.

Bel. Whither shall I fly?
Where hide me and my miseries together?
Where's now the Roman constancy I boasted?
Sunk into trembling fears and desperation,
Not daring to look up to that dear face,
Which used to smile, even on my faults; but, down,
Bending these miserable eyes on earth,
Must move in penance, and implore much mercy.
Jaf. Mercy! kind heaven has surely endless stores,
Hoarded for thee, of blessings yet untasted:
Let wretches, loaded hard with guilt, as I am,
Bow with the weight, and groan beneath the burthen,
Creep with a remnant of that strength, they've left,
Before the footstool of that heaven, they've injured.
Oh, Belvidera! I'm the wretched'st creature
E'er crawled on earth. Now, if thou hast virtue, help me;
Take me into thy arms, and speak the words of peace
To my divided soul, that wars within me,
And raises every sense to my confusion:
By heaven, I'm tottering on the very brink
Of peace, and thou art all the hold I've left.
Bel. Alas! I know thy sorrows are most mighty:
I know thou'st cause to mourn; to mourn, my Jaffier,
With endless cries, and never-ceasing wailing:
Thou'st lost———
Jaf. Oh! I have lost what can't be counted.
My friend too, Belvidera, that dear friend,
Who, next to thee, was all my heart rejoiced in,
Has used me like a slave, shamefully used me:
'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story.
What should I do? Resentment, indignation,
Love, pity, fear, and memory how I've wronged him,
Distract my quiet with the very thought of it,
And tear my heart to pieces in my bosom.
Bel. What has he done?
Jaf. Thou'dst hate me, should I tell thee.
Bel. Why?
Jaf. Oh! he has used me—yet, by heaven, I bear it;
He has used me, Belvidera—but first swear,
That when I've told thee, thou wilt not loath me utterly,
Though vilest blots, and stains appear on me;
But still, at least, with charitable goodness,
Be near me in the pangs of my affliction,
Nor scorn me, Belvidera, as he has done.
Bel. Have I then e'er been false, that now I am doubted?
Speak, what's the cause I am grown into distrust?
Why thought unfit to hear my love's complaining?
Jaf. Oh!
Bel. Tell me.
Jaf. Bear my failings, for they are many.
Oh, my dear angel! in that friend, I have lost
All my soul's peace; for every thought of him
Strikes my sense hard, and deads it in my brains!
Would'st thou believe it?
Bel. Speak.
Jaf. Before we parted,
E're yet his guards had led him to his prison,
Full of severest sorrow for his sufferings,

With eyes o'erflowing, and a bleeding heart,
Humbling myself, almost beneath my nature,
As at his feet I kneeled and sued for mercy,
Forgetting all our friendship, all the dearness,
In which we have lived so many years together,
With a reproachful hand he dashed a blow:
He struck me, Belvidera! by heaven, he struck me!
Buffetted, called me traitor, villain, coward.
Am I a coward? Am I a villain? Tell me!
Thou'rt the best judge, and mad'st me, if I am so.
Damnation! Coward!
Bel. Oh! forgive him, Jaffier;
And, if his sufferings wound thy heart already,
What will they do to-morrow?
Jaf. Ah!
Bel. To-morrow,
When thou shalt see him stretched in all the agonies
Of a tormenting and a shameful death;
His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,
Insulted o'er by a vile butchering villain;
What will thy heart do then? Oh! sure 'twill stream,
Like my eyes now.
Jaf. What means thy dreadful story?
Death, and to-morrow! Broken limbs and bowels!
Insulted o'er by a vile butchering villain!
By all my fears, I shall start out to madness
With barely guessing, if the truth's hid longer.
Bel. The faithless senators, 'tis they've decreed it:
They say, according to your friends' request,
They shall have death, and not ignoble bondage;
Declare their promised mercy all as forfeited;
False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession,
Warrants are passed for public death to-morrow.
Jaf. Death! doomed to die! condemned unheard! unpleaded!
Bel. Nay, cruellest racks and torments are preparing,
To force confession from their dying pangs——
Oh! do not look so terribly upon me!
How your lips shake, and all your face disordered!
What means my love?
Jaf. Leave me, I charge thee, leave me—Strong temptations
Wake in my heart.
Bel. For what?
Jaf. No more, but leave me.
Bel. Why?
Jaf. Oh! by Heaven, I love thee with that fondness,
I would not have thee stay a moment longer
Near these cursed hands: Are they not cold upon thee?
[*Pulls the dagger half out of his bosom, and puts it back again.*
Bel. No; everlasting comfort's in thy arms.
To lean thus on thy breast, is softer ease
Than downy pillows, decked with leaves of roses.
Jaf. Alas! thou think'st not of the thorns 'tis filled with:
Fly, e'er they gall thee. There's a lurking serpent
Ready to leap, and sting thee to the heart.
Art thou not terrified?
Bel. No.
Jaf. Call to mind
What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me.
Bel. Ha!
Jaf. Where's my friend? my friend, thou smiling mischief!
Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late; thou shouldst have fled
When thy guilt first had cause; for dire revenge
Is up, and raging for my friend. He groans!
Hark, how he groans! his screams are in my ears
Already; see, they've fixed him on the wheel!
And now they tear him!—murder! Perjured senate!
Murder!—Oh!—Hark thee, traitress, thou hast done this!
Thanks to thy tears, and false persuading love.
How her eyes speak! Oh, thou bewitching creature!
Madness can't hurt thee. Come, thou little trembler,
Creep even into my heart, and there lie safe;
'Tis thy own citadel—Ha—yet stand off!
Heaven must have justice, and my broken vows—
I'll wink, and then 'tis done——
Bel. What means the lord
Of me, my life, and love? What's in thy bosom,
Thou graspest at so? Nay, why am I thus treated?
[*Draws the dagger, and offers to stab her.*
What wilt thou do? Ah! do not kill me, Jaffier:
Pity these panting breasts, and trembling limbs,
That used to clasp thee, when thy looks were milder,
That yet hang heavy on my unpurged soul,
And plunge it not into eternal darkness!
Jaf. Know, Belvidera, when we parted last,
I gave this dagger with thee, as in trust,
To be thy portion, if I e'er proved false.
On such condition, was my truth believed;
But now 'tis forfeited, and must be paid for.
[*Offers to stab her again.*
Bel. Oh! Mercy! [*Kneeling.*
Jaf. Nay, no struggling.
Bel. Now, then, kill me,
[*Leaps on his neck, and kisses him.*
While thus I cling about thy cruel neck,
Kiss thy revengeful lips, and die in joys
Greater than any I can guess hereafter.
Jaf. I am, I am a coward, witness heaven,
Witness it, earth, and every being witness!
'Tis but one blow! yet, by immortal love,
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee.
[*He throws away the dagger, and embraces her.*
The seal of Providence is sure upon thee;

And thou wert born for yet unheard-of wonders.
Oh! thou wert either born to save or damn me!
By all the power, that's given thee o'er my soul,
By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles,
By the victorious love, that still waits on thee,
Fly to thy cruel father, save my friend,
Or all our future quiet's lost for ever!
Fall at his feet, cling round his reverend knees,
Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears,
Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him!
Crush him in thy arms, torture him with thy softness;
Nor, till thy prayers are granted, set him free,
But conquer him, as thou hast conquered me!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Priuli's House.*

Enter PRIULI *solus.*

Pri. WHY, cruel Heaven, have my unhappy days
Been lengthened to this sad one? Oh! dishonour
And deathless infamy is fallen upon me!
Was it my fault? Am I a traitor? No.
But then, my only child, my daughter wedded;
There my best blood runs foul, and a disease
Incurable has seized upon my memory,
To make it rot and stink to after-ages!
Curst be the fatal minute, when I got her;
Or would that I had been any thing but man,
And raised an issue, which would ne'er have wronged me.
The miserablest creatures (man excepted)
Are not the less esteemed, though their posterity
Degenerate from the virtues of their fathers:
The vilest beasts are happy in their offspring,
While only man gets traitors, whores, and villains!
Cursed be the names, and some swift blow from fate
Lay this head deep, where mine may be forgotten!

Enter BELVIDERA, *in a long mourning veil.*

Bel. He's there, my father, my inhuman father,
That for three years has left an only child
Exposed to all the outrages of fate,
And cruel ruin!—Oh———
Pri. What child of sorrow
Art thou, that comest wrapt in weeds of sadness,
And movest, as if thy steps were towards a grave?
Bel. A wretch, who, from the very top of happiness,
Am fallen into the depths of misery,
And want your pitying hand to raise me up again.
Pri. Indeed thou talkst as thou hadst tasted sorrows;
Would I could help thee!
Bel. 'Tis greatly in your power:
The world, too, speaks you charitable; and I,
Who ne'er asked alms before, in that dear hope,
Am come a begging to you, sir.
Pri. For what?
Bel. Oh, well regard me! is this voice a strange one?
Consider, too, when beggars once pretend
A case like mine, no little will content them.
Pri. What wouldst thou beg for?
Bel. Pity and forgiveness. [*Throws up her veil.*
By the kind tender names of child and father,
Hear my complaints, and take me to your love!
Pri. My daughter!
Bel. Yes, your daughter, by a mother
Virtuous and noble, faithful to your honour,
Obedient to your will, kind to your wishes,
Dear to your arms: By all the joys she gave you,
When, in her blooming years, she was your treasure,
Look kindly on me. In my face behold
The lineaments of her's you have kissed so often,
Pleading the cause of your poor cast-off child.
Pri. Thou art my daughter.
Bel. Yes—and you have often told me,
With smiles of love and chaste paternal kisses,
I had much resemblance of my mother.
Pri. Oh!
Hadst thou inherited her matchless virtues,
I had been too blessed!
Bel. Nay, do not call to memory
My disobedience; but let pity enter
Into your heart, and quite deface the impression.
For could you think how mine's perplexed, what sadness,
Fears and despair distract the peace within me,
Oh! you would take me in your dear, dear arms,
Hover with strong compassion o'er your young one,
To shelter me, with a protecting wing,
From the black gathered storm, that's just, just breaking.
Pri. Don't talk thus.
Bel. Yes, I must; and you must hear too.
I have a husband.
Pri. Damn him.
Bel. Oh! do not curse him;
He would not speak so hard a word towards you
On any terms, howe'er he deals with me.
Pri. Ha! what means my child?
Bel. Oh! there's but this short moment
'Twixt me and fate: yet send me not with curses
Down to my grave; afford me one kind blessing
Before we part: just take me in your arms,
And recommend me with a prayer to heaven,
That I may die in peace; and when I am dead—
Pri. How my soul's catch'd!
Bel. Lay me, I beg you, lay me
By the dear ashes of my tender mother.

She would have pitied me, had fate yet spared her.
Pri. By Heaven, my aching heart forebodes much mischief!
Tell me thy story, for I'm still thy father.
Bel. No; I'm contented.
Pri. Speak!
Bel. No matter.
Pri. Tell me:
By yon blessed Heaven, my heart runs o'er with fondness!
Bel. Oh!
Pri. Utter it!
Bel. Oh! my husband, my dear husband,
Carries a dagger in his once kind bosom,
To pierce the heart of your poor Belvidera!
Pri. Kill thee!
Bel. Yes, kill me. When he passed his faith
And covenant against your state and senate,
He gave me up a hostage for his truth:
With me a dagger and a dire commission,
Whene'er he failed, to plunge it through this bosom!
I learnt the danger, chose the hour of love
To attempt his heart, and bring it back to honour.
Great love prevailed, and blest me with success!
He came, confessed, betrayed his dearest friends
For promised mercy. Now they are doomed to suffer,
Galled with remembrance of what then was sworn,
If they are lost, he vows to appease the gods
With this poor life, and make my blood the atonement!
Pri. Heavens!
Bel. Think you saw what passed at our last parting:
Think you beheld him, like a raging lion,
Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps,
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain
Of burning fury: think you saw his one hand
Fixed on my throat, whilst the extended other
Grasped a keen threatening dagger: Oh! 'twas thus
We last embraced, when, trembling with revenge,
He dragged me to the ground, and at my bosom
Presented horrid death. Cried out, 'My friends!
Where are my friends?' swore, wept, raged, threatened, loved,
For yet he loved, and that dear love preserved me
To this last trial of a father's pity.
I fear not death; but cannot bear the thought,
That that dear hand should do the unfriendly office.
If I was ever then your care, now hear me;
Fly to the senate, save the promised lives
Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice.
Pri. Oh, my heart's comfort!
Bel. Will you not, my father?
Weep not, but answer me!
Pri. By Heaven I will.
Not one of them but what shall be immortal.
Canst thou forgive me all my follies past?
I'll henceforth be indeed a father; never,
Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,
Dear as the vital warmth, that feeds my life,
Dear as these eyes, that weep in fondness over thee:
Peace to thy heart! Farewell.
Bel. Go, and remember,
'Tis Belvidera's life her father pleads for.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Garden.*

Enter JAFFIER.

Jaf. Final destruction seize on all the world!
Bend down ye heavens, and, shutting round this earth,
Crush the vile globe into its first confusion;
Scorch it with elemental flames to one cursed cinder,
And all us little creepers on it, called men,
Burn, burn to nothing; but let Venice burn,
Hotter than all the rest: Here kindle hell,
Ne'er to extinguish; and let souls hereafter
Groan here, in all those pains, which mine feels now!

Enter BELVIDERA.

Bel. My life—— [*Meeting him.*
Jaf. My plague—— [*Turning from her.*
Bel. Nay, then I see my ruin.
If I must die—
Jaf. No, death's this day too busy;
Thy father's ill-timed mercy came too late.
I thank thee for thy labours though; and him too;
But all my poor, betrayed, unhappy friends,
Have summons to prepare for Fate's black hour;
And yet I live.
Bel. Then be the next my doom:
I see, thou hast passed my sentence in thy heart,
And I'll no longer weep, or plead against it,
But with the humblest, most obedient patience,
Meet thy dear hands and kiss them, when they wound me.
Indeed I am willing, but I beg thee do it
With some remorse; and when thou givest the blow,
View me with eyes of a relenting love,
And shew me pity, for 'twill sweeten justice.
Jaf. Shew pity to thee!
Bel. Yes; and when thy hands,
Charged with my fate, come trembling to the deed,
As thou hast done a thousand times
To this poor breast, when kinder rage hath brought thee,
When our stung hearts have leaped to meet each other,
And melting kisses sealed our lips together;
When joys have left me gasping in thy arms—

So let my death come now, and I'll not shrink from it.
Jaf. Nay, Belvidera, do not fear my cruelty,
Nor let the thoughts of death perplex thy fancy;
But answer me to what I shall demand,
With a firm temper and unshaken spirit.
Bel. I will, when I have done weeping——
Jaf. Fy, no more of it——
How long is it, since that miserable day
We wedded first?
Bel. Oh! Oh!
Jaf. Nay, keep in thy tears,
Lest they unman me too.
Bel. Heaven knows I cannot;
The words you utter sound so very sadly,
The streams will follow—
Jaf. Come, I'll kiss them dry then.
Bel. But was it a miserable day?
Jaf. A cursed one.
Bel. I thought it otherwise; and you have often sworn,
In the transporting hours of warmest love,
When sure you spoke the truth, you have sworn, you blessed it.
Jaf. 'Twas a rash oath.
Bel. Then why am I not cursed too?
Jaf. No, Belvidera; by the eternal truth,
I doat with too much fondness.
Bel. Still so kind!
Still then do you love me?
Jaf. Nature, in her workings,
Inclines not with more ardour to creation,
Than I do now towards thee: Man ne'er was blessed,
Since the first pair met, as I have been.
Bel. Then sure you will not curse me?
Jaf. No I'll bless thee.
'Tis now, I think, three years we have lived together.
Bel. And may no fatal minute ever part us,
Till, reverend grown for age and love, we go
Down to one grave, as our last bed, together;
There sleep in peace, till an eternal morning.
Jaf. When will that be? [*Sighing.*
Bel. I hope, long ages hence.
Jaf. Have I not hitherto, (I beg thee tell me
Thy very fears) used thee with tenderest love?
Did e'er my soul rise up in wrath against thee?
Did I e'er frown, when Belvidera smiled?
Or by the least unfriendly word, betray
Abating passion? have I ever wronged thee?
Bel. No.
Jaf. Has my heart, or have my eyes, e'er wandered
To any other woman?
Bel. Never, never—I were the worst of false ones, should I accuse thee.
I own I have been too happy, blessed above
My sex's charter.
Jaf. Did I not say, I came to bless thee?
Bel. You did.
Jaf. Then hear me, bounteous Heaven!
Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head,
Where everlasting sweets are always springing,
With a continual giving hand, let peace,
Honour, and safety, always hover round her;
Feed her with plenty; let her eyes ne'er see
A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning;
Crown all her days with joy, her nights with rest,
Harmless as her own thoughts; and prop her virtue,
To bear the loss of one, that too much loved,
And comfort her with patience in our parting!
Bel. How! parting, parting!
Jaf. Yes, for ever parting;
I have sworn, Belvidera, by yon heaven,
That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
We part this hour for ever.
Bel. O! call back
Your cruel blessing! stay with me and curse me!
Jaf. No, 'tis resolved.
Bel. Then hear me too, just heaven!
Pour down your curses on this wretched head,
With never-ceasing vengeance; let despair,
Danger and infamy, nay all, surround me;
Starve me with wantings; let my eyes ne'er see
A sight of comfort, nor my heart know peace:
But dash my days with sorrow, nights with horrors,
Wild as my own thoughts now, and let loose fury,
To make me mad enough for what I lose,
If I must lose him! If I must? I will not.
Oh! turn and hear me!
Jaf. Now, hold heart, or never.
Bel. By all the tender days we have lived together,
Pity my sad condition! speak, but speak!
Jaf. Oh! Oh!
Bel. By these arms, that now cling round thy neck,
By this dear kiss, and by ten thousand more,
By these poor streaming eyes——
Jaf. Murder! unhold me:
By the immortal destiny, that doomed me
[*Draws his dagger.*
To this cursed minute, I'll not live one longer;
Resolve to let me go, or see me fall——
Bel. Hold, sir, be patient!
Jaf. Hark, the dismal bell [*Passing bell tolls.*
Tolls out for death! I must attend its call too;
For my poor friend, my dying Pierre, expects me;
He sent a message to require I would see him
Before he died, and take his last forgiveness.
Farewell, for ever!
Bel. Leave thy dagger with me,
Bequeath me something—Not one kiss at parting?
Oh! my poor heart, when wilt thou break!
[*Going out, looks back at him.*
Jaf. Yet stay:
We have a child, as yet a tender infant;
Be a kind mother to him, when I am gone;
Breed him in virtue, and the paths of honour,
But never let him know his father's story;
I charge thee, guard him from the wrongs my fate

May do his future fortune, or his name.
Now—nearer yet— [*Approaching each other.*
Oh! that my arms were rivetted
Thus round thee ever! But my friend! my oath!
This, and no more. [*Kisses her.*
Bel. Another, sure another,
For that poor little one you have taken such care of!
I will give it him truly.
Jaf. So now, farewell!
Bel. For ever?
Jaf. Heaven knows for ever; all good angels guard thee. [*Exit.*
Bel. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment.
Cursed be my days, and doubly cursed my nights,
Which I must now mourn out with widowed tears;
Blasted be every herb, and fruit, and tree;
Cursed be the rain, that falls upon the earth,
And may the general curse reach man and beast!
Oh! give me daggers, fire or water!
How I could bleed, how burn, how drown, the waves
Huzzing and booming round my sinking head,
Till I descended to the peaceful bottom!
Oh! there all is quiet, here all rage and fury:
The air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain;
I long for thick substantial sleep: Hell! hell!
Burst from the centre, rage and roar aloud,
If thou art half so hot, so mad as I am.

Enter PRIULI, *and Servants.*

Who's there? [*They raise her.*
Pri. Run, seize, and bring her safely home;
Guard her as you would life! Alas, poor creature!
Bel. What to my husband! then conduct me quickly;
Are all things ready? Shall we die most gloriously?
Say not a word of this to my old father:
Murmuring streams, soft shades, and springing flowers!
Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Opening, discovers a scaffold, and a wheel prepared for the execution of PIERRE; *then enter Officer,* PIERRE, *and Guards, a Friar, Executioner, and a great rabble.*

Offi. Room, room there—stand all by, make room for the prisoner.
Pier. My friend not come yet?
Fri. Why are you so obstinate?
Pier. Why you so troublesome, that a poor wretch can't die in peace,
But you, like ravens, will be croaking round him—
Fri. Yet Heaven——
Pier. I tell thee, Heaven and I are friends:
I ne'er broke peace with it yet by cruel murders,
Rapine, or perjury, or vile deceiving;
But lived in moral justice towards all men:
Nor am a foe to the most strong believers,
Howe'er my own short-sighted faith confine me.
Fri. But an all-seeing Judge——
Pier. You say my conscience
Must be my accuser; I have searched that conscience,
And find no records there of crimes, that scare me.
Fri. 'Tis strange, you should want faith.
Pier. You want to lead
My reason blind-fold, like a hampered lion,
Checked of its nobler vigour; then, when baited
Down to obedient tameness, make it couch,
And shew strange tricks, which you call signs of faith:
So silly souls are gulled, and you get money.
Away; no more. Captain, I'd have hereafter
This fellow write no lies of my conversion,
Because he has crept upon my troubled hours.

Enter JAFFIER.

Jaf. Hold: eyes be dry;
Heart, strengthen me to bear
This hideous sight, and humble me, to take
The last forgiveness of a dying friend,
Betrayed by my vile falsehood, to his ruin,
Oh, Pierre!
Pier. Yet nearer.
Jaf. Crawling on my knees,
And prostrate on the earth, let me approach thee:
How shall I look up to thy injured face,
That always used to smile with friendship on me?
It darts an air of so much manly virtue,
That I, methinks, look little in thy sight,
And stripes are fitter for me, than embraces.
Pier. Dear to my arms, though thou hast undone my fame,
I can't forget to love thee. Prithee, Jaffier,
Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee;
I'm now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey.
Jaf. Good! I am the vilest creature, worse than e'er
Suffered the shameful fate, thou'rt going to taste of.
Why was I sent for to be used thus kindly?
Call, call me villain, as I am! describe
The foul complexion of my hateful deeds:
Lead me to the rack, and stretch me in thy stead!
I have crimes enough to give it its full load,
And do it credit: thou wilt but spoil the use of it—
And honest men hereafter bear its figure
About them, as a charm from treacherous friendship.
Offi. The time grows short, your friends are dead already.

Jaf. Dead!
Pier. Yes, dead, Jaffier; they have all died like men, too,
Worthy their character.
Jaf. And what must I do?
Pier. Oh, Jaffier!
Jaf. Speak loud thy burthened soul,
And tell thy troubles to thy tortured friend.
Pier. Friend! Couldst thou yet be a friend, a generous friend,
I might hope comfort from thy noble sorrows.
Heaven knows, I want a friend.
Jaf. And I a kind one,
That would not thus scorn my repenting virtue,
Or think, when he's to die, my thoughts are idle.
Pier. No! live, I charge thee, Jaffier.
Jaf. Yes, I will live:
But it shall be to see thy fall revenged
At such a rate, as Venice long shall groan for.
Pier. Wilt thou?
Jaf. I will, by Heaven.
Pier. Then still thou art noble,
And I forgive thee. Oh!—yet—shall I trust thee?
Jaf. No; I have been false already.
Pier. Dost thou love me?
Jaf. Rip up my heart, and satisfy thy doubtings!
Pier. Curse on this weakness! [*He weeps.*
Jaf. Tears! Amazement! Tears!
I never saw thee melted thus before;
And know there's something labouring in thy bosom,
That must have vent: Though I am a villain, tell me.
Pier. See'st thou that engine? [*Pointing to the wheel.*
Jaf. Why?
Pier. Is it fit a soldier, who has lived with honour,
Fought nation's quarrels, and been crowned with conquest,
Be exposed a common carcase on a wheel?
Jaf. Ha!
Pier. Speak! is it fitting?
Jaf. Fitting!
Pier. Yes; is it fitting?
Jaf. What's to be done?
Pier. I'd have thee undertake
Something that's noble, to preserve my memory
From the disgrace that's ready to attaint it.
Offi. The day grows late, sir.
Pier. I'll make haste. Oh, Jaffier!
Though thou'st betrayed me, do me some way justice.
Jaf. No more of that: thy wishes shall be satisfied;
I have a wife, and she shall bleed: my child, too,
Yield up his little throat, and all
To appease thee——
[*Going away, Pierre holds him.*
Pier. No—this—no more.
[*He whispers Jaffier.*
Jaf. Ha! is it then so?
Pier. Most certainly.
Jaf. I'll do it.
Pier. Remember.
Offi. Sir!
Pier. Come, now I'm ready,
[*He and Jaffier ascend the scaffold.*
Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour;
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate, and die with decency.
Come,
[*Takes off his gown, executioner prepares to bind him.*
Fri. Son.
Pier. Hence, tempter!
Offi. Stand off, priest.
Pier. I thank you, sir. [*To the Officer.*
You'll think on't? [*To Jaffier.*
Jaf. It won't grow stale before to-morrow.
Pier. Now, Jaffier! now I'm going. Now—
[*Executioner having bound him.*
Jaf. Have at thee,
Thou honest heart, then—here! [*Stabs him.*
And this is well too. [*Stabs himself.*
Fri. Damnable deed!
Pier. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done nobly—We have deceived the senate.
Jaf. Bravely.
Pier. Ha, ha, ha——oh! oh! [*Dies.*
Jaf. Now, ye cursed rulers,
Thus of the blood ye have shed I make a libation,
And sprinkle it mingling. May it rest upon you,
And all your race! Be henceforth peace a stranger
Within your walls; let plagues and famine waste
Your generation—Oh, poor Belvidera!
Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her,
A token, that with my dying breath I blessed her,
And the dear little infant left behind me.
I'm sick——I'm quiet. [*Dies.*
Offi. Bear this news to the senate,
And guard their bodies, till there's further orders.
Heaven grant I die so well!
[*Scene shuts upon them.*

SCENE IV.

Soft Music.—Enter BELVIDERA *distracted, led by two of her Women,* PRIULI *and Servants.*

Pri. Strengthen her heart with patience, pitying Heaven!
Bel. Come, come, come, come, come, nay, come to bed,
Prithee, my love! The winds; hark how they whistle;
And the rain beats: Oh! how the weather shrinks me!
You are angry now, who cares? Pish, no indeed,
Chuse then; I say you shall not go, you shall not;
Whip your ill-nature; get you gone then. Oh!

Are you returned? See, father, here he's come again:
Am I to blame to love him? O, thou dear one,
Why do you fly me? Are you angry still then?
Jaffier, where art thou? father, why do you do thus?
Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here somewhere.
Stand off, I say: What, gone? Remember it, tyrant:
I may revenge myself for this trick, one day.
I'll do't—I'll do't. Renault's a nasty fellow;
Hang him, hang him, hang him.

Enter Officer.

Pri. News, what news?
[*Officer whispers Priuli.*
Off. Most sad, sir;
Jaffier, upon the scaffold, to prevent
A shameful death, stabbed Pierre, and next himself;
Both fell together.
Pri. Daughter!
Bel. Ha! look there!
My husband bloody, and his friend too! Murder!
Who has done this? Speak to me, thou sad vision!
On these poor trembling knees I beg it. Vanished—
Here they went down—Oh, I'll dig, dig the den up!
You shan't delude me thus. Hoa, Jaffier, Jaffier!
Peep up, and give me but a look. I have him!
I've got him, father: Oh! now how I'll smuggle him!
My love! my dear! my blessing! help me! help me!
They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.
Nay—now they pull so hard—farewell— [*Dies.*
Maid. She's dead;
Breathless and dead.
Pri. Oh! guard me from the sight on't!
Lead me into some place that's fit for mourning:
Where the free air, light, and the cheerful sun,
May never enter: hang it round with black:
Set up one taper, that may last a day,
As long as I've to live; and there all leave me:
Sparing no tears, when you this tale relate,
But bid all cruel fathers dread my fate.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

MOURNING BRIDE.

BY

CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Manuel, king of Granada.
Gonsalez, *his favourite.*
Garcia, *son to Gonsalez.*
Perez, *captain of the guards.*
Alonzo, *an officer, creature to Gonsalez.*
Osmyn, *a noble prisoner.*
Heli, *a prisoner, his friend.*
Selim, *an eunuch.*

WOMEN.

Almeria, *the princess of Granada.*
Zara, *a captive queen.*
Leonora, *chief attendant on the princess.*

Women, eunuchs, and mutes attending Zara, guards, &c.

Scene,—Granada.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A room of state. The curtain rising slowly to soft music, discovers Almeria *in mourning,* Leonora *waiting in mourning.*

After the music, Almeria *rises from her chair, and comes forward.*

Alm. Music has charms to sooth a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read, that things inanimate have moved,
And, as with living souls, have been informed
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown
Than trees or flint? O, force of constant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.
Anselmo sleeps, and is at peace; last night
The silent tomb received the good old king;
He and his sorrows now are safely lodged
Within its cold, but hospitable bosom.
Why am not I at peace?
Leon. Dear madam, cease,
Or moderate your grief; there is no cause——
Alm. No cause! Peace, peace; there is eternal cause,
And misery eternal will succeed.
Thou canst not tell—thou hast indeed no cause.
Leon. Believe me, madam, I lament Anselmo,
And always did compassionate his fortune;
Have often wept, to see how cruelly
Your father kept in chains his fellow-king:
And oft, at night, when all have been retired,
Have stolen from bed, and to his prison crept;
Where, while his gaoler slept, I thro' the grate
Have softly whispered, and enquired his health;
Sent in my sighs and prayers for his deliverance;
For sighs and prayers were all that I could offer.
Alm. Indeed thou hast a soft and gentle nature;

That thus could melt to see a stranger's wrongs.
Oh, Leonora! hadst thou known Anselmo,
How would thy heart have bled to see his sufferings!
Thou hadst no cause, but general compassion.
Leon. Love of my royal mistress gave me cause;
My love of you begot my grief for him;
For I had heard, that when the chance of war
Had blessed Anselmo's arms with victory,
And the rich spoil of all the field, and you,
The glory of the whole, were made the prey
Of his success; that then, in spite of hate,
Revenge, and that hereditary feud
Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,
He did endear himself to your affection,
By all the worthy and indulgent ways
His most industrious goodness could invent;
Proposing, by a match between Alphonso,
His son, the brave Valentian prince, and you,
To end the long dissention, and unite
The jarring crowns.
Alm. Alphonso! O Alphonso!
Thou too art quiet—long hast been at peace—
Both, both! father and son are now no more.
Then why am I? Oh, when shall I have rest?
Why do I live to say you are no more?
Why are all these things thus? Is it of force?
Is there necessity I must be miserable?
Is it of moment to the peace of heaven,
That I should be afflicted thus? If not,
Why is it thus contrived? Why are things laid
By some unseen hand, so, as of sure consequence,
They must to me bring curses, grief of heart,
The last distress of life, and sure despair?
Leon. Alas! you search too far, and think too deeply.
Alm. Why was I carried to Anselmo's court?
Or there, why was I used so tenderly?
Why not ill-treated, like an enemy?
For so my father would have used his child.
Oh, Alphonso, Alphonso!
Devouring seas have washed thee from my sight—
No time shall raze thee from my memory;
No, I will live to be thy monument:
The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb,
But in my heart thou art interred; there, there,
Thy dear resemblance is for ever fixed;
My love, my lord, my husband still, though lost.
Leon. Husband! Oh, Heavens!
Alm. Alas! what have I said?
My grief has hurryed me beyond all thought.
I would have kept that secret; though I know
Thy love, and faith to me deserve all confidence.
But 'tis the wretch's comfort still to have
Some small reserve of near and inward woe,
Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,
Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and mourn,
And, glutton-like, alone devour.
Leon. Indeed,
I knew not this.

Alm. Oh, no, thou knowest not half,
Knowest nothing of my sorrows—if thou didst—
If I should tell thee, wouldst thou pity me?
Tell me; I know thou wouldst; thou art compassionate.
Leon. Witness these tears——
Alm. I thank thee, Leonora——
Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress:
For 'tis, alas! the poor prerogative
Of greatness to be wretched, and unpitied——
But I did promise I would tell thee—What?
My miseries! Thou dost already know them:
And when I told thee thou didst nothing know,
It was because thou didst not know Alphonso:
For to have known my loss, thou must have known
His worth, his truth, and tenderness of love.
Leon. The memory of that brave prince stands fair
In all report—
And I have heard imperfectly his loss;
But, fearful to renew your troubles past,
I never did presume to ask the story.
Alm. If for my swelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,
Even on the day when Manuel, my father,
Led on his conquering troops high as the gates
Of king Anselmo's palace; which, in rage,
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fired.
The good king, flying to avoid the flames,
Started amidst his foes, and made captivity
His fatal refuge—Would that I had fallen
Amidst those flames—but 'twas not so decreed.
Alphonso, who foresaw my father's cruelty,
Had borne the queen and me on board a ship,
Ready to sail; and, when this news was brought,
We put to sea; but being betrayed by some
Who knew our flight, we closely were pursued
And almost taken; when a sudden storm
Drove us, and those that followed, on the coast
Of Afric: There our vessel struck the shore,
And, bulging 'gainst a rock, was dashed in pieces;
But heaven spared me for yet much more affliction!
Conducting them who followed us, to shun
The shore, and save me floating on the waves.
While the good queen and my Alphonso perished.
Leon. Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonso?
Alm. That day, that fatal day, our hands were joined.
For when my lord beheld the ship pursuing,
And saw her fate so far exceeding ours,
He came to me, and begged me by my love,
I would consent the priest should make us one;
That, whether death or victory ensued,
I might be his, beyond the power of fate;
The queen too did assist his suit—I granted;
And in one day was wedded and a widow.
Leon. Indeed 'twas mournful——

Alm. 'Twas as I have told thee——
For which I mourn, and will for ever mourn;
Nor will I change these black and dismal robes,
Or ever dry these swoln and watery eyes,
Or ever taste content, or peace of heart,
While I have life, and thought of my Alphonso.
Leon. Look down, good heaven, with pity on her sorrows,
And grant that time may bring her some relief.
Alm. Oh, no! time gives increase to my afflictions.
The circling hours, that gather all the woes
Which are diffused through the revolving year,
Come heavy laden with the oppressing weight
To me; with me successively, they leave
The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,
And all the damps of grief, that did retard their flight:
They shake their downy wings, and scatter all
The dire collected dews on my poor head:
Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.
[*Shouts at a distance.*
Leon. Hark!
The distant shouts proclaim your father's triumph.
O cease, for heaven's sake, assuage a little
This torrent of your grief; for, this I fear,
'Twill urge his wrath, to see you drowned in tears,
When joy appears in every other face.
Alm. And joy he brings to every other heart,
But double, double weight of woe to mine:
For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom
I must be sacrificed, and all the vows
I gave my dear Alphonso basely broken.
No, it shall never be; for I will die
First, die ten thousand deaths—Look down, look down,
Alphonso, hear the sacred vow I make! [*Kneels.*
One moment, cease to gaze on perfect bliss,
And bend thy glorious eyes to earth and me.
And thou, Anselmo, if yet thou art arrived,
Through all impediments of purging fire,
To that bright heaven, where my Alphonso reigns,
Behold thou also, and attend my vow.
If ever I do yield, or give consent,
By any action, word, or thought, to wed
Another lord, may then just heaven shower down
Unheard of curses on me, greater far
(If such there be in angry heaven's vengeance)
Than any I have yet endured! And now [*Rising.*
My heart has some relief; having so well
Discharged this debt, incumbent on my love.
Yet, one thing more I would engage from thee.
Leon. My heart, my life, and will, are only yours.
Alm. I thank thee. 'Tis but this: anon, when all
Are wrapped and busied in the general joy,
Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me
Steal forth, to visit good Anselmo's tomb.
Leon. Alas! I fear some fatal resolution.
Alm. No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,
Nor violence—I feel myself more light,
And more at large, since I have made this vow.
Perhaps I would repeat it there more solemnly.
'Tis that, or some such melancholy thought;
Upon my word, no more.
Leon. I will attend you.

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. The lord Gonsalez comes to tell your highness,
The king is just arrived.
Alm. Conduct him in. [*Exit Alon.*
That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,
To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds,
And gild and magnify his son's exploits.
But I am armed with ice around my heart,
Not to be warmed with words, or idle eloquence.

Enter GONSALEZ.

Gon. Be ev'ry day of your long life like this.
The sun, bright conquest, and your brighter eyes,
Have all conspired to blaze promiscuous light,
And bless this day with most unequalled lustre.
Your royal father, my victorious lord,
Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,
Is entering now, in martial pomp, the palace.
Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.
Chariots of war, adorned with glittering gems,
Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,
White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills,
That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,
As they disdained the victory they grace.
Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow;
And captains of the noblest blood of Afric
Sweat by his chariot wheel, and lick and grind,
With gnashing teeth, the dust his triumphs raise.
The swarming populace spread every wall,
And cling, as if with claws they did enforce
Their hold; through clifted stones stretching and staring,
As if they were all eyes, and every limb
Would feed its faculty of admiration;
While you alone retire, and shun this sight;
This sight, which is indeed not seen (though twice
The multitude should gaze) in absence of your eyes.
Alm. My lord, my eyes ungratefully behold
The gilded trophies of exterior honours;
Nor will my ears be charmed with sounding words,
Or pompous phrase, the pageantry of fools.
But that my father is returned in safety,
I bend to heaven with thanks.
Gon. Excellent princess!
But 'tis a task unfit for my weak age,
With dying words to offer at your praise.
Garcia, my son, your beauty's lowest slave,
Has better done; in proving with his sword

The force and influence of your matchless charms.
Alm. I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,
Which had been brave, though I had ne'er been born.
Leon. Madam, the king. [*Flourish.*
Alm. My women. I would meet him.
[*Attendants to Almeria enter in mourning.*

Symphony of warlike music. Enter the KING, *attended by* GARCIA *and several officers. Files of prisoners in chains, and guards, who are ranged in order round the stage. Almeria meets the King, and kneels: afterwards* GONSALEZ *kneels and kisses the King's hand, while* GARCIA *does the same to the princess.*

King. Almeria, rise—My best Gonsalez, rise.
What, tears! my good old friend—
Gon. But tears of joy.
Believe me, sir, to see you thus, has filled
Mine eyes with more delight than they can hold.
King. By heaven, thou lovest me, and I'm pleased thou dost;
Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice
To see thee weep on this occasion—Some
Here are, who seem to mourn at our success.
Why is it, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,
Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?
In opposition to my brightness, you
And yours are all like daughters of affliction.
Alm. Forgive me, sir, if I in this offend.
The year, which I have vowed to pay to heaven,
In mourning and strict life, for my deliverance
From wreck and death, wants yet to be expired.
King. Your zeal to heaven is great, so is your debt:
Yet something, too, is due to me, who gave
That life, which heaven preserved. A day bestowed
In filial duty, had atoned and given
A dispensation to your vow—No more!
'Twas weak and wilful—and a woman's error.
Yet, upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,
To see that sable worn upon the day,
Succeeding that, in which our deadliest foe,
Hated Anselmo, was interred—By heaven,
It looks as thou didst mourn for him! just so
Thy senseless vow appeared to bear its date,
Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserved,
But that wherein the cursed Alphonso perished.
Ha! What? thou dost not weep to think of that!
Gon. Have patience, royal sir; the princess weeps
To have offended you. If fate decreed,
One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss,
And her deliverance, is she to blame?
King. I tell thee she's to blame, not to have feasted
When my first foe was laid in earth, such enmity,
Such detestation bears my blood to his;
My daughter should have revelled at his death,
She should have made these palace walls to shake,
And all this high and ample roof to ring
With her rejoicings. What, to mourn and weep!
Then, then to weep, and pray, and grieve! by heaven,
There's not a slave, a shackled slave of mine,
But should have smiled that hour, through all his care,
And shook his chains, in transport and rude harmony.
Gon. What she has done, was in excess of goodness;
Betrayed by too much piety, to seem
As if she had offended.——Sure, no more.
King. To seem is to commit, at this conjuncture.
I would not have a seeming sorrow seen
To-day.—Retire; divest yourself with speed
Of that offensive black: on me be all
The violation of your vow; for you
It shall be your excuse, that I command it.
Gar. [*Kneeling.*] Your pardon, sir, if I presume so far,
As to remind you of your gracious promise.
King. Rise, Garcia—I forgot. Yet stay, Almeria.
Alm. My boding heart!—What is your pleasure, sir?
King. Draw near, and give your hand, and, Garcia, yours:
Receive this lord, as one whom I have found
Worthy to be your husband, and my son.
Gar. Thus let me kneel to take—O not to take—
But to devote, and yield myself for ever
The slave and creature of my royal mistress!
Gon. O let me prostrate pay my worthless thanks—
King. No more; my promise long since passed, thy services,
And Garcia's well-tried valour, all oblige me.
This day we triumph; but to-morrow's sun,
Garcia, shall shine to grace thy nuptials——
Alm. Oh! [*Faints.*
Gar. She faints! Help to support her.
Gon. She recovers.
King. A fit of bridal fear. How is't, Almeria?
Alm. A sudden chillness seizes on my spirits.
Your leave, sir, to retire.
King. Garcia, conduct her.
[*Garcia leads Almeria to the door, and returns.*
This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears;
I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
And make it sin, not to renounce that vow
Which I'd have broken. Now, what would Alonzo?

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arrived,
And with a train as if she still were wife
To Albucacim, and the Moor had conquered.
King. It is our will she should be so attended.
Bear hence these prisoners. Garcia, which is he,
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?
[*Prisoners led off.*

Gar. Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,
Great sir, at her request, attends on Zara.
King. He is your prisoner; as you please dispose him.
Gar. I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness;
And with a haughty mien, and stern civility,
Dumbly declines all offers. If he speak,
'Tis scarce above a word; as he were born
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk;
At least to talk where he must not command.
King. Such sullenness, and in a man so brave,
Must have some other cause than his captivity.
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?
Gar. My lord, she did.
King. That, joined with his behaviour,
Begets a doubt. I'd have them watched; perhaps
Her chains hang heavier on him than his own.

Enter ALONZO, ZARA, *and* OSMYN *bound, conducted by* PEREZ *and a guard, and attended by* SELIM *and several mutes and eunuchs in a train.*

King. What welcome, and what honours, beauteous Zara,
A king and conqueror can give, are yours.
A conqueror indeed, where you are won;
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,
That had our pomp been with your presence graced,
The expecting crowd had been deceived; and seen
The monarch enter, not triumphant, but,
In pleasing triumph led, your beauty's slave.
Zara. If I on any terms could condescend
To like captivity, or think those honours,
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,
Of equal value with unborrowed rule
And native right to arbitrary sway,
I might be pleased, when I beheld this train
With usual homage wait: but when I feel
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself,
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid
Beneath mock praises, and dissembled state.
King. Those bonds! 'Twas my command you should be free.
How durst you, Perez, disobey?
Per. Great sir,
Your order was she should not wait your triumph,
But at some distance follow, thus attended.
King. 'Tis false; 'twas more; I bid she should be free;
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.
Her eyes did more than bid—Free her and her's,
With speed—yet stay—my hands alone can make
Fit restitution here.——Thus I release you,
And, by releasing you, enslave myself.
Zara. Such favours, so conferred, though when unsought,
Deserve acknowledgment from noble minds.
Such thanks, as one hating to be obliged——
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,
I offer.
King. Born to excel, and to command!
As by transcendent beauty to attract
All eyes; so, by pre-eminence of soul,
To rule all hearts!
Garcia, what's he, who, with contracted brow,
[*Beholding Osmyn, as they unbind him.*
And sullen port, glooms downwards with his eyes,
At once regardless of his chains, or liberty?
Gar. That, sir, is he of whom I spoke; that's Osmyn.
King. He answers well the character you gave him.
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man
So great in arms, as thou art said to be,
So hardly can endure captivity,
The common chance of war?
Osm. Because captivity
Has robbed me of a dear and just revenge.
King. I understand not that.
Osm. I would not have you.
Zara. That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend,
Whom more than life he loved; and the regret,
Of not revenging on his foes that loss,
Has caused this melancholy and despair.
King. She does excuse him; 'tis as I suspected.
[*To Gon.*
Gon. That friend might be herself; seem not to heed
His arrogant reply: she looks concerned.
King. I'll have enquiry made; perhaps his friend
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name?
Zara. Heli.
King. Garcia, that search shall be your care:
It shall be mine to pay devotion here;
At this fair shrine to lay my laurels down,
And raise love's altar on the spoils of war.
Conquest and triumph, now, are mine no more;
Nor will I victory in camps adore:
For, lingering there, in long suspence she stands,
Shifting the prize in unresolving hands;
Unused to wait, I broke through her delay,
Fixed her by force, and snatched the doubtful day.
Now late I find that war is but her sport;
In love the goddess keeps her awful court;
Fickle in fields, unsteadily she flies,
But rules with settled sway in Zara's eyes.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Representing the Aisle of a Temple.*

GARCIA, HELI, PEREZ.

Gar. THIS way, we're told, Osmyn was seen to walk;
Chusing this lonely mansion of the dead,
To mourn, brave Heli, thy mistaken fate.
Heli. Let Heaven with thunder to the centre strike me,
If to arise in very deed from death,
And to revisit, with my long-closed eyes,
This living light, could to my soul or sense
Afford a thought, or shew a glimpse of joy,
In least proportion to the vast delight
I feel, to hear of Osmyn's name; to hear
That Osmyn lives, and I again shall see him.
Gar. I've heard, with admiration, of your friendship.
Per. Yonder, my lord, behold the noble Moor.
Hel. Where? Where?
Gar. I saw him not, nor any like him——
Per. I saw him when I spoke, thwarting my view,
And striding with distempered haste; his eyes
Seemed flame, and flashed upon me with a glance;
Then forward shot their fires which he pursued,
As to some object frightful, yet not feared.
Gar. Let's haste to follow him, and know the cause.
Hel. My lord, let me intreat you to forbear:
Leave me alone, to find and cure the cause.
I know his melancholy, and such starts
Are usual to his temper. It might raise him
To act some violence upon himself,
So to be caught in an unguarded hour,
And when his soul gives all her passion way,
Secure and loose in friendly solitude.
I know his noble heart would burst with shame,
To be surprised by strangers in its frailty.
Gar. Go, generous Heli, and relieve your friend.
Far be it from me officiously to pry
Or press upon the privacies of others.
[*Exit Heli.*
Perez, the king expects, from our return,
To have his jealousy confirmed, or cleared,
Of that appearing love which Zara bears
To Osmyn; but some other opportunity
Must make that plain.
Per. To me 'twas long since plain,
And every look from him and her confirms it.
Gar. If so, unhappiness attends their love,
And I could pity them. I hear some coming.
The friends, perhaps, are met; let us avoid them.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Alm. It was a fancied noise, for all is hushed.
Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling through hollows of this vaulted aisle.
We'll listen——
Leon. Hark!
Alm. No, all is hushed, and still as death—'tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.
Leon. Let us return; the horror of this place,
And silence, will encrease your melancholy.
Alm. It may my fears, but cannot add to that.
No, I will on; shew me Anselmo's tomb,
Lead me o'er bones and skulls, and mouldering earth,
Of human bodies; for I'll mix with them,
Or wind me in the shroud of some pale corpse,
Yet green in earth, rather than be the bride
Of Garcia's more detested bed: that thought
Exerts my spirits, and my present fears
Are lost in dread of greater ill. Then shew me,
Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead me
Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again,
To him, to Heaven, and my Alphonso's soul.
Leon. I go; but Heaven can tell with what regret.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter HELI.

Heli. I wander through this maze of monuments,
Yet cannot find him—Hark! sure 'tis the voice
Of one complaining—There it sounds!—I'll follow it.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Opening, discovers a place of Tombs: one Monument, fronting the view, greater than the rest.*

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Leon. Behold the sacred vault, within whose womb
The poor remains of good Anselmo rest,
Yet fresh and unconsumed by time or worms.
What do I see? Oh, Heaven! either my eyes
Are false, or still the marble door remains
Unclosed; the iron gates, that lead to death
Beneath, are still wide stretched upon their hinge,
And staring on us with unfolded leaves!
Alm. Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me;
And that dumb mouth, significant in show,
Invites me to the bed, where I alone

Shall rest; shews me the grave, where nature, weary
And long oppresed with woes and bending cares,
May lay the burthen down, and sink in slumbers
Of peace eternal. Death, grim death, will fold
Me in his leaden arms, and press me close
To his cold clayey breast: My father, then,
Will cease his tyranny; and Garcia, too,
Will fly my pale deformity with loathing.
My soul, enlarged from its vile bonds, will mount,
And range the starry orbs, and milky ways,
Of that refulgent world, where I shall swim
In liquid light, and float, on seas of bliss,
To my Alphonso's soul. Oh, joy too great!
Oh, ecstacy of thought! Help me, Anselmo;
Help me, Alphonso; take me, reach thy hand;
To thee, to thee I call; to thee, Alphonso:
Oh, Alphonso!

OSMYN *ascending from the tomb.*

Osm. Who calls that wretched thing that was Alphonso?

Alm. Angels, and all the host of heaven, support me!

Osm. Whence is that voice, whose shrillness, from the grave,
And growing to his father's shroud, roots up
Alphonso?

Alm. Mercy! Providence! Oh, speak,
Speak to it quickly, quickly; speak to me,
Comfort me, help me, hold me, hide me, hide me,
Leonora, in thy bosom, from the light,
And from my eyes!

Osm. Amazement and illusion!
Rivet and nail me where I stand, ye powers,
[*Coming forward.*
That, motionless, I may be still deceived.
Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve
That tender, lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade!
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she, 'tis she herself!
Nor dead, nor shade, but breathing and alive!
It is Almeria, it is my wife!

Enter HELI.

Leon. Alas! she stirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes;
He, too, is fainting——Help me, help me, stranger,
Whoe'er thou art, and lend thy hand to raise
These bodies.

Hel. Ha! 'tis he! and with——Almeria!
Oh, miracle of happiness! Oh, joy
Unhoped for! Does Almeria live?

Osm. Where is she?
Let me behold, and touch her, and be sure
'Tis she; shew me her face, and let me feel
Her lips with mine—'Tis she, I am not deceived;
I taste her breath, I warm her and am warmed.
Look up, Almeria, bless me with thy eyes;
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy husband.

Alm. I have sworn I'll not wed Garcia: why do ye force me?
Is this a father?

Osm. Look on thy Alphonso.
Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia:
Nor am I what I seem, but thy Alphonso.
Wilt thou not know me? Hast thou then forgot me?
Hast thou thy eyes, yet canst not see Alphonso?
Am I so altered, or art thou so changed,
That, seeing my disguise, thou seest not me?

Alm. It is, it is Alphonso! 'tis his face,
His voice—I know him now, I know him all.
Oh, take me to thy arms, and bear me hence,
Back to the bottom of the boundless deep,
To seas beneath, where thou so long hast dwelt.
Oh, how hast thou returned? How hast thou charmed
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this;
That, thus relenting, they have given thee back
To earth, to light and life, to love and me?

Osm. Oh, I'll not ask, nor answer, how or why
We both have backward trod the paths of fate,
To meet again in life; to know I have thee,
Is knowing more than any circumstance,
Or means, by which I have thee——
To fold thee thus, to press thy balmy lips,
And gaze upon thy eyes, is so much joy,
I have not leisure to reflect, or know,
Or trifle time in thinking.

Alm. Stay a while——
Let me look on thee yet a little more.

Osm. What wouldst thou? thou dost put me from thee.

Alm. Yes.

Osm. And why? What dost thou mean? Why dost thou gaze so?

Alm. I know not; 'tis to see thy face, I think—
It is too much! too much to bear and live!
To see thee thus again is such profusion
Of joy, of bliss—I cannot bear—I must
Be mad—I cannot be transported thus.

Osm. Thou excellence, thou joy, thou heaven of love!

Alm. Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?
How is all this? All-powerful Heaven, what are we?
Oh, my strained heart—let me again behold thee,
For I weep to see thee—Art thou not paler?
Much, much; how thou art changed!

Osm. Not in my love.

Alm. No, no! thy griefs, I know, have done this to thee.
Thou hast wept much, Alphonso; and, I fear,
Too much, too tenderly, lamented me.

Osm. Wrong not my love, to say too tenderly,
No more, my life; talk not of tears or grief;
Affliction is no more, now thou art found.
Why dost thou weep, and hold thee from my arms,

My arms which ache to hold thee fast, and grow
To thee with twining? Come, come to my heart!
Alm. I will, for I should never look enough.
They would have married me; but I had sworn
To Heaven and thee, and sooner would have died——
Osm. Perfection of all faithfulness and love!
Alm. Indeed I would—Nay, I would tell thee all,
If I could speak; how I have mourned and prayed:
For I have prayed to thee, as to a saint;
And thou hast heard my prayer; for thou art come
To my distress, to my despair, which Heaven
Could only, by restoring thee, have cured.
Osm. Grant me but life, good Heaven, but length of days,
To pay some part, some little of this debt,
This countless sum of tenderness and love,
For which I stand engaged to this all-excellence:
Then bear me in a whirlwind to my fate,
Snatch me from life, and cut me short unwarned:
Then, then, 'twill be enough—I shall be old,
I shall have passed all æras then
Of yet unmeasured time; when I have made
This exquisite, this most amazing goodness,
Some recompence of love and matchless truth.
Alm. 'Tis more than recompence to see thy face:
If heaven is greater joy, it is no happiness,
For 'tis not to be borne—What shall I say?
I have a thousand things to know and ask,
And speak—That thou art here beyond all hope,
All thought; that all at once thou art before me,
And with such suddenness hast hit my sight,
Is such surprise, such mystery, such extasy,
It hurries all my soul, and stuns my sense.
Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise?
Osm. I did; and thou, my love, didst call me; thou.
Alm. True; but how cam'st thou there? Wert thou alone?
Osm. I was, and lying on my father's lead,
When broken echoes of a distant voice
Disturbed the sacred silence of the vault,
In murmurs round my head. I rose and listened,
And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso;
I thought I saw thee too; but, Oh, I thought not
That I indeed should be so blest to see thee——
Alm. But still, how cam'st thou thither? How thus?—Ha!
What is he, who, like thyself, is started here
Ere seen?
Osm. Where? Ha! What do I see, Antonio!
I am fortunate indeed—my friend, too, safe!
Heli. Most happily, in finding you thus blessed.
Alm. More miracles! Antonio escaped!
Osm. And twice escaped; both from the rage of seas
And war: for in the fight I saw him fall.
Heli. But fell unhurt, a prisoner as yourself,
And as yourself made free; hither I came,
Impatiently to seek you, where I knew
Your grief would lead you to lament Anselmo.
Osm. There are no wonders; or else all is wonder.
Heli. I saw you on the ground, and raised you up,
When with astonishment I saw Almeria.
Osm. I saw her too, and therefore saw not thee.
Alm. Nor I; nor could I, for my eyes were yours.
Osm. What means the bounty of all-gracious Heaven,
That persevering still, with open hand,
It scatters good, as in a waste of mercy!
Where will this end? But Heaven is infinite
In all, and can continue to bestow,
When scanty number shall be spent in telling.
Leon. Or I am deceived, or I beheld the glimpse
Of two in shining habits cross the aisle;
Who by their pointing, seem to mark this place.
Alm. Sure I have dreamt, if we must part so soon.
Osm. I wish at least our parting were a dream,
Or we could sleep 'till we again were met.
Heli. Zara and Selim, sir, I saw and know them:
You must be quick, for love will lend her wings.
Alm. What love? Who is she? Why are you alarmed?
Osm. She's the reverse of thee; she's my unhappiness.
Harbour no thought that may disturb thy peace;
But gently take thyself away, lest she
Should come, and see the straining of my eyes
To follow thee.
Retire, my love, I'll think how we may meet
To part no more; my friend will tell thee all;
How I escaped, how I am here, and thus;
How I am not called Alphonso now, but Osmyn;
And he Heli. All, all he will unfold,
Ere next we meet——
Alm. Sure we shall meet again——
Osm. We shall; we part not but to meet again.
Gladness and warmth of ever-kindling love
Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in absence.
[*Exeunt Alm. Leon. and Heli.*
Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.
Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thoughts,
So shall you still behold her—'twill not be.
Oh, impotence of sight! Mechanic sense!
Which to exterior objects ow'st thy faculty,
Not seeing of election, but necessity.
Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,
Successively reflect succeeding images:
Not what they would, but must; a star, or toad;
Just as the hand of chance administers.
Not so the mind, whose undetermined view
Resolves, and to the present adds the past;

Essaying farther to futurity;
But that in vain. I have Almeria here
At once, as I before have seen her often——

Enter ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zara. See where he stands, folded and fixed to earth,
Stiff'ning in thought, a statue among statues.
Why, cruel Osmyn, dost thou fly me thus?
Is it well done? Is this then the return
For fame, for honour, and for empire lost?
But what is loss of honour, fame, and empire?
Is this the recompence reserved for love?
Why dost thou leave my eyes, and fly my arms,
To find this place of horror and obscurity?
Am I more loathsome to thee than the grave,
That thou dost seek to shield thee there, and shun
My love? But to the grave I'll follow thee—
He looks not, minds not, hears not! barbarous man!
Am I neglected thus? Am I despised!
Not heard! Ungrateful Osymn!

Osm. Ha, 'tis Zara!

Zara. Yes, traitor; Zara, lost, abandoned Zara,
Is a regardless suppliant now, to Osmyn.
The slave, the wretch that she redeemed from death,
Disdains to listen now, or look on Zara.

Osm. Far be the guilt of such reproaches from me;
Lost in myself, and blinded by my thoughts,
I saw you not till now.

Zara. Now then you see me—
But with such dumb and thankless eyes you look,
Better I was unseen, than seen thus coldly.

Osm. What would you from a wretch who came to mourn,
And only for his sorrows chose this solitude?
Look round; joy is not here, nor chearfulness.
You have pursued misfortune to its dwelling,
Yet look for gaiety and gladness there.

Zara. Inhuman! Why, why dost thou rack me thus?
And, with perverseness, from the purpose answer?
What is it to me, this house of misery?
What joy do I require? if thou dost mourn,
I come to mourn with thee, to share thy griefs,
And give thee, for them, in exchange, my love.

Osm. Oh, that's the greatest grief—I am so poor,
I have not wherewithal to give again.

Zara. Thou hast a heart, though it is a savage one—
Give it me as it is; I ask no more
For all I've done, and all I have endured:
For saving thee, when I beheld thee first,
Driven by the tide upon my country's coast,
Pale and expiring, drenched in briny waves,
Thou and thy friend, 'till my compassion found thee;
Compassion! scarce will it own that name, so soon,
So quickly, was it love; for thou wert godlike
Even then. Kneeling on earth, I loosed my hair,
And with it dried thy watery cheeks, then chafed
Thy temples, till reviving blood arose,
And, like the morn, vermilioned o'er thy face.
Oh, heaven! how did my heart rejoice and ache,
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,
And felt the balm of thy respiring lips!

Osm. Oh, call not to my mind what you have done;
It sets a debt of that account before me,
Which shews me poor and bankrupt even in hopes.

Zara. The faithful Selim, and my women, know
The danger which I tempted to conceal you.
You know how I abused the credulous king;
What arts I used to make you pass on him,
When he received you as the prince of Fez;
And, as my kinsman, honoured and advanced you.
Oh! why do I relate what I have done?
What did I not? Was it not for you this war
Commenced? Not knowing who you were, nor why
You hated Manuel, I urged my husband
To this invasion; where he late was lost,
Where all is lost, and I am made a slave.
Look on me now, from empire fallen to slavery;
Think on my sufferings first, then look on me;
Think on the cause of all, then view thyself:
Reflect on Osmyn, and then look on Zara,
The fallen, the lost, and now the captive Zara,
And now abandoned——Say, what then is Osmyn?

Osm. A fatal wretch—A huge, stupendous ruin,
That tumbling on its prop, crushed all beneath,
And bore contiguous palaces to earth.

Zara. Yet thus, thus fallen, levelled with the vilest,
If I have gained thy love, 'tis glorious ruin;
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more
A queen; for what are riches, empire, power,
But larger means to gratify the will?
The steps on which we tread, to rise and reach
Our wish; and that obtained, down with the scaffolding
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones; they've served their end,
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorned.

Osm. Why was I made the instrument, to throw
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

Zara. We may be free; the conqueror is mine;
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,
And can unwind or strain him as I please.
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

Osm. In vain you offer, and in vain require,
What neither can bestow. Set free yourself,
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

Zara. Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talkest.

Osm. Alas! You know me not.

Zara. Not who thou art:
But what this last ingratitude declares,
This grovelling baseness—Thou sayest true, I know

Thee not; for what thou art yet wants a name;
But something so unworthy and so vile,
That to have loved thee makes me yet more lost
Than all the malice of my other fate.
Traitor, monster, cold, and perfidious slave!
A slave not daring to be free; nor dares
To love above him; for 'tis dangerous.
'Tis that, I know; for thou dost look, with eyes
Sparkling desire, and trembling to possess.
I know my charms have reached thy very soul,
And thrilled thee through with darted fires; but thou
Dost fear so much, thou darest not wish. The king!
There, there's the dreadful sound! the king's thy rival!

Sel. Madam, the king is here, and entering now.

Zara. As I could wish; by Heaven I'll be revenged.

Enter the KING, PEREZ, *and Attendants.*

King. Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw
Her shining from the day, to gild this scene
Of death and night? Ha! what disorder's this?
Somewhat I heard of king and rival mentioned.
What's he that dares be rival to the king,
Or lift his eyes to like where I adore?

Zara. There, he, your prisoner, and that was my slave.

King. How? better than my hopes? Does she accuse him? [*Aside.*

Zara. Am I become so low by my captivity,
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld
Waiting my nod, the creature of my power,
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

King. Better for him to tempt the rage of Heaven,
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand
Of him that thunders, than but to think that insolence.
'Tis daring for a god. Hence to the wheel
With that Ixion, who aspires to hold
Divinity embraced; to whips and prisons
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.
[*Guards seize Osmyn, and exeunt.*

Zara. Compassion led me to bemoan his state,
Whose former faith had merited much more:
And, through my hopes in you, I undertook
He should be set at large! thence sprung his insolence,
And what was charity, he construed love.

King. Enough; his punishment be what you please.
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow,
To one where young delights attend, and joys,
Yet new, unborn, and blooming in the bud,
Which wait to be full-blown at your approach,
And spread, like roses to the morning sun:
Where every hour shall roll in circling joys,
And love shall wing the tedious wasting day.
Life, without love, is load; and time stands still:
What we refuse to him, to death we give;
And then, then only, when we love, we live.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Prison.*

OSMYN *with a Paper.*

Osm. But now, and I was closed within the tomb,
That holds my father's ashes; and but now,
Where he was prisoner, I too am imprisoned.
Sure 'tis the hand of Heaven that leads me thus,
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.
In a dark corner of my cell I found
This paper; what it is this light will shew:
'If my Alphonso'——Ha! [*Reading.*
'If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heaven;
'Give me more weight, crush my declining years
'With bolts, with chains, imprisonment, and want;
'But bless my son, visit not him for me.'
It is his hand; this was his prayer——yet more:
'Let every hair, which sorrow by the roots
[*Reading.*
'Tears from my hoary and devoted head,
'Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:
'Not for myself, but him, hear me, all-gracious'—
'Tis wanting what should follow—Heaven should follow,
But 'tis torn off—Why should that word alone
Be torn from this petition? 'Twas to Heaven,
But Heaven was deaf, Heaven heard him not; but thus,
Thus as the name of Heaven from this is torn,
So did it tear the ears of mercy from
His voice, shutting the gates of prayer against him.
If piety be thus debarred access
On high, and of good men the very best
Is singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,
What is reward? Or what is punishment?
But who shall dare to tax eternal justice!
Yet I may think——I may, I must; for thought
Precedes the will to think, and error lives
Ere reason can be born. Reason, the power
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
Of wandering life, that winks and wakes by turns,
Fooling the follower, betwixt shade and shining.
What noise! Who's there? My friend? How camest thou hither?

Enter HELI.

Heli. The time's too precious to be spent in telling.
The captain, influenced by Almeria's power,
Gave order to the guards for my admittance.
Osm. How does Almeria? But I know she is
As I am. Tell me, may I hope to see her?
Heli. You may. Anon, at midnight, when the king
Is gone to rest, and Garcia is retired,
Who takes the privilege to visit late,
Presuming on a bridegroom's right, she'll come.
Osm. She'll come; 'tis what I wish, yet what I fear.
She'll come; but whither, and to whom? Oh, Heaven!
To a vile prison, and a captived wretch;
To one, whom, had she never known, she had
Been happy. Why, why was that heavenly creature
Abandoned o'er to love what Heaven forsakes?
Why does she follow, with unwearied steps,
One, who has tired misfortune with pursuing?
One driven about the world, like blasted leaves
And chaff, the sport of adverse winds; 'till late,
At length imprisoned in some cleft of rock,
On earth it rests, and rots to silent dust?
Heli. Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.
I have learned there are disorders ripe for mutiny
Among the troops, who thought to share the plunder,
Which Manuel to his own use and avarice
Converts. This news has reached Valentia's frontiers,
Where many of your subjects, long oppressed
With tyranny, and grievous impositions,
Are risen in arms, and call for chiefs to head
And lead them, to regain their rights and liberty.
Osm. By Heaven thou hast roused me from my lethargy!
The spirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,
Deaf to revenge—nay, which refused to hear
The piercing sighs and murmurs of my love
Yet unenjoyed; what not Almeria could
Revive or raise, my people's voice has wakened.
Heli. Our posture of affairs, and scanty time,
My lord, require you should compose yourself.
Osm. Oh, my Antonio! I am all on fire;
My soul is up in arms, ready to charge
And bear amidst the foe with conquering troops.
I hear them call to lead them on to liberty,
To victory; their shouts and clamours rend
My ears, and reach the heavens. Where is the king?
Where is Alphonso? Ha! where? where indeed?
Oh, I could tear and burst the strings of life,
To break these chains. Off, off, ye stains of royalty;
Off, slavery. Oh, curse! that I alone
Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I
Would soar and stoop at victory beneath.
Heli. Abate this ardour, sir, or we are lost;
And think on what we may reduce to practice.
Zara, the cause of your restraint, may be
The means of liberty restored. That gained,
Occasion will not fail to point out ways
For your escape. Mean time, I have thought already
With speed and safety to convey myself,
Where, not far off, some malcontents hold council
Nightly, who hate this tyrant; some, who love
Anselmo's memory, and will, for certain,
When they shall know you live, assist your cause.
Osm. My friend and counsellor, as thou think'st fit,
So do. I will, with patience, wait my fortune.
Heli. When Zara comes, abate of your aversion.
Osm. I hate her not, nor can dissemble love:
But as I may I'll do. I have a paper
Which I would shew thee, friend, but that the sight
Would hold thee here, and clog thy expedition.
Within I found it, by my father's hand
'Twas writ; a prayer for me, wherein appears
Paternal love, prevailing o'er his sorrows;
Such sanctity, such tenderness, so mixed
With grief, as would draw tears from inhumanity.
Heli. The care of Providence sure left it there,
To arm your mind with hope. Such piety
Was never heard in vain. Heaven has in store
For you those blessings it withheld from him.
In that assurance live; which time, I hope,
And our next meeting, will confirm.
Osm. Farewell,
My friend; the good thou dost deserve, attend thee. [*Exit Heli.*
I have been to blame, and questioned, with impiety,
The care of Heaven. Not so my father bore
More anxious grief. This should have better taught me;
This lesson, in some hour of inspiration
By him set down, when his pure thoughts were borne,
Like fumes of sacred incense, o'er the clouds,
And wafted thence, on angels' wings, through ways
Of light, to the bright source of all. For there
He in the book of prescience saw this day;
And, waking to the world and mortal sense,
Left this example of his resignation,
This his last legacy to me: which, here,
I'll treasure as more worth than diadems,
Or all extended rule of regal power.

Enter ZARA, *veiled.*

Osm. What brightness breaks upon me thus, through shades,

And promises a day to this dark dwelling?
Is it my love?
Zara. Oh, that thy heart had taught
[*Lifting her veil.*
Thy tongue that saying!
Osm. Zara! I am betrayed
By my surprise.
Zara. What! does my face displease thee?
That, having seen it, thou dost turn thy eyes
Away, as from deformity and horror?
If so, this sable curtain shall again
Be drawn, and I will stand before thee, seeing,
And unseen. 'Is it my love?' Ask again
That question; speak again in that soft voice;
And look again with wishes in thy eyes.
Oh, no! thou canst not, for thou seest me now,
As she, whose savage breast hath been the cause
Of these thy wrongs; as she, whose barbarous rage
Has loaded thee with chains and galling irons.
Well dost thou scorn me, and upbraid my falseness;
Could one who loved, thus torture whom she loved?
No, no, it must be hatred, dire revenge,
And detestation, that could use thee thus.
So dost thou think; then do but tell me so;
Tell me, and thou shalt see how I'll revenge
Thee on this false one, how I'll stab and tear
This heart of flint, 'till it shall bleed; and thou
Shall weep for mine, forgetting thy own miseries.
Osm. You wrong me, beauteous Zara, to believe
I bear my fortunes with so low a mind,
As still to meditate revenge on all,
Whom chance, or fate, working by secret causes,
Has made, per-force, subservient to that end
The heavenly powers allot me; no, not you,
But destiny, and inauspicious stars,
Have cast me down to this low being. Or,
Granting you had, from you I have deserved it.
Zara. Canst thou forgive me, then? wilt thou believe
So kindly of my fault, to call it madness?
Oh, give that madness yet a milder name,
And call it passion! then, be still more kind,
And call that passion love.
Osm. Give it a name,
Or being, as you please, such I will think it.
Zara. Oh, thou dost wound me more with this thy goodness,
Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches;
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.
Osm. Yet I could wish——
Zara. Haste me to know it; what?
Osm. That at this time I had not been this thing.
Zara. What thing?
Osm. This slave.
Zara. Oh, Heaven! my fears interpret
This thy silence; somewhat of high concern,
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruined.
Have I done this? Tell me, am I so cursed?
Osm. Time may have still one fated hour to come,
Which, winged with liberty, might overtake
Occasion past.
Zara. Swift as occasion, I
Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn,
Wake thee to freedom. Now 'tis late; and yet
Some news few minutes past arrived, which seemed
To shake the temper of the king—Who knows
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?
Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,
And strikes his rays through dusk and folded lids,
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.
I'll try.
Osm. I have not merited this grace;
Nor, should my secret purpose take effect,
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.
Zara. Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more
To give, than I have already lost. But now,
So does the form of our engagements rest,
Thou hast the wrong till I redeem thee hence;
That done, I leave thy justice to return
My love. Adieu. [*Exit.*
Osm. This woman has a soul,
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,
And challenges, in spite of me, my best
Esteem; to this, she's fair, few more can boast
Of personal charms, or with less vanity
Might hope to captivate the hearts of kings;
But she has passions which outstrip the wind,
And tear her virtues up, as tempests root
The sea. I fear, when she shall know the truth,
Some swift and dire event of her blind rage
Will make all fatal. But, behold, she comes
For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,
The cause and comfort of my boding heart.

Enter ALMERIA.

My life, my health, my liberty, my all!
How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?
How speak to thee the words of joy and transport?
How run into thy arms, withheld by fetters?
Or take thee into mine, while I am thus manacled,
And pinioned, like a thief or murderer?
Shall I not hurt and bruise thy tender body,
And stain thy bosom with the rust of these
Rude irons? Must I meet thee thus, Almeria?
Alm. Thus, thus; we parted, thus to meet again.
Thou toldst me thou wouldst think how we might meet,
To part no more—Now, we will part no more;
For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.
Osm. Hard means to ratify that word! Oh cruelty!
That ever I should think beholding thee

A torture! Yet such is the bleeding anguish
Of my heart, to see thy sufferings—Oh, Heaven!
That *I* could almost turn my eyes away,
Or wish thee from my sight.
Alm. Oh, say not so!
Though 'tis because thou lovest me. Do not say,
On any terms, that thou dost wish me from thee.
No, no, 'tis better thus, that we together
Feed on each other's heart, devour our woes
With mutual appetite; and, mingling in
One cup the common stream of both our eyes,
Drink bitter draughts, with never-slaking thirst;
Thus better, than for any cause to part.
What dost thou think? Look not so tenderly
Upon me—speak, and take me in thy arms—
Thou canst not; thy poor arms are bound, and strive,
In vain, with the remorseless chains, which gnaw
And eat into thy flesh, festering thy limbs
With rankling rust.
Osm. Oh! O——
Alm. Give me that sigh.
Why dost thou heave, and stifle in thy griefs?
Thy heart will burst, thy eyes look red, and start;
Give thy soul way, and tell me thy dark thought.
Osm. For this world's rule, I would not wound thy breast
With such a dagger as then stuck my heart.
Alm. Why? why? To know it, cannot wound me more
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me,
Thou givest me pain with too much tenderness.
Osm. And thy excessive love distracts my sense.
Oh, wouldst thou be less killing, soft, or kind,
Grief could not double thus his darts against me.
Alm. Thou dost me wrong, and grief, too, robs my heart,
If there he shoot not every other shaft;
Thy second self should feel each other wound,
And woe should be in equal portions dealt.
I am thy wife——
Osm. Oh, thou hast searched too deep:
There, there I bleed; there pull the cruel cords,
That strain my cracking nerves; engines and wheels,
That piece-meal grind, are beds of down and balm
To that soul-racking thought.
Alm. Then I am cursed
Indeed, if that be so! if I am thy torment,
Kill me, then, kill me, dash me with thy chains,
Tread on me: What, am I the bosom-snake
That sucks thy warm life-blood, and gnaws thy heart?
Oh, that thy words had force to break those bonds,
As they have strength to tear this heart in sunder;
So shouldst thou be at large from all oppression.
Am I, am I of all thy woes the worst?
Osm. My all of bliss, my everlasting life,
Soul of my soul, and end of all my wishes,
Why dost thou thus unman me with thy words,
And melt me down to mingle with thy weepings?
Why dost thou ask? Why dost thou talk thus piercingly?
Thy sorrows have disturbed thy peace of mind,
And thou dost speak of miseries impossible.
Alm. Didst not thou say, that racks and wheels were balm,
And beds of ease, to thinking me thy wife?
Osm. No, no; nor should the subtlest pains that hell,
Or hell-born malice, can invent, extort
A wish, or thought, from me to have thee other.
But thou wilt know what harrows up my heart:
Thou art my wife—nay, thou art yet my bride—
The sacred union of connubial love
Yet unaccomplished: his mysterious rites
Delayed; nor has our Hymeneal torch
Yet lighted up his last most grateful sacrifice;
But dashed with rain from eyes, and swailed with sighs,
Burns dim, and glimmers with expiring light.
Is this dark cell a temple for that god?
Or this vile earth an altar for such offerings?
This den for slaves, this dungeon damped with woes;
Is this our marriage-bed? are these our joys?
Is this to call thee mine? Oh, hold, my heart!
To call thee mine! Yes; thus, even thus, to call
Thee mine, were comfort, joy, extremest extasy.
But, Oh, thou art not mine, not even in misery;
And 'tis denied to me to be so blessed,
As to be wretched with thee.
Alm. No; not that
The extremest malice of our fate can hinder:
That still is left us, and on that we'll feed,
As on the leavings of calamity.
There we will feast and smile on past distress,
And hug, in scorn of it, our mutual ruin.
Osm. Oh, thou dost talk, my love, as one resolved,
Because not knowing danger. But look forward;
Think of to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn
From these weak, struggling, unextended arms:
Think how my heart will heave, and eyes will strain,
To grasp and reach what is denied my hands:
Think how the blood will start, and tears will gush,
To follow thee, my separating soul.
Think how I am, when thou shalt wed with Garcia!
Then will I smear these walls with blood, disfigure
And dash my face, and rive my clotted hair,
Break on the flinty floor my throbbing breast,
And grovel, with gashed hands, to scratch a grave,
Stripping my nails to tear this pavement up,
And bury me alive.
Alm. Heart-breaking horror!
Osm. Then Garcia shall lie panting on thy bosom,

Luxurious, revelling amidst thy charms;
And thou, per-force, must yield, and aid his transport.
Hell! hell! have I not cause to rage and rave?
What are all racks, and wheels, and whips, to this?
Are they not soothing softness, sinking ease,
And wafting air, to this? Oh, my Almeria!
What do the damned endure, but to despair,
But knowing heaven, to know it lost for ever?
Alm. Oh, I am struck; thy words are bolts of ice,
Which, shot into my breast, now melt and chill me.
I chatter, shake, and faint, with thrilling fears.
No, hold me not! Oh, let us not support,
But sink each other, deeper yet, down, down,
Where, levelled low, no more we'll lift our eyes,
But prone, and dumb, rot the firm face of earth
With rivers of incessant scalding rain.

Enter ZARA, PEREZ, *and* SELIM.

Zara. Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom.
Dare you dispute the king's command? Behold
The royal siguet.
Per. I obey; yet beg
Your majesty one moment to defer
Your entering, till the princess is returned
From visiting the noble prisoner.
Zara. Ha!
What sayest thou?
Osm. We are lost! undone! discovered!
Retire, my life, with speed—Alas! we are seen:
Speak of compassion, let her hear you speak
Of interceding for me with the king;
Say somewhat quickly to conceal our loves,
If possible——
Alm. I cannot speak.
Osm. Let me
Conduct you forth, as not perceiving her,
But till she's gone; then bless me thus again.
Zara. Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!
Confusion in his face, and grief in hers!
'Tis plain I have been abused—Death and destruction!
How shall I search into this mystery?
The bluest blast of pestilential air
Strike, damp, deaden her charms, and kill his eyes;
Perdition catch them both, and ruin part them.
Osm. This charity to one unknown, and thus
[*Aloud to Almeria as she goes out.*
Distressed, Heaven will repay; all thanks are poor. [*Exit Almeria.*
Zara. Damned, damned dissembler! Yet I will be calm,
Choak in my rage, and know the utmost depth
Of this deceiver—You seem much surprised.
Osm. At your return so soon, and unexpected!
Zara. And so unwished, unwanted too, it seems.
Confusion! Yet I will contain myself.
You are grown a favourite since last we parted;
Perhaps I am saucy and intruding——
Osm. Madam!
Zara. I did not know the princess' favourite.
Your pardon, sir—mistake me not; you think
I am angry; you are deceived. I came to set
You free; but shall return much better pleased,
To find you have an interest superior.
Osm. You do not come to mock my miseries?
Zara. I do.
Osm. I could at this time spare your mirth.
Zara. I know thou couldst; but I am not often pleased,
And will indulge it now. What miseries?
Who would not be thus happily confined,
To be the care of weeping majesty;
To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forsake their down, to wake with watery eyes,
And watch, like tapers, o'er your hours of rest?
Oh, curse! I cannot hold——
Osm. Come, it is too much.
Zara. Villain!
Osm. How, madam!
Zara. Thou shalt die,
Osm. I thank you.
Zara. Thou liest, for now I know for whom thou wouldst live.
Osm. Then you may know for whom I would die.
Zara. Hell! hell!
Yet I will be calm—Dark and unknown betrayer!
But now the dawn begins, and the slow hand
Of fate is stretched to draw the veil, and leave
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.
Osm. You may be still deceived, 'tis in my power——
Zara. Ha! sayest thou—but I will prevent it—
Who waits there? As you will answer it, look this slave [*To the guard.*
Attempt no means to make himself away.
I have been deceived. The public safety now
Requires he should be more confined, and none,
No, not the princess, suffered or to see
Or speak with him. I will quit you to the king.
Vile and ingrate! too late thou shalt repent
The base injustice thou hast done my love:
Yes, thou shalt know, spite of thy past distress,
And all those ills which thou so long hast mourned;
Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State.*

ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zara. THOU hast already racked me with thy stay;
Therefore require me not to ask thee twice:
Reply at once to all. What is concluded?
Sel. Your accusation highly has incensed
The king, and were alone enough to urge
The fate of Osmyn; but, to that, fresh news
Is since arrived, of more revolted troops.
'Tis certain Heli, too, is fled, and with him
(Which breeds amazement and distraction) some
Who bore high offices of weight and trust,
Both in the state and army. This confirms
The king in full belief of all you told him
Concerning Osmyn, and his correspondence
With them who first began the mutiny.
Wherefore a warrant for his death is signed;
And order given for public execution.
Zara. Ha! haste thee! fly, prevent his fate and mine;
Find out the king, tell him I have of weight,
More than his crown, to impart ere Osmyn die.
Sel. It needs not, for the king will straight be here,
And, as to your revenge, not his own interest,
Pretend to sacrifice the life of Osmyn.
Zara. What shall I say, invent, contrive, advise?
Something to blind the king, and save his life,
In whom I live. Spite of my rage and pride,
I am a woman, and a lover still.
Oh! 'tis more grief but to suppose his death,
Than still to meet the rigour of his scorn.
From my despair my anger had its source;
When he is dead I must despair for ever.
For ever! that's despair——it was distrust
Before; distrust will ever be in love,
And anger in distrust; both short-lived pains.
But in despair, and ever-during death,
No term, no bound, but infinite of woe.
Oh, torment, but to think! what then to bear?
Not to be borne—Devise the means to shun it,
Quick; or, by Heaven, this dagger drinks thy blood.
Sel. My life is yours, nor wish I to preserve it,
But to serve you. I have already thought.
Zara. Forgive my rage; I know thy love and truth.
But say, what's to be done, or when, or how,
Shall I prevent or stop the approaching danger?
Sel. You must still seem more resolute, and fixed
On Osmyn's death; too quick a change of mercy
Might breed suspicion of the cause. Advise
That execution may be done in private.
Zara. On what pretence?
Sel. Your own request is enough,
However, for a colour, tell him, you
Have cause to fear his guards may be corrupted,
And some of them bought off to Osmyn's interest,
Who, at the place of execution, will
Attempt to force his way for an escape;
The state of things will countenance all suspicions.
Then offer to the king, to have him strangled
In secret, by your mutes; and get an order,
That none but mutes may have admittance to him.
I can no more, the king is here. Obtain
This grant, and I'll acquaint you with the rest.

Enter KING, GONSALEZ, *and* PEREZ.

King. Bear to the dungeon those rebellious slaves,
The ignoble curs that yelp to fill the cry,
And spend their mouths in barking tyranny.
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,
Let them be led away to present death.
Perez, see it performed.
Gons. Might I presume,
Their execution better were deferred,
Till Osmyn die. Mean time we may learn more
Of this conspiracy.
King. Then be it so.
Stay, soldier; they shall suffer with the Moor.
Are none of those returned who followed Heli?
Gons. None, sir. Some papers have been since discovered
In Roderigo's house, who fled with him,
Which seemed to intimate, as if Alphonso
Were still alive, and arming in Valentia:
Which wears, indeed, this colour of a truth,
They who are fled have that way bent their course.
Of the same nature divers notes have been
Dispersed, to amuse the people; whereupon
Some, ready of belief, have raised this rumour:
That, being saved upon the coast of Afric,
He there disclosed himself to Albuccacim,
And, by a secret compact made with him,
Opened and urged the way to this invasion;
While he himself, returning to Valentia,
In private, undertook to raise this tumult.
Zara. Ha! hearest thou that? Is Osmyn then Alphonso?
Oh, Heaven! a thousand things occur at once
To my remembrance now, that make it plain.
Oh, certain death for him, as sure despair
For me, if it be known——If not, what hope
Have I? Yet 'twere the lowest baseness now,
To yield him up—No, I will conceal him,
And try the force of yet more obligations.
Gons. 'Tis not impossible. Yet it may be,
That some impostor has usurped his name.
Your beauteous captive Zara can inform,
If such a one, so escaping, was received,
At any time, in Albuccacim's court.

King. Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:
An unforeseen, unwelcome hour of business,
Has thrust between us and our while of love;
But wearing, now, apace with ebbing sand,
Will quickly waste and give again the day.
Zara. You're too secure: the danger is more imminent
Than your high courage suffers you to see;
While Osmyn lives, you are not safe.
King. His doom
Is passed; if you revoke it not, he dies.
Zara. 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your entrance,
I find I can unfold what yet concerns
You more. One, who did call himself Alphonso,
Was cast upon my coast, as 'tis reported,
And oft had private conference with the king;
To what effect I knew not then: but he,
Alphonso, secretly departed, just
About the time our arms embarked for Spain.
What I know more is, that a triple league,
Of strictest friendship, was professed between
Alphonso, Heli, and the traitor Osmyn.
King. Public report is ratified in this.
Zara. And Osmyn's death required, of strong necessity.
King. Give order strait, that all the prisoners die.
Zara. Forbear a moment, somewhat more I have,
Worthy your private ear, and this your minister.
King. Let all, except Gonsalez, leave the room.
[*Exeunt Perez, &c.*
Zara. I am your captive, and you've used me nobly;
And, in return of that, though otherwise
Your enemy, I have discovered Osmyn,
His private practice, and conspiracy,
Against your state: and, fully to discharge
Myself of what I've undertaken, now
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards
Are tainted; some among them have resolved
To rescue Osmyn at the place of death.
King. Is treason, then, so near us as our guards?
Zara. Most certain; though my knowledge is not yet
So ripe, to point at the particular men.
King. What is to be done?
Zara. That, too, I will advise.
I have, remaining in my train, some mutes,
A present once from the sultana queen,
In the grand signior's court. These, from their infancy,
Are practised in the trade of death; and shall
(As there the custom is) in private strangle
Osmyn.
Gons. My lord, the queen advises well.
King. What offering, or what recompence remains
In me, that can be worthy so great services?
To cast beneath your feet the crown you have saved,
Though on the head that wears it, were too little.
Zara. Of that hereafter: but, mean time, tis fit
You give strict charge that none may be admitted
To see the prisoner, but such mutes as I
Shall send.
King. Who waits there?

Enter PEREZ.

On your life, take heed
That only Zara's mutes, or such who bring
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.
Zara. They, and no other, not the princess' self.
Per. Your Majesty shall be obeyed.
King. Retire. [*Exit Perez.*
Gons. That interdiction, so particular,
Pronounced with vehemence, against the princess,
Should have more meaning than appears barefaced.
This king is blinded by his love, and heeds
It not. [*Aside.*]—Your majesty, sure, might have spared
The last restraint: you hardly can suspect
The princess is confederate with the Moor.
Zara. I've heard her charity did once extend
So far, to visit him, at his request.
Gons. Ha!
King. How! She visit Osmyn! What, my daughter?
Sel. Madam, take heed; or you have ruined all.
Zara. And after did solicit you, on his
Behalf.——
King. Never. You have been misinformed.
Zara. Indeed! Then 'twas a whisper, spread by some
Who wished it so; a common art in courts,
I will retire, and instantly prepare
Instruction for my ministers of death.
[*Exeunt Zara and Selim.*
Gons. There's somewhat yet of mystery in this;
Her words and actions are obscure and double,
Sometimes concur, and sometimes disagree:
I like it not. [*Aside.*
King. What dost thou think, Gonsalez?
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?
Gons. I am a little slow of credit, sir,
In the sincerity of women's actions.
Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor
Disquiets her too much; which makes it seem
As if she'd rather that she did not hate him.
I wish her mutes are meant to be employed
As she pretends—I doubt it now—Your guards
Corrupted! How? By whom? Who told her so?
In the evening Osmyn was to die; at midnight
She begged the royal signet, to release him;
In the morning he must die again; ere noon
Her mutes alone must strangle him, or he'll
Escape. This, put together, suits not well,
King. Yet that there's truth in what she has discovered

Is manifest, from every circumstance.
This tumult, and the lords who fled with Heli,
Are confirmation;——that Alphonso lives,
Agrees expressly too, with her report.
Gons. I grant it, sir; and doubt not, but in rage
Of jealousy, she has discovered what
She now repents. It may be I'm deceived.
But why that needless caution of the princess?
What if she had seen Osmyn? Though it were strange;
But if she had, what was't to her, unless
She feared her stronger charms might cause the Moor's
Affection to revolt?
King. I thank thee, friend.
There's reason in thy doubt, and I am warned.—
But think'st thou that my daughter saw this Moor?
Gons. If Osmyn be, as Zara has related,
Alphonso's friend, 'tis not impossible
But she might wish, on his account, to see him.
King. Say'st thou? By Heaven, thou hast roused a thought,
That, like a sudden earthquake, shakes my frame.
Confusion! then my daughter's an accomplice,
And plots in private with this hellish Moor.
Gons. That were too hard a thought——but see, she comes—
Twere not amiss to question her a little,
And try, howe'er, if I've divined aright.
If what I fear be true, she'll be concerned
For Osmyn's death, as he's Alphonso's friend:
Urge that, to try if she'll solicit for him.

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

King. Your coming has prevented me, Almeria;
I had determined to have sent for you.
Let your attendant be dismissed; I have
[*Leonora retires.*
To talk with you. Come near; why dost thou shake?
What mean those swollen and red-flecked eyes, that look
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night
In waking anguish? Why this on the day
Which was designed to celebrate thy nuptials;
But that the beams of light are to be stained
With reeking gore, from traitors on the rack?
Wherefore I have deferred the marriage-rites;
Nor shall the guilty horrors of the day
Profane that jubilee.
Alm. All days to me
Henceforth are equal: this, the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows,
Will undistinguished roll, and but prolong
One hated line of more extended woe.
King. whence is thy grief? Give me to know *the cause*;
And look thou answer me with truth; for know
I am not unacquainted with thy falsehood.
Why art thou mute? Base and degenerate maid!
Gons. Dear madam, speak, or you'll incense the king.
Alm. What is it to speak? Or wherefore should I speak?
What mean these tears but grief unutterable?
King. They are the dumb confessions of thy mind;
They mean thy guilt, and say thou wert confederate
With damned conspirators, to take my life.
Oh, impious parricide! Now canst thou speak?
Alm. O earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield;
Open thy bowels of compassion, take
Into the womb the last and most forlorn
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent,
——I have no parent else—be thou a mother,
And step between me and the curse of him,
Who was—who was, but is no more, a father;
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes;
And, for the tender names of child and daughter,
Now calls me murderer and parricide.
King. Rise, I command thee, rise—and if thou wouldst
Acquit thyself of these detested names,
Swear thou hast never seen that foreign dog,
Now doomed to die, that most accursed Osmyn.
Alm. Never, but as with innocence I might,
And free of all bad purposes. So Heaven's
My witness.
King. Vile equivocating wretch!
With innocence! Oh, patience! hear—she owns it!
Confesses it! By heaven, I'll have him racked,
Torn, mangled, flayed, impaled—all pains and tortures
That wit of man, or dire revenge, can think,
Shall he, accumulated, underbear.
Alm. Oh, I am lost.——There fate begins to wound.
King. Hear me, then; if thou canst reply; know, traitress,
I'm not to learn that cursed Alphonso lives;
Nor am I ignorant what Osmyn is——
Alm. Then all is ended, and we both must die.
Since thou'rt revealed, alone thou shalt not die;
And yet alone would I have died, Heaven knows,
Repeated deaths, rather than have revealed thee.
Yes, all my father's wounding wrath, though each
Reproach cuts deeper than the keenest sword,
And cleaves my heart, I would have borne it all,
Nay all the pains that are prepared for thee;
To the remorseless rack I would have given
This weak and tender flesh, to have been bruised
And torn, rather than have revealed thy being.
King. Hell, hell! Do I hear this, and yet endure!
What! darest thou to my face avow thy guilt?
Hence, ere I curse—fly my just rage with speed;
Lest I forget us both, and spurn thee from me.

Alm. And yet a father! Think, I am your child!
Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling;
Now, curse me if you can, now spurn me off.
Did ever father curse his kneeling child?
Never: for always blessings crown that posture.
Nature inclines, and half way meets that duty,
Stooping to raise from earth the filial reverence;
For bended knees returning folding arms,
With prayers, and blessings, and paternal love.
Oh, hear me, then, thus crawling on the earth—
King Be thou advised, and let me go, while yet
The light impression thou hast made remains.
Alm. No, never will I rise, nor lose this hold,
'Till you are moved, and grant that he may live.
King. Ha! Who may live? Take heed! No more of that;
For, on my soul, he dies, though thou and I,
And all, should follow to partake his doom.
Away, off, let me go——Call her attendants.
[*Leonora and women return.*
Alm. Drag me; and harrow the earth with my bare bosom;
I will not go 'till you have spared my husband!
King. Ha! What sayest thou? Husband! Husband! damnation!
What husband! which? Who?
Alm. He, he is my husband.
King. Poison and daggers! Who?
Alm. Oh—— [*Faints.*
Gons. Help! support her.
Alm. Let me go, let me fall, sink deep—I will dig,
I will dig a grave, and tear up death; I will;
I will scrape, till I collect his rotten bones,
And cloath their nakedness with my own flesh;
Yes, I will strip off life, and we will change:
I will be death! then, though you kill my husband,
He shall be mine still, and for ever mine.
King. What husband? whom dost thou mean?
Gons. She raves!
Alm. Oh, that I did. Osmyn, he is my husband.
King. Osmyn!
Alm. Not Osmyn, but Alphonso, is my dear
And wedded husband—Heaven, and air, and seas,
Ye winds and waves, I call ye all to witness.
King. Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.
Should I hear more, I too should catch thy madness.
Yet somewhat she must mean of dire import,
Which I will not hear, till I am more at peace.
Watch her returning sense, and bring me word;
And look that she attempt not on her life.
[*Exit King.*
Alm. Oh, stay, yet stay; hear me, I am not mad.
I would to Heaven I were—He is gone.
Gons. Have comfort.
Alm. Cursed be that tongue that bids me be of comfort;
Cursed my own tongue, that could not move his pity;
Cursed these weak hands, that could not hold him here!
For he is gone, to doom Alphonso's death.
Gons. Your too excessive grief works on your fancy,
And deludes your sense. Alphonso, if living,
Is far from hence, beyond your father's power.
Alm. Hence, thou detested, ill-timed flatterer;
Source of my woes: thou and thy race be cursed;
But doubly thou, who couldst alone have policy
And fraud to find the fatal secret out,
And know that Osmyn was Alphonso.
Gons. Ha!
Alm. Why dost thou start? What dost thou see or hear?
Was it the doleful bell, tolling for death?
Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?
See, see, look yonder! where a grizzled, pale,
And ghastly head glares by, all smeared with blood,
Gasping as it would speak; and after, see,
Behold, a damp, dead hand has dropped a dagger:
I will catch it—Hark! a voice cries murder! ah!
My father's voice! hollow it sounds, and calls
Me from the tomb—I will follow it; for there
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.
[*Exeunt Almeria and Leonora.*
Gons. She is greatly grieved; nor am I less surprized.
Osmyn Alphonso! No; she over-rates
My policy; I never suspected it;
Nor now had known it, but from her mistake.
Her husband too! Ha! where is Garcia then?
And where the crown that should descend on him,
To grace the line of my posterity?
Hold, let me think—if I should tell the king—
Things come to this extremity: his daughter
Wedded already—what if he should yield?
Knowing no remedy for what is past,
And, urged by nature pleading for his child,
With which he seems to be already shaken.
And though I know he hates, beyond the grave,
Anselmo's race; yet if—that If concludes me.
To doubt, when I may be assured, is folly.
But how prevent the captive queen, who means
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain. O well
Invented tale! He was Alphonso's friend.
This subtle woman will amuse the king.
If I delay—'twill do—or better so.
One to my wish. Alonzo thou art welcome.

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. The king expects your lordship.
Gons. 'Tis no matter.
I am not in the way at present, good Alonzo.
Alm. If it please your lordship, I will return and say
I have not seen you.

Gons. Do, my best Alonzo.
Yet stay, I would—but go; anon will serve—
Yet I have that requires thy speedy help.
I think thou wouldst not stop to do me service.
Alon. I am your creature.
Gons. Say thou art my friend.
I have seen thy sword do noble execution.
Alon. All that it can, your lordship shall command.
Gons. Thanks; and I take thee at thy word. Thou hast seen,
Amongst the followers of the captive queen,
Dumb men, who make their meaning known by signs.
Alon. I have, my lord.
Gons. Couldst thou procure, with speed
And privacy, the wearing garb of one
Of those, though purchased by his death, I would give
Thee such reward, as should exceed thy wish.
Alon. Conclude it done. Where shall I wait your lordship?
Gons. At my apartment. Use thy utmost diligence;
And say I have not been seen—Haste, good Alonzo. [*Exit Alonzo.*
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonso slain,
The greatest obstacle is then removed.
Almeria widowed, yet again may wed;
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head.
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room of State.*

Enter KING, PEREZ, *and* ALONZO.

King. Not to be found! in an ill hour he is absent.
None, say you? none! What, not the favourite eunuch?
Nor she herself, nor any of her mutes,
Have yet required admittance?
Per. None, my lord.
King. Is Osmyn so disposed, as I commanded?
Per. Fast bound in double chains, and at full length,
He lies supine on earth; with as much ease
She might remove the centre of this earth,
As loose the rivets of his bonds.
King. It is well.
[*A mute appears, and, seeing the king, retires.*
Ha! stop and seize that mute; Alonzo, follow him.
Entering, he met my eyes, and, starting back,
Frighted, and fumbling one hand in his bosom,
As to conceal the importance of his errand.
[*Alonzo follows him, and returns with a paper.*
Alon. A bloody proof of obstinate fidelity!
King. What dost thou mean?
Alon. Soon as I seized the man,
He snatched from out his bosom this—and strove,
With rash and greedy haste, at once, to cram
The morsel down his throat. I caught his arm,
And hardly wrenched his hand to bring it from him;
Which done, he drew a poinard from his side,
And, on the instant, plunged it in his breast.
King. Remove the body thence, ere Zara see it.
Alon. I will be so bold to borrow his attire;
'Twill quit me of my promise to Gonsalez.
[*Aside. Exit.*
Per. Whate'er it is, the king's complexion turns.
King. How is this? My mortal foe beneath my roof! [*Having read the letter.*
Oh, give me patience, all ye powers! No, rather
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,
And trebled fury—Ha! who's there?
Per. My lord.
King. Hence, slave! how darest thou bide to watch, and pry
Into how poor a thing a king descends?
How like thyself, when passion treads him down!
Ha! stir not, on thy life; for thou wert fixed,
And planted here, to see me gorge this bait,
And lash against the hook—by Heaven, you are all
Rank traitors! thou art with the rest combined:
Thou knewest that Osmyn was Alphonso; knewest
My daughter privately with him conferred;
And wert the spy and pandar to their meeting.
Per. By all that's holy, I am amazed——
King. Thou liest.
Thou art accomplice too with Zara; here
Where she sets down—'Still I will set thee free.'
[*Reading.*
That somewhere is repeated—'I have power
O'er them that are thy guards'—Mark that, thou traitor.
Per. It was your majesty's command I should
Obey her order.
King. [*Reading.*] 'And still will I set
Thee free, Alphonso'—Hell! cursed, cursed, Alphonso!
False and perfidious Zara! Strumpet daughter!
Away, begone, thou feeble boy, fond Love!
All nature, softness, pity, and compassion,
This hour I throw ye off, and entertain
Fell hate within my breast, revenge and gall.
By Heaven, I will meet, and counterwork this treachery.
Hark thee, villain, traitor—answer me, slave!
Per. My service has not merited those titles.
King. Darest thou reply? Take that—thy service! thine! [*Strikes him.*
What is thy whole life, thy soul, thy all, to my
One moment's ease? Hear my command: and look,

That thou obey, or horror on thy head:
Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart——
Why dost thou start? Resolve, or——
Per. Sir, I will.
King. 'Tis well—that when she comes to set him free,
His teeth may grin, and mock at her remorse.
[*Perez going.*
Stay thee—I have farther thought—I will add to this,
And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:
When thou hast ended him, bring me his robe;
And let the cell, where she will expect to see him,
Be darkened, so as to amuse the sight.
I will be conducted thither—mark me well—
There with his turban, and his robe arrayed,
And laid along, as he now lies, supine,
I shall convict her, to her face, of falsehood.
When, for Alphonso's, she shall take my hand,
And breathe her sighs upon my lips, for his;
Sudden I will start, and dash her with her guilt.
But see, she comes. I will shun the encounter; thou
Follow me, and give heed to my direction.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zara. The mute not yet returned! ha! it was the king,
The king that parted hence! frowning he went;
His eyes, like meteors, rolled, then darted down
Their red and angry beams; as if his sight
Would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth,
And kindle ruin in its course; Dost think
He saw me?
Sel. Yes: but then, as if he thought
His eyes had erred, he hastily recalled
The imperfect look, and sternly turned away.
Zara. Shun me when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.
Thy shallow artifice begets suspicion,
And, like a cobweb veil, but thinly shades
The face of thy design! alone disguising
What should have ne'er been seen; imperfect mischief!
Thou, like the adder, venomous and deaf,
Hast stung the traveller, and after hearest
Not his pursuing voice; even when thou thinkst
To hide, the rustling leaves and bended grass
Confess, and point the path which thou hast crept.
Oh, fate of fools! officious in contriving;
In executing, puzzled, lame, and lost.
Sel. Avert it, Heaven, that you should ever suffer
For my defect; or that the means which I
Devised to serve, should ruin your design.
Prescience is Heaven's alone, not given to man;
If I have failed, in what, as being man,
I needs must fail, impute not as a crime
My nature's want, but punish nature in me;
I plead not for a pardon, and to live,
But to be punished and forgiven. Here, strike;
I bare my breast, to meet your just revenge.
Zara. I have not leisure now to take so poor
A forfeit as thy life; somewhat of high,
And more important fate, requires my thought.
When I have concluded on myself, if I
Think fit, I will leave thee my command to die.
Regard me well; and dare not to reply
To what I give in charge; for I am resolved.
Give order that the two remaining mutes
Attend me instantly, with each a bowl
Of such ingredients mixed, as will, with speed,
Benumb the living faculties, and give
Most easy and inevitable death.
Yes, Osmyn, yes; be Osmyn or Alphonso,
I will give thee freedom, if thou darest be free:
Such liberty as I embrace myself,
Thou shalt partake. Since fates no more afford;
I can but die with thee, to keep my word.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Opening, shews the Prison.*

Enter GONSALEZ *disguised like a Mute, with a dagger.*

Gon. Nor centinel, nor guard! the doors unbarred!
And all as still, as at the noon of night!
Sure death already has been busy here.
There lies my way; that door, too, is unlocked.
[*Looking in.*
Ha! sure he sleeps—all is dark within, save what
A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,
By fits reveals—his face seems turned, to favour
The attempt: I'll steal and do it unperceived.
What noise! somebody coming! is it Alonzo?
Nobody. Sure he'll wait without——I would
'Twere done—I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart,
Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it.
[*Goes in.*

Enter GARCIA *and* ALONZO.

Gar. Where, where, Alonzo, where's my father? where
The king? Confusion! all is on the rout!
All is lost, all ruined by surprise and treachery.
Where, where is he? Why dost thou mislead me?
Alon. My lord, he entered but a moment since,
And could not pass me unperceived—What hoa!
My lord, my lord! What hoa! my lord Gonsalez!

Enter GONSALEZ, *bloody.*

Gons. Perdition choak your clamours—whence this rudeness?
Garcia!
Gar. Perdition, slavery, and death,
Are entering now our doors. Where is the king?
What means this blood; and why this face of horror?
Gons. No matter—give me first to know the cause

Of these your rash, and ill-timed exclamations.
Gar. The eastern gate is to the foe betrayed,
Who, but for heaps of slain that choak the passage,
Had entered, long ere now, and borne down all
Before them, to the palace walls. Unless
The king in person animate our men,
Granada's lost; and, to confirm this fear,
The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,
Are through a postern fled, and joined the foe.
Gons. Would all were false as that! for whom you call
The Moor, is dead. That Osmyn was Alphonso;
In whose heart's blood this poniard yet is warm.
Gar. Impossible; for Osmyn was, while flying,
Pronounced aloud by Perez for Alphonso.
Gons. Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes,
How much report has wronged your easy faith.
[*Garcia goes in.*
Alon. My lord, for certain truth, Perez is fled;
And has declared, the cause of his revolt
Was to revenge a blow the king had given him.
Gar. [*Returning.*] Ruin and horror! Oh, heart-wounding sight!
Gons. What says my son? What ruin? Ha! what horror?
Gar. Blasted my eyes, and speechless be my tongue,
Rather than or to see, or to relate
This deed—Oh, dire mistake! Oh, fatal blow!
The king——
Gons. Alon. The king!
Gar. Dead, weltering, drowned in blood.
See, see, attired like Osmyn, where he lies.
[*They look in.*
Oh, whence, or how, or wherefore was this done?
But what imports the manner or the cause?
Nothing remains to do, or to require,
But that we all should turn our swords against
Ourselves, and expiate, with our own, his blood.
Gons. Oh, wretch! Oh, cursed, rash, deluded fool!
On me, on me turn your avenging swords.
I, who have spilt my royal master's blood,
Should make atonement by a death as horrid,
And fall beneath the hand of mine own son.
Gar. Ha! what! atone this murder with a greater!
The horror of that thought has damped my rage.
The earth already groans to bear this deed;
Oppress her not, nor think to stain her face
With more unnatural blood. Murder my father!
Better with this to rip up my own bowels,
And bathe it to the hilt, in far less damnable
Self-murder.
Gons. Oh, my son! from the blind dotage
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.
For thee I've been ambitious, base, and bloody:
For thee I've plunged into this sea of sin;
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While the other bore the crown (to wreath thy brow),
Whose weight has sunk me, ere I reached the shore.
Gar. Fatal ambition! Hark! the foe is entered: (*Shout.*
The shrillness of that shout speaks them at hand.
We have no time to search into the cause
Of this surprising, and most fatal error.
What's to be done? the king's death known, would strike
The few remaining soldiers with despair,
And make them yield to mercy of the conqueror.
Alon. My lord, I've thought how to conceal the body.
Require me not to tell the means, till done,
Lest you forbid what you may then approve.
[*Goes in. Shout.*
Gons. They shout again! Whate'er he means to do,
'Twere fit the soldiers were amused with hopes
And, in the mean time, fed with expectation
To see the king in person at their head.
Gar. Were it a truth, I fear it is too late.
But I'll omit no care, nor haste, and try,
Or to repel their force, or bravely die.
[*Exit Garcia.*

Re-enter ALONZO.

Gons. What hast thou done, Alonzo?
Alon. Such a deed,
As but an hour ago I'd not have done,
Though for the crown of universal empire.
But what are kings, reduced to common clay?
Or who can wound the dead? I have from the body
Severed the head, and in an obscure corner
Disposed it, muffled in the mute's attire,
Leaving to view of them who enter next,
Alone the undistinguishable trunk;
Which may be still mistaken by the guards
For Osmyn, if, in seeking for the king,
They chance to find it.
Gons. 'Twas an act of horror;
And of a piece with this day's dire misdeeds.
But 'tis no time to ponder or repent.
Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence, with speed,
To aid my son. I'll follow, with the last
Reserve, to reinforce his arms: at least,
I shall make good, and shelter, his retreat.
[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter ZARA, *followed by* SELIM, *and two Mutes bearing the bowls.*

Zara. Silence and solitude are every where.
Through all the gloomy ways, and iron doors,
That hither lead, nor human face nor voice
Is seen or heard. A dreadful din was wont
To grate the sense, when entered here, from groans,
And howls of slaves condemned; from clink of chains,

And crash of rusty bars and creaking hinges!
And ever and anon the sight was dashed
With frightful faces, and the meagre looks
Of grim and ghastly executioners.
Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul,
Than did that scene of complicated horrors.
It may be, that the cause of this my errand
And purpose, being changed from life to death,
Had also wrought this chilling change of temper.
Or does my heart bode more? What can it, more
Than death?
Let them set down the bowls, and warn Alphonso
That I am here—so. You return, and find
[*Mutes going in.*
The king; tell him, what he required, I've done,
And wait his coming to approve the deed.
[*Exit Selim.*

Enter Mutes.

Zara. What have you seen? Ha! wherefore stare you thus,
[*The mutes return, and look affrighted.*
With haggard eyes? Why are your arms across?
Your heavy and desponding heads hung down?
Why is it you more than speak in these sad signs?
Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.
[*They go to the scene, which openeng, she perceives the body.*
Ha! prostrate! bloody! headless! Oh——I'm lost.
Oh, Osmyn! Oh, Alphonso! Cruel fate!
Cruel, cruel, oh, more than killing object!
I came prepared to die, and see thee die—
Nay, came prepared myself to give thee death—
But cannot bear to find thee thus, my Osmyn—
Oh, this accursed, this base, this treacherous king!

Enter SELIM.

Sel. I've sought in vain, for no where can the king
Be found——
Zara. Get thee to hell, and seek him there.
[*Stabs him.*
His hellish rage had wanted means to act,
But for thy fatal and pernicious counsel.
Sel. You thought it better then—but I am rewarded.
The mute you sent, by some mischance was seen,
And forced to yield your letter with his life;
I found the dead and bloody body stripped——
My tongue faulters, and my voice fails—I sink—
Drink not the poison—for Alphonso is——[*Dies.*
Zara. As thou art now—and I shall quickly be.
'Tis not that he is dead: for 'twas decreed
We both should die. Nor is it that I survive;
I have a certain remedy for that.
But, oh, he died unknowing in my heart!
He knew I loved, but knew not to what height;
Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,
A martyr, and a victim to my vows.
Insensible of this last proof he's gone;
Yet fate alone can rob his mortal part
Of sense: his soul still sees, and knows each purpose,
And fixed event, of my persisting faith.
Then wherefore do I pause? Give me the bowl.
[*A mute kneels, and gives one of the bowls.*
Hover a moment, yet, thou gentle spirit,
Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight.
This to our mutual bliss, when joined above.
[*Drinks.*
Oh, friendly draught, already in my heart.
Cold, cold; my veins are icicles and frost.
I'll creep into his bosom, lay me there;
Cover us close—or I shall chill his breast,
And fright him from my arms—See, see, he slides
Still farther from me; look, he hides his face,
I cannot feel it—quite beyond my reach,—
Oh, now he's gone, and all is dark—— [*Dies.*
[*The mutes kneel, and mourn over her.*

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Alm. Oh, let me seek him in this horrid cell;
For in the tomb, or prison, I alone
Must hope to find him.
Leon. Heavens! what dismal scene
Of death is this? The eunuch, Selim, slain!
Alm. Shew me, for I am come in search of death;
But want a guide; for tears have dimmed my sight.
Leon. Alas, a little farther, and behold
Zara all pale and dead! two frightful men.
Who seem the murderers, kneel weeping by;
Feeling remorse, too late, for what they've done.
But, oh, forbear—lift up your eyes no more;
But haste away, fly from this fatal place,
Where miseries are multiplied; return,
Return, and look not on; for there's a dagger
Ready to stab the sight, and make your eyes
Rain blood——
Alm. Oh, I foreknow, foresee that object.
Is it at last then so? Is he then dead?
What! dead at last? quite, quite, for ever dead?
There, there, I see him; there he lies, the blood
Yet bubbling from his wounds—Oh, more than savage!
Had they or hearts or eyes, that did this deed?
Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands?
Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,
That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone?
——I do not weep! The springs of tears are dried;
And of a sudden I am calm, as if
All things were well; and yet my husband's murdered!
Yes, yes, I know to mourn! I'll sluice this heart,
The source of woe, and let the torrent loose.
——Those men have left to weep! they look on me!

I hope they murder all on whom they look.
Behold me well; your bloody hands have erred,
And wrongfully have slain those innocents:
I am the sacrifice designed to bleed,
And came prepared to yield my throat—They shake
Their heads, in sign of grief and innocence!
[*They point at the bowl on the ground.*
And point! What mean they? Ha! a cup; Oh, well
I understand what medicine has been here.
Oh, noble thirst! yet greedy to drink all———
——Oh, for another draught of death——What mean they? [*They point at the other cup.*
Ha! point again! 'tis there, and full, I hope.
Thanks to the liberal hand that filled thee thus!
I'll drink my glad acknowledgment——
Leon. Oh, hold,
For mercy's sake! Upon my knee I beg———
Alm. With thee the kneeling world should beg in vain.
Seest thou not there? Behold who prostrate lies,
And pleads against thee; who shall then prevail?
Yet I will take a cold and parting leave
From his pale lips; I'll kiss him ere I drink,
Lest the rank juice should blister on my mouth,
And stain the colour of my last adieu.
Horror! a headless trunk! nor lips nor face,
[*Coming near the body, starts and lets fall the cup.*
But spouting veins, and mangled flesh! Oh, Oh!

Enter ALPHONSO, HELI, PEREZ, *with* GARCIA *prisoner. Guards and Attendants.*

Alph. Away, stand off! Where is she? let me fly,
Save her from death, and snatch her to my heart.
Alm. Oh!
Alph. Forbear; my arms alone shall hold her up,
Warm her to life, and wake her into gladness.
Oh, let me talk, to thy reviving sense,
The words of joy and peace; warm thy cold beauties
With the new-flushing ardour of my cheek;
Into thy lips pour the soft trickling balm
Of cordial sighs; and re-inspire thy bosom
With the breath of love. Shine, awake, Almeria!
Give a new birth to thy long-shaded eyes,
Then double on the day reflected light.
Alm. Where am I? Heaven! what does this dream intend?
Alph. Oh, may'st thou never dream of less delight,
Nor ever wake to less substantial joys!
Alm. Given me again from death! Oh, all ye powers,
Confirm this miracle! Can I believe
My sight against my sight? and shall I trust
That sense, which, in one instant, shews him dead
And living?—Yes, I will; I've been abused
With apparitions and affrighting phantoms:
This is my lord, my life, my only husband;
I have him now, and we no more will part.
My father, too, shall have compassion——
Alph. Oh, my heart's comfort; 'tis not given to this
Frail life to be entirely blessed. Even now,
In this extremest joy my soul can taste,
Yet I am dashed to think that thou must weep;
Thy father fell where he designed my death.
Gonsalez and Alonzo, both of wounds
Expiring, have, with their last breath, confessed
The just decree of Heaven, which on themselves
Has turned their own most bloody purposes.
Nay, I must grant, 'tis fit you should be thus——
[*She weeps.*
Let them remove the body from her sight.
Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup! Alas!
Thy error then is plain! but I were flint
Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.
Oh, Garcia!——
Whose virtue has renounced thy father's crimes,
Seest thou how just the hand of Heaven has been?
Let us, who through our innocence survive,
Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;
And, though a late, a sure reward succeeds.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

TAMERLANE.

BY

ROWE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

TAMERLANE.
BAJAZET.
AXALLA.
MONESES.
STRATOCLES.
PRINCE OF TANAIS.
OMAR.
MIRVAN.
ZAMA.
HALY.
Dervise.

WOMEN.

ARPASIA.
SELIMA.

Parthian and Tartarian Soldiers. Mutes belonging to Bajazet. Other Attendants.

Scene—Tamerlane's Camp, near Angoria, in Galatia.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before Tamerlane's Tent.*

Enter the PRINCE *of* TANAIS, ZAMA, *and* MIRVAN.

Pr. HAIL to the sun! from whose returning light
The cheerful soldier's arms new lustre take,
To deck the pomp of battle. O, my friends!
Was ever such a glorious face of war?
See, from this height, how all Galatia's plains,
With nations numberless, are covered o'er;
Who, like a deluge, hide the face of earth,
And leave no object in the vast horizon,
But glittering arms, and skies.

Zam. Our Asian world,
From this important day, expects a lord;
This day they hope an end of all their woes,
Of tyranny, of bondage, and oppression,
From our victorious emperor, Tamerlane.

Mir. Well has our holy Alla marked him out,
The scourge of lawless pride, and dire ambition,
The great avenger of the groaning world.
Well has he worn the sacred cause of justice
Upon his prosperous sword. Approving Heaven
Still crowned the righteous warrior with success;
As if it said, 'Go forth, and be my champion,
Thou, most like me of all my works below.'

Pr. No lust of rule, the common vice of kings,
No furious zeal, inspired by hot-brained priests,
Ill hid beneath religion's specious name,
E'er drew his temperate courage to the field:
But to redress an injured people's wrongs,
To save the weak one from the strong oppressor,
Is all his end of war. And, when he draws
The sword to punish, like relenting Heaven,
He seems unwilling to deface his kind.

Mir. So rich his soul, in every virtuous grace,
That, had not nature made him great by birth,
Yet all the brave had sought him for their friend.
The Christian prince, Axalla, nicely bred
In polished arts of European courts,
For him forsakes his native Italy,
And lives a happy exile in his service.

Pr. Pleased with the gentle manners of that prince,
Our mighty lord is lavish of his friendship;
Though Omar and the Tartar lords repine,
And loudly tax their monarch as too partial.

Zam. Ere the mid-hour of night, from tent to tent,

Unwearied, through the numerous host he past,
Viewing, with careful eye, each several quarter;
Whilst from his looks, as from divinity,
The soldiers took presage, and cried, 'Lead on,
Great Alla, and our emperor; lead on
To victory, and everlasting fame.'
Mir. Hear you of Bajazet?
Pr. Late in the evening
A slave, of near attendance on his person,
'Scaped to our camp. From him we learned, the tyrant,
With rage redoubled, for the fight prepares;
Some accidental passion fires his breast,
(Love, as 'tis thought, for a fair Grecian captive)
And adds new horror to his native fury.
For five returning suns, scarce was he seen
By any, the most favoured of his court,
But in lascivious ease, among his women,
Lived, from the war retired; or else alone,
In sullen mood, sat meditating plagues
And ruin to the world; till yester morn,
Like fire, that, labouring upwards, rends the earth,
He burst with fury from his tent, commanding
All should be ready for the fight this day.
Zam. I know his temper well, since in his court,
Companion of the brave Axalla's embassy,
I oft observed him proud, impatient
Of aught superior, e'en of Heaven, that made him;
Fond of false glory, of the savage power
Of ruling without reason, of confounding
Just and unjust, by an unbounded will;
By whom religion, honour, all the bands
That ought to hold the jarring world in peace,
Were held the tricks of state, snares of wise princes,
To draw their easy neighbours to destruction.
Mir. Thrice, by our law and prophet, has he sworn,
By the world's lord and maker, lasting peace,
With our great master, and his royal friend,
The Grecian emperor; as oft, regardless
Of plighted faith, with most unkingly baseness,
Has ta'en the advantage of their absent arms,
Without a war proclaimed, or cause pretended,
To waste, with sword and fire, their fruitful fields;
Like some accursed fiend, who, 'scaped from hell,
Poisons the balmy air through which he flies,
He blasts the bearded corn, and loaded branches,
The labouring hind's best hopes, and marks his way with ruin.
Pr. But see his fate! The mighty Tamerlane
Comes, like the proxy of inquiring Heaven,
To judge, and to redress. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter TAMERLANE, *Guards, and other Attendants.*

Tam. Yet, yet a little, and destructive slaughter
Shall rage around, and mar this beauteous prospect;
Pass but an hour, which stands betwixt the lives
Of thousands and eternity. What change
Shall hasty death make in yon glittering plain!
Oh, thou fell monster, War! that in a moment
Layest waste the noblest part of the creation,
The boast and masterpiece of the great Maker,
That wears, in vain, the impression of his image,
Unprivileged from thee.
Health to our friends, and to our arms success,
[*To the Prince, Zama, and Mirvan.*
Such as the cause for which we fight deserves!
Pr. Nor can we ask beyond what Heaven bestows,
Preventing still our wishes. See, great sir,
The universal joy your soldiers wear,
Omen of prosperous battle.
Impatient of the tedious night, in arms
Watchful they stood, expecting opening day;
And now are hardly by their leaders held
From darting on the foe. Like a hot courser,
That bounding paws the mouldering soil, disdaining
The rein that checks him, eager for the race.
Tam. Yes, prince, I mean to give a loose to war.
This morn Axalla, with my Parthian horse,
Arrives to join me. He, who, like a storm,
Swept, with his flying squadrons, all the plain
Between Angoria's walls and yon tall mountains,
That seem to reach the clouds; and now he comes,
Loaden with spoils and conquest, to my aid.
[*Flourish of Trumpets.*
Zam. These trumpets speak his presence——

Enter AXALLA, *who kneels to* TAMERLANE.

Tam. Welcome! thou worthy partner of my laurels,
Thou brother of my choice, a band more sacred
Than nature's brittle tie. By holy friendship,
Glory and fame stood still for thy arrival!
My soul seemed wanting in its better half,
And languished for thy absence; like a prophet,
That waits the inspiration of his god.
Ax. My emperor! My ever royal master!
To whom my secret soul more lowly bends,
Than forms of outward worship can express;
How poorly does your soldier pay this goodness,
Who wears his every hour of life out for you!
Yet 'tis his all, and what he has, he offers;
Nor now disdain to accept the gift he brings,

Enter SELIMA, MONESES, STRATOCLES, *Prisoners; Guards, Mutes, &c.*

This earnest of your fortune. See, my lord,
The noblest prize that ever graced my arms!
Approach, my fair——
Tam. This is indeed to conquer,
And well to be rewarded for thy conquest;
The bloom of opening flowers, unsullied beauty,
Softness, and sweetest innocence she wears,
And looks like nature in the world's first spring.
But say, Axalla——
Sel. Most renowned in war,
[*Kneeling to Tam.*

Look with compassion on a captive maid,
Though born of hostile blood; nor let my birth,
Derived from Bajazet, prevent that mercy,
Which every subject of your fortune finds.
War is the province of ambitious man,
Who tears the miserable world for empire;
Whilst our weak sex, incapable of wrong,
On either side claims privilege of safety.
Tam. [*raising her.*] Rise, royal maid! the pride of haughty power
Pays homage, not receives it, from the fair.
Thy angry father fiercely calls me forth,
And urges me, unwillingly, to arms.
Yet, though our frowning battles menace death,
And mortal conflict, think not that we hold
Thy innocence and virtue as our foe.
Here, till the fate of Asia is decided,
In safety stay. To-morrow is your own.
Nor grieve for who may conquer, or who lose;
Fortune on either side shall wait thy wishes.
Sel. Where shall my wonder and my praise begin?
From the successful labours of thy arms,
Or from a theme more soft, and full of peace,
Thy mercy and thy gentleness? Oh, Tamerlane!
What can I pay thee for this noble usage,
But grateful praise? So Heaven itself is paid.
Give peace, ye powers above, peace to mankind;
Nor let my father wage unequal war,
Against the force of such united virtues!
Tam. Heaven hear thy pious wish!—But since our prospect
Looks darkly on futurity, till fate
Determine for us, let thy beauty's safety
Be my Axalla's care; in whose glad eyes,
I read what joy the pleasing service gives him.
Is there amongst thy other prisoners aught
[*To Ax.*
Worthy our knowledge?
Ax. This brave man, my lord,
[*Pointing to Mon.*
With long resistance held the combat doubtful.
His party, prest with numbers, soon grew faint,
And would have left their charge an easy prey;
Whilst he alone, undaunted at the odds,
Though hopeless to escape, fought well and firmly;
Nor yielded, till, o'ermatched by many hands,
He seemed to shame our conquest, whilst he owned it.
Tam. Thou speak'st him as a soldier should a soldier,
Just to the worth he finds. I would not war
[*To Mon.*
With aught that wears thy virtuous stamp of greatness.
Thy habit speaks thee Christian—Nay, yet more,
My soul seems pleased to take acquaintance with thee,
As if allied to thine: perhaps 'tis sympathy
Of honest minds; like strings wound up in music,
Where, by one touch, both utter the same harmony.
Why art thou, then, a friend to Bajazet?
And why my enemy?
Mon. If human wisdom
Could point out every action of our lives,
And say, 'Let it be thus, in spite of fate
Or partial fortune,' then I had not been
The wretch I am.
Tam. The brave meet every accident
With equal minds. Think nobler of thy foes,
Than to account thy chance in war an evil.
Mon. Far, far from that: I rather hold it grievous,
That I was forced even but to seem your enemy;
Nor think the baseness of a vanquished slave
Moves me to flatter for precarious life,
Or ill-bought freedom, when I swear, by Heaven!
Were I to chuse, from all mankind, a master,
It should be Tamerlane.
Tam. A noble freedom
Dwells with the brave, unknown to fawning sycophants,
And claims a privilege of being believed.
I take thy praise as earnest of thy friendship.
Mon. Still you prevent the homage I should offer.
O, royal sir! let my misfortunes plead,
And wipe away the hostile mark I wore.
I was, when, not long since, my fortune hailed me,
Blessed to my wish, I was the prince Moneses;
Born, and bred up to greatness: witness the blood,
Which, through successive heroes' veins, allied
To our Greek emperors, rolled down to me,
Feeds the bright flame of glory in my heart.
Tam. Even that, that princely tie should bind thee to me,
If virtue were not more than all alliance.
Mon. I have a sister,—oh, severe remembrance!
Our noble house's, nay, her sex's pride;
Nor think my tongue too lavish, if I speak her
Fair as the fame of virtue, and yet chaste
As its cold precepts; wise beyond her sex
And blooming youth; soft as forgiving mercy,
Yet greatly brave, and jealous for her honour:
Such as she was, to say I barely loved her,
Is poor to my soul's meaning. From our infancy,
There grew a mutual tenderness between us,
Till, not long since, her vows were kindly plighted
To a young lord, the equal of her birth.
The happy day was fixed, and now approaching,
When faithless Bajazet (upon whose honour,
In solemn treaty given, the Greeks depended,)
With sudden war, broke in upon the country,
Secure of peace, and for defence unready.
Tam. Let majesty no more be held divine,
Since kings, who are called gods, profane themselves.
Mon. Among the wretches, whom that deluge swept
Away to slavery, myself and sister,
Then passing near the frontiers to the court,
(Which waited for her nuptials) were surprised,
And made the captives of the tyrant's power.
Soon as we reached his court, we found our usage

Beyond what we expected, fair and noble;
'Twas then the storm of your victorious arms
Looked black, and seemed to threaten, when he prest me
(By oft repeating instances) to draw
My sword for him: But when he found my soul
Disdained his purpose, he more fiercely told me,
That my Arpasia, my loved sister's fate,
Depended on my courage shewn for him.
I had long learnt to hold myself at nothing;
But for her sake, to ward the blow from her,
I bound my service to the man I hated.
Six days are past, since, by the sultan's order,
I left the pledge of my return behind,
And went to guard this princess to his camp:
The rest the brave Axalla's fortune tells you.

Tam. Wisely the tyrant strove to prop his cause,
By leaguing with thy virtue; but just Heaven
Has torn thee from his side, and left him naked
To the avenging bolt, that drives upon him.
Forget the name of captive, and I wish
I could as well restore that fair one's freedom,
Whose loss hangs heavy on thee: yet ere night,
Perhaps, we may deserve thy friendship nobler;
The approaching storm may cast the shipwrecked wealth
Back to thy arms; till that be past, since war
(Though in the justest cause) is ever doubtful,
I will not ask thy sword to aid my victory,
Lest it should hurt that hostage of thy valour,
Our common foe detains.

Mon. Let Bajazet
Bend to his yoke repining slaves by force;
You, sir, have found a nobler way to empire,
Lord of the willing world.

Tam. Oh, my Axalla!
Thou hast a tender soul, apt for compassion,
And art thyself a lover and a friend.
Does not this prince's fortune move thy temper?

Ax. Yes, sir, I mourn the brave Moneses' fate,
The merit of his virtue hardly matched
With disadventurous chance: yet, prince, allow me,
Allow me, from the experience of a lover,
To say, one person, whom your story mentioned,
(If he survive) is far beyond you wretched:
You named the bridegroom of your beauteous sister.

Mon. I did. Oh, most accurst!

Ax. Think what he feels,
Dashed in the fierceness of his expectation:
Then, when the approaching minute of possession
Had wound imagination to the height—
Think, if he lives!

Mon. He lives! he does: 'tis true
He lives! But how? To be a dog, and dead,
Were Paradise to such a state as his:
He holds down life, as children do a potion,
With strong reluctance and convulsive struglings,
Whilst his misfortunes press him to disgorge it.

Tam. Spare the remembrance; 'tis an useless grief,
And adds to the misfortune by repeating.
The revolution of a day may bring
Such turns, as Heaven itself could scarce have promised,
Far, far beyond thy wish: let that hope cheer thee.
Haste, my Axalla, to dispose with safety
Thy beauteous charge, and on the foe revenge
The pain which absence gives; thy other care,
Honour and arms, now summon thy attendance.
Now do thy office well, my soul! Remember
Thy cause, the cause of Heaven and injured earth.
O thou Supreme! if thy great spirit warms
My glowing breast, and fires my soul to arms,
Grant that my sword, assisted by thy power,
This day may peace and happiness restore,
That war and lawless rage may vex the world no more.

[*Exeunt Tamerlane, Moneses, Stratocles, Prince of Tanais, Zama, Mirvan, and Attendants.*

Ax. The battle calls, and bids me haste to leave thee;
Oh, Selima!—but let destruction wait.
Are there not hours enough for blood and slaughter?
This moment shall be love's, and I will waste it
In soft complainings, for thy sighs and coldness,
For thy forgetful coldness; even at Birza,
When in thy father's court my eyes first owned thee,
Fairer than light, the joy of their beholding,
Even then thou wert not thus.

Sel. Art not thou changed,
Christian Axalla? Art thou still the same?
Those were the gentle hours of peace, and thou
The world's good angel, that didst kindly join
Its mighty masters in harmonious friendship:
But since those joys that once were ours are lost,
Forbear to mention them, and talk of war;
Talk of thy conquests and my chains, Axalla,

Ax. Yet I will listen, fair, unkind upbraider!
Yet I will listen to thy charming accents,
Although they make me curse my fame and fortune,
My laurel wreaths, and all the glorious trophies,
For which the valiant bleed—Oh, thou unjust one!
Dost thou then envy me this small return
My niggard fate has made, for all the mournings,
For all the pains, for all the sleepless nights,
That cruel absence brings?

Sel. Away, deceiver!
I will not hear thy soothing. Is it thus
That Christian lovers prove the faith they swear?
Are war and slavery the soft endearments,
With which they court the beauties they admire?
'Twas well my heart was cautious of believing

Thy vows, and thy protesting. Know, my conqueror,
Thy sword has vanquished but the half of Selima;
Her soul disdains thy victory.
Ax. Hear, sweet heaven!
Hear the fair tyrant, how she wrests love's laws,
As she had vowed my ruin! What is conquest?
What joy have I from that, but to behold thee,
To kneel before thee, and, with lifted eyes,
To view thee, as devotion does a saint,
With awful, trembling pleasure; then to swear
Thou art the queen and mistress of my soul?
Has not even Tamerlane (whose word, next Heaven's,
Makes fate at second-hand) bid thee disclaim
Thy fears? And dost thou call thyself a slave,
Only to try how far the sad impression
Can sink into Axalla?
Sel. Oh, Axalla!
Ought I to hear you?
Ax. Come back, ye hours,
And tell my Selima what she has done!
Bring back the time, when to her father's court
I came, ambassador of peace from Tamerlane;
When, hid by conscious darkness and disguise,
I past the dangers of the watchful guards,
Bold as the youth who nightly swam the Hellespont:
Then, then she was not sworn the foe of love;
When, as my soul confest its flame, and sued
In moving sounds for pity, she frowned rarely,
But, blushing, heard me tell the gentle tale;
Nay, even confest, and told me, softly sighing,
She thought there was no guilt in love like mine.
Sel. Young, and unskilful in the world's false arts,
I suffered love to steal upon my softness,
And warm me with a lambent guiltless flame:
Yes, I have heard thee swear a thousand times,
And call the conscious powers of heaven to witness
The tenderest, truest, everlasting passion.
But, oh! 'tis past; and I will charge remembrance
To banish the fond image from my soul.
Since thou art sworn the foe of royal Bajazet,
I have resolved to hate thee.
Ax. Is it possible!
Hate is not in thy nature; thy whole frame
Is harmony, without one jarring atom.
Why dost thou force thy eyes to wear this coldness?
It damps the springs of life. Oh! bid me die,
Much rather bid me die, if it be true
That thou hast sworn to hate me!——
Sel. Let life and death
Wait the decision of the bloody field;
Nor can thy fate, my conqueror, depend
Upon a woman's hate. Yet, since you urge
A power, which once perhaps I had, there is
But one request that I can make with honour.
Ax. Oh, name it! say!——
Sel. Forego your right of war,
And render me this instant to my father.
Ax. Impossible!—The tumult of the battle,
That hastes to join, cuts off all means of commerce
Betwixt the armies.
Sel. Swear then to perform it,
Which way soe'er the chance of war determines,
On my first instance.
Ax. By the sacred majesty
Of heaven, to whom we kneel, I will obey thee!
Yes, I will give thee this severest proof
Of my soul's vowed devotion; I will part with thee,
(Thou cruel, to command it!) I will part with thee,
As wretches, that are doubtful of hereafter,
Part with their lives, unwilling, loth, and fearful,
And trembling at futurity. But is there nothing,
No small return that honour can afford,
For all this waste of love?
Sel. The gifts of captives
Wear somewhat of constraint; and generous minds
Disdain to give, where freedom of the choice
Does but seem wanting.
Ax. What! not one kind look?
Then thou art changed indeed. [*Trumpets.*] Hark, I am summoned,
And thou wilt send me forth like one unblessed,
Whom fortune has forsaken, and ill fate
Marked for destruction. Thy surprising coldness
Hangs on my soul, and weighs my courage down;
And the first feeble blow I meet shall raze me
From all remembrance: nor is life or fame
Worthy my care, since I am lost to thee. [*Going.*
Sel. Ha! goest thou to the fight?———
Ax. I do.———Farewell!———
Sel. What! and no more! A sigh heaves in my breast,
And stops the struggling accents on my tongue,
Else, sure, I should have added something more,
And made our parting softer.
Ax. Give it way.
The niggard honour, that affords not love,
Forbids not pity———
Sel. Fate perhaps has set
This day, the period of thy life and conquests;
And I shall see thee, borne at evening back,
A breathless corse.——Oh! can I think on that,
And hide my sorrows?—No—they will have way,
And all the vital air, that life draws in,
Is rendered back in sighs.
Ax. The murmuring gale revives the drooping flame,
That at thy coldness languished in my breast:
So breathe the gentle zephyrs on the spring,
And waken every plant, and odorous flower,
Which winter frost had blasted, to new life.
Sel. To see thee for this moment, and no more—

Oh! help me to resolve against this tenderness,
That charms my fierce resentments, and presents thee,
Not as thou art, mine and my father's foe,
But as thou wert, when first thy moving accents
Won me to hear; when, as I listened to thee,
The happy hours past by us unperceived,
So was my soul fixed to the soft enchantment.

Ar. Let me be still the same! I am, I must be.
If it were possible my heart could stray,
One look from thee would call it back again,
And fix the wanderer for ever thine.

Sel. Where is my boasted resolution now?
[*Sinking into his arms.*
Oh, yes! thou art the same; my heart joins with thee,
And, to betray me, will believe thee still:
It dances to the sounds that moved it first,
And owns at once the weakness of my soul.
So, when some skilful artist strikes the strings,
The magic numbers rouse our sleeping passions,
And force us to confess our grief and pleasure.
Alas! Axalla, say——dost thou not pity
My artless innocence, and easy fondness?
Oh! turn thee from me, or I die with blushing.

Ar. No, let me rather gaze, for ever gaze,
And bless the new-born glories that adorn thee!
From every blush, that kindles in thy cheeks,
Ten thousand little loves and graces spring,
To revel in the roses—it will not be,
[*Trumpets.*
This envious trumpet calls, and tears me from thee—

Sel. My fears increase, and doubly press me now:
I charge thee, if thy sword comes cross my father,
Stop for a moment, and remember me.

Ar. Oh, doubt not but his life shall be my care;
Even dearer than my own———

Sel. Guard that for me too.

Ar. O, Selima! thou hast restored my quiet.
The noble ardour of the war, with love
Returning, brightly burns within my breast,
And bids me be secure of all hereafter.
So cheers some pious saint a dying sinner
(Who trembled at the thought of pains to come)
With Heaven's forgiveness, and the hopes of mercy:
At length, the tumult of his soul appeased,
And every doubt and anxious scruple eased,
Boldly he proves the dark, uncertain road;
The peace, his holy comforter bestowed,
Guides, and protects him like a guardian god.
[*Exit.*

Sel. In vain all arts a love-sick virgin tries,
Affects to frown, and seem severely wise,
In hopes to cheat the wary lover's eyes.
If the dear youth her pity strives to move,
And pleads with tenderness, the cause of love,
Nature asserts her empire in her heart,
And kindly takes the faithful lover's part.
By love herself, and nature, thus betrayed,
No more she trusts in pride's fantastic aid,
But bids her eyes confess the yielding maid.
[*Exit Selima, Guards following.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Tamerlane's Camp.*

Enter Moneses.

Mon. The dreadful business of the war is over:
And Slaughter, that, from yester morn 'till even,
With giant steps, past striding o'er the field,
Besmeared and horrid with the blood of nations,
Now weary, sits among the mangled heaps,
And slumbers o'er her prey; while from this camp
The chearful sounds of victory and Tamerlane
Beat the high arch of heaven. Deciding Fate,
That crowns him with the spoils of such a day,
Has given it as an earnest of the world,
That shortly shall be his.

Enter Stratocles.

My Stratocles!
Most happily returned, might I believe
Thou bring'st me any joy?

Stra. With my best diligence,
This night I have enquired of what concerns you.
Scarce was the sun, who shone upon the horror
Of the past day, sunk to the western ocean,
When, by permission from the prince Axalla,
I mixt among the tumult of the warriors
Returning from the battle: here, a troop
Of hardy Parthians, red with honest wounds,
Confest the conquest they had well deserved:
There, a dejected crew of wretched captives,
Sore with unprofitable hurts, and groaning
Under new bondage, followed sadly after
The haughty victor's heels. But that, which fully
Crowned the success of Tamerlane, was Bajazet,
Fallen, like the proud archangel, from the height
Where once (even next to majesty divine)
Enthroned he sat, down to the vile descent
And lowness of a slave: but, oh! to speak
The rage, the fierceness, and the indignation!—
It bars all words, and cuts description short.

Mon. Then he is fallen! that comet which on high
Portended ruin; he has spent his blaze,
And shall distract the world with fears no more.
Sure it must bode me well; for oft my soul
Has started into tumult at his name,
As if my guardian angel took the alarm,
At the approach of somewhat mortal to me.

But say, my friend, what hear'st thou of Arpasia?
For there my thoughts, my every care is centered.
Stra. Though on that purpose still I bent my search,
Yet nothing certain could I gain, but this;
That in the pillage of the sultan's tent
Some women were made prisoners, who this morning
Were to be offered to the emperor's view:
Their names and qualities, though oft enquiring,
I could not learn.
Mon. Then must my soul still labour
Beneath uncertainty and anxious doubt,
The mind's worst state. The tyrant's ruin gives me
But a half ease.
Stra. 'Twas said, not far from hence
The captives were to wait the emperor's passage.
Mon. Haste we to find the place. Oh, my Arpasia!
Shall we not meet? Why hangs my heart thus heavy,
Like death, within my bosom? Oh! 'tis well,
The joy of meeting pays the pangs of absence,
Else who could bear it?
When thy loved sight shall bless my eyes again,
Then I will own I ought not to complain,
Since that sweet hour is worth whole years of pain. [*Exeunt Moneses and Stratocles.*

SCENE II.—*The inside of a magnificent Tent. Symphony of Warlike Music.*

Enter TAMERLANE, AXALLA, PRINCE OF TANAIS, ZAMA, MIRVAN, *Soldiers, and other Attendants.*

Ax. From this auspicious day the Parthian name
Shall date its birth of empire, and extend
Even from the dawning east to utmost Thule,
The limits of its sway.
Pr. Nations unknown,
Where yet the Roman eagle never flew,
Shall pay their homage to victorious Tamerlane;
Bend to his valour and superior virtue,
And own, that conquest is not given by chance,
But, bound by fatal and resistless merit,
Waits on his arms.
Tam. It is too much; you dress me
Like an usurper, in the borrowed attributes
Of injured Heaven. Can we call conquest ours?
Shall man, this pigmy, with a giant's pride,
Vaunt of himself, and say, 'Thus have I done this?'
Oh, vain pretence to greatness! Like the moon,
We borrow all the brightness which we boast,
Dark in ourselves, and useless. If that hand,
That rules the fate of battles, strike for us,
Crown us with fame, and gild our clay with honour,
'Twere most ungrateful to disown the benefit,
And arrogate a praise which is not ours.
Ax. With such unshaken temper of the soul
To bear the swelling tide of prosperous fortune,
Is to deserve that fortune: in adversity
The mind grows tough by buffetting the tempest,
Which, in success dissolving, sinks to ease,
And loses all her firmness.
Tam. Oh, Axalla!
Could I forget I am a man as thou art,
Would not the winter's cold, or summer's heat,
Sickness, or thirst, and hunger, all the train
Of nature's clamorous appetites, asserting
An equal right in kings and common men,
Reprove me daily?—No—If I boast of aught,
Be it to have been Heaven's happy instrument,
The means of good to all my fellow-creatures:
This is a king's best praise.

Enter OMAR.

Om. Honour and fame [*Bowing to Tamerlane.*
For ever wait the emperor! May our prophet
Give him ten thousand thousand days of life,
And every day like this! The captive sultan,
Fierce in his bonds, and at his fate repining,
Attends your sacred will.
Tam. Let him approach.

Enter BAJAZET, *and other Turkish Prisoners in chains, with a guard of Soldiers.*

When I survey the ruins of this field,
The wild destruction which thy fierce ambition
Has dealt among mankind (so many widows
And helpless orphans has thy battle made,
That half our eastern world this day are mourners),
Well may I, in behalf of heaven and earth,
Demand from thee atonement for this wrong.
Baj. Make thy demand to those that own thy power!
Know, I am still beyond it; and though Fortune
(Curse on that changeling deity of fools!)
Has stript me of the train and pomp of greatness,
That outside of a king, yet still my soul,
Fixt high, and on itself alone dependent,
Is ever free and royal, and even now,
As at the head of battle, does defy thee:
I know what power the chance of war has given,
And dare thee to the use on't. This vile speeching,
This after-game of words, is what most irks me;
Spare that, and for the rest 'tis equal all——
Be it as it may.
Tam. Well was it for the world,
When on their borders neighbouring princes met,
Frequent in friendly parle, by cool debates
Preventing wasteful war: such should our meeting
Have been, hadst thou but held in just regard
The sanctity of leagues so often sworn to.
Canst thou believe thy prophet, or, what's more,

That power supreme, which made thee and thy prophet,
Will, with impunity, let pass that breach
Of sacred faith given to the royal Greek?
Baj. Thou pedant talker! ha! art thou a king,
Possest of sacred power, Heaven's darling attribute,
And dost thou prate of leagues, and oaths, and prophets!
I hate the Greek (perdition on his name!)
As I do thee, and would have met you both,
As death does human nature, for destruction.
Tam. Causeless to hate, is not of human kind:
The savage brute, that haunts in woods remote
And desart wilds, tears not the fearful traveller,
If hunger, or some injury, provoke not.
Baj. Can a king want a cause, when empire bids
Go on? What is he born for, but ambition?
It is his hunger, 'tis his call of nature,
The noble appetite which will be satisfied,
And, like the food of gods, makes him immortal.
Tam. Henceforth I will not wonder we were foes,
Since souls, that differ so, by nature hate,
And strong antipathy forbids their union.
Baj. The noble fire, that warms me, does indeed
Transcend thy coldness. I am pleased we differ,
Nor think alike.
Tam. No—for I think like man;
Thou, like a monster, from whose baneful presence
Nature starts back; and though she fixed her stamp
On thy rough mass, and marked thee for man,
Now, conscious of her error, she disclaims thee,
As formed for her destruction.——
'Tis true, I am a king, as thou hast been:
Honour and glory, too, have been my aim;
But, though I dare face death, and all the dangers
Which furious war wears in its bloody front,
Yet would I chuse to fix my name by peace,
By justice, and by mercy, and to raise
My trophies on the blessings of mankind;
Nor would I buy the empire of the world
With ruin of the people whom I sway,
Or forfeit of my honour.
Baj. Prophet, I thank thee.——
Damnation!—Couldst thou rob me of my glory,
To dress up this same king, this preaching dervise?
Unfit for war, thou shouldst have lived secure
In lazy peace, and, with debating senates,
Shared a precarious sceptre, sat tamely still,
And let bold factions canton out thy power,
And wrangle for the spoils they robbed thee of;
Whilst I (curse on the power that stops my ardour!)
Would, like a tempest, rush amidst the nations,
Be greatly terrible, and deal, like Alla,
My angry thunder on the frighted world.
Tam. The world!—'twould be too little for thy pride:
Thou wouldst scale heaven——
Baj. I would:—Away! my soul
Disdains thy conference.
Tam. Thou vain, rash thing,
That, with gigantic insolence, hast dared
To lift thy wretched self above the stars,
And mate with power Almighty—thou art fallen!
Baj. 'Tis false! I am not fallen from aught I have been;
At least my soul resolves to keep her state,
And scorns to take acquaintance with ill-fortune.
Tam. Almost beneath my pity art thou fallen;
Since, while the avenging hand of Heaven is on thee,
And presses to the dust thy swelling soul,
Fool-hardy, with the stronger thou contendest.
To what vast heights had thy tumultuous temper
Been hurried, if success had crowned thy wishes!
Say, what had I to expect, if thou hadst conquered?
Baj. Oh, glorious thought! By Heaven I will enjoy it,
Though but in fancy; imagination shall
Make room to entertain the vast idea.
Oh! had I been the master but of yesterday,
The world, the world had felt me; and for thee,
I had used thee, as thou art to me—a dog,
The object of my scorn and mortal hatred:
I would have taught thy neck to know my weight,
And mounted from that footstool to my saddle:
Then, when thy daily servile task was done,
I would have caged thee, for the scorn of slaves,
Till thou hadst begged to die; and even that mercy
I had denied thee. Now thou know'st my mind,
And question me no farther.
Tam. Well dost thou teach me,
What justice should exact from thee. Mankind,
With one consent, cry out for vengeance on thee;
Loudly they call, to cut off this league-breaker,
This wild destroyer, from the face of earth.
Baj. Do it, and rid thy shaking soul at once
Of its worst fear.
Tam. Why slept the thunder,
That should have armed the idol deity,
And given thee power, ere yester sun was set,
To shake the soul of Tamerlane? Hadst thou an arm
To make thee feared, thou shouldst have proved it on me,
Amidst the sweat and blood of yonder field,
When, through the tumult of the war, I sought thee,
Fenced in with nations.
Baj. Curse upon the stars,
That fated us to different scenes of slaughter!
Oh! could my sword have met thee!——
Tam. Thou hadst then,
As now, been in my power, and held thy life

Dependent on my gift—Yes, Bajazet,
I bid thee—live! So much my soul disdains
That thou shouldst think I can fear aught but Heaven:
Nay, more; couldst thou forget thy brutal fierceness,
And form thyself to manhood, I would bid thee
Live, and be still a king, that thou mayest learn
What man should be to man, in war remembering
The common tie and brotherhood of kind.
This royal tent, with such of thy domestics
As can be found, shall wait upon thy service;
Nor will I use my fortune to demand
Hard terms of peace, but such as thou mayst offer
With honour, I with honour may receive.

[*Tamerlane signs to an Officer, who unbinds Bajazet.*

Baj. Ha! sayst thou—no—our prophet's vengeance blast me,
If thou shalt buy my friendship with thy empire.
Damnation on thee, thou smooth fawning talker!
Give me again my chains, that I may curse thee,
And gratify my rage: or, if thou wilt
Be a vain fool, and play with thy perdition,
Remember I'm thy foe, and hate thee deadly.
Thy folly on thy head!

Tam. Be still my foe.
Great minds, like Heaven, are pleased in doing good,
Though the ungrateful subjects of their favours
Are barren in return: thy stubborn pride,
That spurns the gentle office of humanity,
Shall in my honour own, and thy despite,
I have done as I ought. Virtue still does
With scorn the mercenary world regard,
Where abject souls do good, and hope reward:
Above the worthless trophies men can raise,
She seeks not honours, wealth, nor airy praise,
But with herself, herself the goddess pays.

[*Exeunt Tamerlane, Axalla, Prince of Tanais, Mirvan, Zama, and Attendants.*

Baj. Come, lead me to my dungeon! plunge me down,
Deep from the hated sight of man and day,
Where, under covert of the friendly darkness,
My soul may brood, at leisure, o'er its anguish!

Om. Our royal master would, with noble usage,
Make your misfortunes light: he bids you hope—

Baj. I tell thee, slave, I have shook hands with hope,
And all my thoughts are rage, despair, and horror!
Ha! wherefore am I thus?—Perdition seize me!
But my cold blood runs shivering to my heart,
As at some phantom, that in dead of night,
With dreadful action, stalks around our beds.
The rage and fiercer passions of my breast
Are lost in new confusion.——

. . . . *Enter* Haly.

Arpasia!—Haly!

Ha. Oh, emperor! for whose hard fate our prophet,
And all the heroes of thy sacred race,
Are sad in paradise, thy faithful Haly,
The slave of all thy pleasures, in this ruin,
This universal shipwreck of thy fortunes,

Enter Arpasia.

Has gathered up this treasure for thy arms:
Nor even the victor, haughty Tamerlane
(By whose command once more thy slave beholds thee),
Denies this blessing to thee, but, with honour,
Renders thee back thy queen, thy beauteous bride.

Baj Oh! had her eyes, with pity, seen my sorrows,
Had she the softness of a tender bride,
Heaven could not have bestowed a greater blessing,
And love had made amends for loss of empire.
But see, what fury dwells upon her charms!
What lightning flashes from her angry eyes!
With a malignant joy she views my ruin:
Even beauteous in her hatred, still she charms me,
And awes my fierce tumultuous soul to love.

Arp. And darest thou hope, thou tyrant! ravisher!
That Heaven has any joy in store for thee?
Look back upon the sum of thy past life,
Where tyranny, oppression, and injustice,
Perjury, murders, swell the black account;
Where lost Arpasia's wrongs stand bleeding fresh,
Thy last recorded crime. But Heaven has found thee;
At length the tardy vengeance has o'erta'en thee.
My weary soul shall bear a little longer
The pain of life, to call for justice on thee:
That once complete, sink to the peaceful grave,
And lose the memory of my wrongs and thee.

Baj. Thou railest! I thank thee for it—Be perverse,
And muster all the woman in thy soul:
Goad me with curses, be a very wife,
That I may fling off this tame love, and hate thee.

Enter Moneses. [*Bajazet starting.*

Ha! Keep thy temper, heart! nor take alarm
At a slave's presence!

Mon. It is Arpasia!—Leave me, thou cold fear!
Sweet as the rosy morn she breaks upon me,
And sorrow, like the night's unwholesome shade,
Gives way before the golden dawn she brings.

Baj. [*Advancing towards him.*] Ha! Christian! Is it well that we meet thus?
Is this thy faith!

Mon. Why does thy frowning brow
Put on this form of fury? Is it strange
We should meet here, companions in misfortune,
The captives in one common chance of war?
Nor shouldst thou wonder that my sword has failed
Before the fortune of victorious Tamerlane,

When thou, with nations like the sanded shore,
With half the warring world upon thy side,
Couldst not stand up against his dreadful battle,
That crushed thee with its shock. Thy men can witness,
Those cowards that forsook me in the combat,
My sword was not inactive.
Baj. No, it is false;
Where is my daughter, thou vile Greek? Thou hast
Betrayed her to the Tartar; or, even worse,
Pale with thy fear, didst lose her like a coward;
And, like a coward now, would cast the blame
On fortune and ill stars.
Mon. Ha! saidst thou like a coward?
What sanctity, what majesty divine
Hast thou put on, to guard thee from my rage,
That thus thou darest to wrong me?
Baj. Out, thou slave,
And know me for thy lord——
Mon. I tell thee, tyrant,
When in the pride of power thou sat'st on high,
When like an idol thou wert vainly worshipped,
By prostrate wretches, born with slavish souls:
Even when thou wert a king, thou wert no more,
Nor greater than Moneses; born of a race
Royal, and great as thine. What art thou now, then?
The fate of war has set thee with the lowest;
And captives (like the subjects of the grave),
Losing distinction, serve one common lord.
Baj. Braved by this dog! Now give a loose to rage,
And curse thyself! curse thy false cheating prophet!
Ha! yet there is some revenge. Hear me, thou Christian!
Thou leftst that sister with me: Thou impostor!
Thou boaster of thy honesty! Thou liar!
But take her to thee back.
Now to explore my prison—if it holds
Another plague like this, the restless damned
(If muftis lie not) wander thus in hell;
From scorching flames to chilling frosts they run,
Then from their frosts to fires return again,
And only prove variety of pain.
[*Exeunt Bajazet and Haly.*
Arp. Stay, Bajazet, I charge thee by my wrongs!
Stay and unfold a tale of so much horror
As only fits thy telling. Oh, Moneses!
Mon. Why dost thou weep? Why this tempestuous passion,
That stops thy faultering tongue short on my name?
Oh, speak! unveil this mystery of sorrow,
And draw the dismal scene at once to sight!
Arp. Thou art undone, lost, ruined, and undone!
Mon. I will not think it is so, while I have thee;
While thus it is given to hold thee in my arms;
For while I sigh upon thy panting bosom,
The sad remembrance of past woes is lost.
Arp. Forbear to sooth thy soul with flattering thoughts,
Of evils overpast, and joys to come:
Our woes are like the genuine shade beneath,
Where fate cuts off the very hopes of day,
And everlasting night and horror reign.
Mon. By all the tenderness and chaste endearments
Of our past love, I charge thee, my Arpasia,
To ease my soul of doubts! Give me to know,
At once, the utmost malice of my fate!
Arp. Take then thy wretched share in all I suffer,
Still partner of my heart! Scarce hadst thou left
The sultan's camp, when the imperious tyrant,
Softening the pride and fierceness of his temper,
With gentle speech, made offer of his love.
Amazed, as at the thought of sudden death,
I started into tears, and often urged
(Though still in vain) the difference of our faiths.
At last, as flying to the utmost refuge,
With lifted hands and streaming eyes, I owned
The fraud; which when we first were made his prisoners,
Conscious of my unhappy form, and fearing
For thy dear life, I forced thee to put on
Thy borrowed name of brother, mine of sister;
Hiding beneath that veil the nearer tie
Our mutual vows had made before the priest.
Kindling to rage at hearing of my story,
'Then, be it so,' he cried: 'Thinkest thou thy vows,
Given to a slave, shall bar me from thy beauties?'
Then bade the priest pronounce the marriage-rites,
Which he performed; whilst, shrieking with despair,
I called, in vain, the powers of Heaven to aid me.
Mon. Villain! Imperial villain! Oh, the coward!
Awed by his guilt, though backed by force and power,
He durst not, to my face, avow his purpose;
But, in my absence, like a lurking thief,
Stole on my treasure, and at once undid me.
Arp. Had they not kept me from the means of death,
Forgetting all the rules of Christian suffering,
I had done a desperate murder on my soul,
Ere the rude slaves, that waited on his will,
Had forced me to his——
Mon. Stop thee there, Arpasia,
And bar my fancy from the guilty scene!
Let not thought enter, lest the busy mind
Should muster such a train of monstrous images,
As would distract me. Oh! I cannot bear it.
Thou lovely hoard of sweets, where all my joys
Were treasured up, to have thee rifled thus!
Thus torn untasted from my eager wishes!
But I will have thee from him. Tamerlane
(The sovereign judge of equity on earth)

Shall do me justice on this mighty robber,
And render back thy beauties to Moneses.
Arp. And who shall render back my peace, my honour,
The spotless whiteness of my virgin soul?
Ah! no, Moneses—Think not I will ever
Bring a polluted love to thy chaste arms:
I am the tyrant's wife.—Oh, fatal title!
And, in the sight of all the saints, have sworn,
By honour, womanhood, and blushing shame,
To know no second bride-bed but my grave.
Mon. I swear it must not be, since still my eye
Finds thee as heavenly white, as angel pure,
As in the earliest hours of life thou wert:
Nor art thou his, but mine; thy first vow is mine,
Thy soul is mine.
Arp. O! think not, that the power
Of most persuasive eloquence can make me
Forget I have been another's, been his wife.
Now, by my blushes, by the strong confusion
And anguish of my heart, spare me, Moneses,
Nor urge my trembling virtue to the precipice.
Shortly, oh! very shortly, if my sorrows
Divine aright, and Heaven be gracious to me,
Death shall dissolve the fatal obligation,
And give me up to peace, to that blest place,
Where the good rest from care and anxious life.
Mon. Oh, teach me, thou fair saint, like thee to suffer!
Teach me, with hardy piety, to combat
The present ills: instruct my eyes to pass
The narrow bounds of life, this land of sorrow,
And, with bold hopes, to view the realms beyond,
Those distant beauties of the future state.
Tell me, Arpasia—say, what joys are those
That wait to crown the wretch who suffers here?
Oh! tell me, and sustain my failing faith.
Arp. Imagine somewhat exquisitely fine,
Which fancy cannot paint, which the pleased mind
Can barely know, unable to describe it;
Imagine it is a tract of endless joys,
Without satiety or interruption;
Imagine it is to meet, and part no more.
Mon. Grant, gentle Heaven, that such may be our lot!
Let us be blest together. Oh, my soul!
Build on that hope, and let it arm thy courage,
To struggle with the storm that parts us now.
Arp. Yes, my Moneses! now the surges rise,
The swelling sea breaks in between our barks,
And drives us to our fate on different rocks.
Farewell! My soul lives with thee.
Mon. Death is parting,
It is the last sad adieu 'twixt soul and body.
But this is somewhat worse——my joy, my comfort,
All that was left in life, fleets after thee;
My aching sight hangs on thy parting beauties,
Thy lovely eyes, all drowned in floods of sorrow.
So sinks the setting sun beneath the waves,
And leaves the traveller, in pathless woods,
Benighted and forlorn—Thus, with sad eyes,
Westward he turns, to mark the light's decay,
Till, having lost the last faint glimpse of day,
Cheerless, in darkness, he pursues his way.
[*Exeunt Moneses and Arpasia, severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The inside of the Royal Tent.*

Enter Axalla, Selima, *and Women Attendants.*

Ax. Can there be aught in love beyond this proof,
This wondrous proof, I give thee of my faith?
To tear thee from my bleeding bosom thus!
To rend the strings of life, to set thee free,
And yield thee to a cruel father's power!
Foe to my hopes! What canst thou pay me back,
What but thyself, thou angel! for this fondness?
Sel. Thou dost upbraid me, beggar as I am,
And urge me with my poverty of love.
Perhaps thou think'st, 'tis nothing for a maid
To struggle through the niceness of her sex,
The blushes and the fears, and own she loves.
Thou think'st 'tis nothing for my artless heart
To own my weakness, and confess thy triumph.
Ax. Oh! yes I own it; my charmed ears ne'er knew
A sound of so much rapture, so much joy.
Not voices, instruments, not warbling birds,
Not winds, not murmuring waters joined in concert,
Not tuneful nature, not the according spheres,
Utter such harmony, as when my Selima,
With down-cast looks and blushes, said—I love.
Sel. And yet thou say'st, I am a niggard to thee!
I swear the balance shall be held between us,
And love be judge, if, after all the tenderness,
Tears and confusion of my virgin soul,
Thou shouldst complain of aught, unjust Axalla!
Ax. Why was I ever blest!—Why is remembrance
Rich with a thousand pleasing images
Of past enjoyments, since 'tis but plague to me!
When thou art mine no more, what will it ease me
To think of all the golden minutes past,
To think that thou wert kind, and I was happy!
But like an angel fallen from bliss, to curse
My present state, and mourn the heaven I've lost

Sel. Hope better for us both; nor let thy fears,
Like an unlucky omen, cross my way.
My father, rough and stormy in his nature,
To me was always gentle, and, with fondness
Paternal, ever met me with a blessing.
Oft, when offence had stirred him to such fury,
That not grave counsellors, for wisdom famed,
Nor hardy captains, that had fought his battles,
Presumed to speak; but struck with awful dread,
Were hushed as death; yet has he smiled on me,
Kissed me, and bade me utter all my purpose,
Till, with my idle prattle, I had soothed him,
And won him from his anger.

Ax. Oh! I know
Thou hast a tongue to charm the wildest tempers.
Herds would forget to graze, and savage beasts
Stand still and lose their fierceness, but to hear thee,
As if they had reflection, and by reason
Forsook a less enjoyment for a greater.
But, oh! when I revolve each circumstance,
My Christian faith, my service closely bound
To Tamerlane, my master, and my friend,
Tell me, my charmer, if my fears are vain?
Think what remains for me, if the fierce sultan
Should doom thy beauties to another's bed!

Sel. 'Tis a sad thought: but to appease thy doubts,
Here, in the awful sight of Heaven, I vow
No power shall e'er divide me from thy love,
Even duty shall not force me to be false.
My cruel stars may tear thee from my arms,
But never from my heart; and when the maids
Shall yearly come with garlands of fresh flowers,
To mourn with pious office o'er my grave,
They shall sit sadly down, and weeping tell
How well I loved, how much I suffered for thee:
And while they grieve my fate, shall praise my constancy.

Ax. But see, the sultan comes!——My beating heart
Bounds with exulting motion;—hope and fear
Fight with alternate conquest in my breast.
Oh! can I give her from me? Yield her up?
Now mourn, thou god of love, since honour triumphs,
And crowns his cruel altars with thy spoils.

Enter Bajazet.

Baj. To have a nauseous courtesy forced on me,
Spite of my will, by an insulting foe!
Ha! they would break the fierceness of my temper;
And make me supple for their slavish purpose.
Curse on their fawning arts! From Heaven itself
I would not, on such terms, receive a benefit,
But spurn it back upon the giver's hand.

[*Selima comes forward, and kneels to Bajazet.*

Sel. My lord! my royal father!

Baj. Ha! what art thou?
What heavenly innocence! that in a form
So known, so loved, hast left thy paradise,
For joyless prison, for this place of woe!
Art thou my Selima?

Sel. Have you forgot me?
Alas, my piety is then in vain!
Your Selima, your daughter whom you loved,
The fondling once of her dear father's arms,
Is come to claim her share in his misfortunes;
To wait and tend him with obsequious duty;
To sit, and weep for every care he feels;
To help to wear the tedious minutes out,
To soften bondage, and the loss of empire.

Baj. Now, by our prophet, if my wounded mind
Could know a thought of peace, it would be now!
Even from thy prating infancy thou wert
My joy, my little angel; smiling comfort
Came with thee, still to glad me. Now I'm cursed
Even in thee too. Reproach and infamy
Attend the Christian dog, to whom thou wert trusted!
To see thee here—'twere better see thee dead!

Ax. Thus Tamerlane, to royal Bajazet,
With kingly greeting sends; since with the brave
(The bloody business of the fight once ended)
Stern hate and opposition ought to cease;
Thy queen already to thy arms restored,
Receive this second gift, thy beauteous daughter;
And if there be aught farther in thy wish,
Demand with honour, and obtain it freely.

Baj. Bear back thy fulsome greeting to thy master;
Tell him, I'll none of it. Had he been a god,
All his omnipotence could not restore
My fame diminished, loss of sacred honour,
The radiancy of majesty eclipsed:
For aught besides, it is not worth my care;
The giver and his gifts are both beneath me.

Ax. Enough of war the wounded earth has known;
Weary at length, and wasted with destruction,
Sadly she rears her ruined head, to shew
Her cities humbled, and her countries spoiled,
And to her mighty masters sues for peace.
Oh, sultan! by the Power divine I swear,
With joy I would resign the savage trophies
In blood and battle gained, could I atone
The fatal breach 'twixt thee and Tamerlane;
And think a soldier's glory well bestowed
To buy mankind a peace.

Baj. And what art thou,
That dost presume to mediate 'twixt the rage
Of angry kings?

Ax. A prince, born of the noblest,
And of a soul that answers to that birth,
That dares not but do well. Thou dost put on
A forced forgetfulness, thus not to know me,
A guest so lately to thy court, then meeting
On gentler terms.—

Sel. Could aught efface the merit
Of brave Axalla's name, yet when your daughter
Shall tell how well, how nobly she was used,
How light this gallant prince made all her bondage,
Most sure the royal Bajazet will own
That honour stands indebted to such goodness,
Nor can a monarch's friendship more than pay it.
Baj. Ha! know'st thou that, fond girl?—Go
—'tis not well,
And when thou couldst descend to take a benefit
From a vile Christian, and thy father's foe,
Thou didst an act dishonest to thy race:
Henceforth, unless thou mean'st to cancel all
My share in thee, and write thyself a bastard,
Die, starve, know any evil, any pain,
Rather than taste a mercy from these dogs.
Sel. Alas! Axalla!
Ax. Weep not, lovely maid!
I swear, one pearly drop from those fair eyes
Would over-pay the service of my life!
One sigh from thee has made a large amends
For all thy angry father's frowns and fierceness.
Baj. Oh, my curst fortune!—Am I fallen thus low!
Dishonoured to my face! Thou earth-born thing!
Thou clod! how hast thou dared to lift thy eyes
Up to the sacred race of mighty Ottoman,
Whom kings, whom even our prophet's holy offspring
At distance have beheld? And what art thou?
What glorious titles blazon out thy birth?
Thou vile obscurity! ha!—say—thou base one.
Ax. Thus challenged, virtue, modest as she is,
Stands up to do herself a common justice;
To answer, and assert that inborn merit,
That worth, which conscious to herself she feels.
Were honour to be scanned by long descent,
From ancestors illustrious, I could vaunt
A lineage of the greatest, and recount,
Among my fathers, names of ancient story,
Heroes and god-like patriots, who subdued
The world by arms and virtue, and, being Romans,
Scorned to be kings; but that be their own praise:
Nor will I borrow merit from the dead,
Myself an undeserver. I could prove
My friendship such, as thou mightest deign to accept
With honour, when it comes with friendly office,
To render back thy crown, and former greatness;
And yet even this, even all is poor, when Selima,
With matchless worth, weighs down the adverse scale.
Baj. To give me back what yesterday took from me,
Would be to give like Heaven, when having finished
This world (the goodly work of his creation),
He bid his favourite man be lord of all.
But this———
Ax. Nor is this gift beyond my power.
Oft has the mighty master of my arms
Urged me, with large ambition, to demand
Crowns and dominions from his bounteous power:
'Tis true, I waved the proffer, and have held it
The worther choice to wait upon his virtues,
To be the friend and partner of his wars,
Than to be Asia's lord. Nor wonder then,
If, in the confidence of such a friendship,
I promise boldly for the royal giver,
Thy crown and empire.
Baj. For our daughter thus
Meanest thou to barter? Ha! I tell thee, Christian,
There is but one, one dowry thou canst give,
And I can ask, worthy my daughter's love.
Ax. Oh! name the mighty ransom; task my power;
Let there be danger, difficulty, death,
To enhance the price.
Baj. I take thee at thy word.
Bring me the Tartar's head.
Ax. Ha!
Baj. Tamerlane's!
That death, that deadly poison, to my glory.
Ax. Prodigious! Horrid!
Sel. Lost! for ever lost!
Baj. And couldst thou hope to bribe me with aught else?
With a vile peace, patched up on slavish terms!
With tributary kingship?——No!—To merit
A recompence from me, sate my revenge.
The Tartar is my bane, I cannot bear him:
One heaven and earth can never hold us both;
Still shall we hate, and with defiance deadly
Keep rage alive, till one be lost for ever;
As if two suns should meet in the meridian,
And strive, in fiery combat, for the passage.
Weep'st thou, fond girl? Now, as thy king, and father,
I charge thee, drive this slave from thy remembrance!
Hate shall be pious in thee. Come, and join
[*Laying hold on her hand.*
To curse thy father's foes.
Sel. Undone for ever!
Now, tyrant duty, art thou yet obeyed?
There is no more to give thee. Oh, Axalla!
[*Bajazet leads out Selima, she looking back on Axalla.*
Ax. 'Twas what I feared; fool that I was to obey!
The coward, Love, that could not bear her frown,
Has wrought his own undoing. Perhaps e'en now
The tyrant's rage prevails upon her fears:
Fiercely he storms: she weeps, and sighs, and trembles,
But swears at length to think on me no more.
He bade me take her. But, oh, gracious honour!
Upon what terms? My soul yet shudders at it,
And stands but half recovered of her fright.
The head of Tamerlane! monstrous impiety!
Bleed, bleed to death, my heart, be virtue's martyr.

Oh, emperor! I own I ought to give thee
Some nobler mark, than dying, of my faith.
Then let the pains I feel my friendship prove;
'Tis easier far to die, than cease to love.
[*Exit Axalla.*

SCENE II.—*Tamerlane's Camp.*

Enter severally Moneses, *and* Prince *of* Tanais.

Mon. If I not press untimely on his leisure,
You would much bind a stranger to your service,
To give me means of audience from the emperor.
Pr. Most willingly; though, for the present moment,
We must intreat your stay; he holds him private.
Mon. His counsel, I presume?
Pr. No, the affair
Is not of earth, but heaven—A holy man,
(One whom our prophet's law calls such) a dervise,
Keeps him in conference.
Mon. Hours of religion,
Especially of princes, claim a reverence,
Nor will be interrupted.
Pr. What his business
Imports, we know not; but, with earnest suit,
This morn, he begged admittance. Our great master
(Than whom none bows more lowly to high Heaven)
In reverend regard holds all that bear
Relation to religion, and, on notice
Of his request, received him on the instant.
Mon. We will attend his pleasure. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Tamerlane *and a Dervise.*

Tam. Thou bring'st me thy credentials from the highest,
From Alla, and our prophet. Speak thy message;
It must import the best and noblest ends.
Der. Thus speaks our holy Mahomet, who has given thee
To reign and conquer: ill dost thou repay
The bounties of his hand, unmindful of
The fountain whence thy streams of greatness flow.
Thou hast forgot high Heaven, hast beaten down
And trampled on religion's sanctity.
Tam. Now, as I am a soldier and a king
(The greatest names of honour), do but make
Thy imputation out, and Tamerlane
Shall do thee ample justice on himself.
So much the sacred name of Heaven awes me,
Could I suspect my soul of harbouring aught
To its dishonour, I would search it strictly,
And drive the offending thought with fury forth.
Der. Yes, thou hast hurt our holy prophet's honour,
By fostering the pernicious Christian sect:
Those, whom his sword pursued, with fell destruction,
Thou takest into thy bosom, to thy councils!
They are thy only friends. The true-believers
Mourn to behold thee favour this Axalla.
Tam. I fear me, thou outgoest the prophet's order,
And bring'st his venerable name to shelter
A rudeness, ill-becoming thee to use,
Or me to suffer. When thou namest my friend,
Thou namest a man beyond a monk's discerning,
Virtuous and great, a warrior and a prince.
Der. He is a Christian; there our law condemns him,
Although he were even all thou speakest, and more.
Tam. 'Tis false; no law divine condemns the virtuous,
For differing from the rules your schools devise.
Look round, how Providence bestows alike
Sunshine and rain, to bless the fruitful year,
On different nations, all of different faiths;
And (though by several names and titles worshipped)
Heaven takes the various tribute of their praise;
Since all agree to own, at least to mean,
One best, one greatest, only Lord of all.
Thus, when he viewed the many forms of nature,
He found that all was good, and blest the fair variety.
Der. Most impious and profane!—Nay, frown not, prince!
Full of the prophet, I despise the danger
Thy angry power may threaten. I command thee
To hear, and to obey; since thus says Mahomet:
Why have I made thee dreadful to the nations?
Why have I given thee conquest, but to spread
My sacred law even to the utmost earth,
And make my holy Mecca the world's worship?
Go on, and wheresoe'er thy arms shall prosper,
Plant there the prophet's name; with sword and fire
Drive out all other faiths, and let the world
Confess him only.
Tam. Had he but commanded
My sword to conquer all, to make the world
Know but one lord, the task were not so hard;
'Twere but to do what has been done already;
And Philip's son, and Cæsar, did as much;
But to subdue the unconquerable mind,
To make one reason have the same effect
Upon all apprehensions; to force this
Or this man, just to think as thou and I do;
Impossible! Unless souls were alike
In all, which differ now like human faces.
Der. Well might the holy cause be carried on,
If Musselmen did not make war on Musselmen.
Why holdest thou captive a believing monarch?
Now, as thou hopest to 'scape the prophet's curse,
Release the royal Bajazet, and join,
With force united, to destroy the Christians.
Tam. 'Tis well——I've found the cause that moves thy zeal.

What shallow politician set thee on,
In hopes to fright me this way to compliance?
Der. Our prophet only——
Tam. No—thou dost belie him,
Thou maker of new faiths! that darest to build
Thy fond inventions on religion's name.
Religion's lustre is, by native innocence,
Divinely pure, and simple from all arts;
You daub and dress her like a common mistress,
The harlot of your fancies; and, by adding
False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
Suspect her angel's face is foul beneath,
And would not bear all lights. Hence! I have found thee.
Der. I have but one resort. Now aid me, prophet! [*Aside.*
Yet I have somewhat further to unfold;
Our prophet speaks to thee in thunder—thus—
[*The Dervise draws a concealed dagger, and offers to stab Tamerlane.*
Tam. No, villain, Heaven is watchful o'er its worshippers,
[*Wresting the dagger from him.*
And blasts the murderer's purpose. Think, thou wretch!
Think on the pains that wait thy crime, and tremble
When I shall doom thee——
Der. 'Tis but death at last;
And I will suffer greatly for the cause,
That urged me first to the bold deed.
Tam. Oh, impious!
Enthusiasm thus makes villains martyrs.
[*Pausing.*] It shall be so—To die! 'twere a reward——
Now, learn the difference 'twixt thy faith and mine:
Thine bids thee lift thy dagger to my throat;
Mine can forgive the wrong, and bid thee live.
Keep thy own wicked secret, and be safe!
If thou repentest, I have gained one to virtue,
And am, in that, rewarded for my mercy;
If thou continuest still to be the same,
'Tis punishment enough to be a villain.
Hence! from my sight—It shocks my soul to think,
That there is such a monster in my kind.
[*Exit Dervise.*
Whither will man's impiety extend?
Oh, gracious Heaven! dost thou withhold thy thunder,
When bold assassins take thy name upon them,
And swear they are the champions of thy cause?

Enter Moneses.

Mon. Oh, emperor! before whose awful throne
The afflicted never kneel in vain for justice;
[*Kneeling to Tam.*
Undone, and ruined, blasted in my hopes,
Here let me fall before your sacred feet,
And groan out my misfortunes, till your pity
(The last support and refuge that is left me)
Shall raise me from the ground, and bid me live!
Tam. Rise, prince, nor let me reckon up thy worth,
And tell how boldly that might bid thee ask,
Lest I should make a merit of my justice,
The common debt I owe to thee, to all,
Even to the meanest of mankind, the charter
By which I claim my crown, and Heaven's protection.
Speak, then, as to a king, the sacred name
Where power is lodged, for righteous ends alone.
Mon. One only joy, one blessing, my fond heart
Had fixed its wishes on, and that is lost;
That sister, for whose safety my sad soul
Endured a thousand fears——
Tam. I well remember,
When, ere the battle joined, I saw thee first,
With grief uncommon to a brother's love,
Thou told'st a moving tale of her misfortunes,
Such as bespoke my pity. Is there aught
Thou canst demand from friendship? Ask, and have it.
Mon. First, oh! let me entreat your royal goodness,
Forgive the folly of a lover's caution,
That forged a tale of folly to deceive you.
Said I, she was my sister?—Oh! 'tis false;
She holds a dearer interest in my soul,
Such as the closest ties of blood ne'er knew;
An interest, such as power, wealth, and honour,
Cannot buy, but love, love only, can bestow:
She was the mistress of my vows, my bride,
By contract mine; and long ere this the priest
Had tied the knot for ever, had not Bajazet——
Tam. Ha! Bajazet!—If yet his power withholds
The cause of all thy sorrows, all thy fears,
E'en gratitude for once shall gain upon him,
Spite of his savage temper, to restore her.
This morn a soldier brought a captive beauty,
Sad, though she seemed, yet of a form most rare,
By much the noblest spoil of all the field;
E'en Scipio, or a victor yet more cold,
Might have forgot his virtue at her sight.
Struck with a pleasing wonder, I beheld her,
Till, by a slave that waited near her person,
I learned she was the captive sultan's wife:
Straight I forbid my eyes the dangerous joy
Of gazing long, and sent her to her lord.
Mon. There was Moneses lost! Too sure my heart
(From the first mention of her wondrous charms)
Presaged it could be only my Arpasia.
Tam. Arpasia! didst thou say?
Mon. Yes, my Arpasia.
Tam. Sure I mistake, or fain I would mistake thee:
I named the queen of Bajazet, his wife.
Mon. His queen! his wife! he brings that holy title,
To varnish o'er the monstrous wrongs he has done me.

Tam. Alas! I fear me, prince, thy griefs are just;
Thou art, indeed, unhappy——
Mon. Can you pity me,
And not redress? Oh, royal Tamerlane!
[*Kneeling.*
Thou succour of the wretched, reach thy mercy
To save me from the grave, and from oblivion!
Be gracious to the hopes that wait my youth.
Oh! let not sorrow blast me, lest I wither,
And fall in vile dishonour! Let thy justice
Restore me my Arpasia; give her back,
Back to my wishes, to my transports give her,
To my fond, restless, bleeding, dying bosom!
Oh! give her to me yet while I have life
To bless thee for the bounty! Oh, Arpasia!
Tam. Unhappy, royal youth, why dost thou ask
What honour must deny? Ha! is she not
His wife, whom he has wedded, whom enjoyed?
And wouldst thou have my partial friendship break
That holy knot, which, tied once, all mankind
Agree to hold sacred and indissolveable?
The brutal violence would stain my justice,
And brand me with a tyrant's hated name
To late posterity.
Mon. Are then the vows,
The holy vows we registered in heaven,
But common air?
Tam. Could thy fond love forget
The violation of a first enjoyment?——
But sorrow has disturbed and hurt thy mind.
Mon. Perhaps it has, and, like an idle madman,
That wanders with a train of hooting boys,
I do a thousand things to shame my reason.
Then let me fly, and bear my follies with me,
Far, far from the world's sight. Honour and fame,
Arms, and the glorious war shall be forgotten;
No noble sound of greatness, or ambition,
Shall wake my drowsy soul from her dead sleep,
Till the last trump do summon.
Tam. Let thy virtue
Stand up and answer to these warring passions,
That vex thy manly temper. From the moment
When first I saw thee, something wondrous noble
Shone through thy form, and won my friendship for thee,
Without the tedious form of long acquaintance;
Nor will I lose thee poorly for a woman.
Come, droop no more! thou shalt with me pursue
True greatness, till we rise to immortality.
Thou shalt forget these lesser cares, Moneses;
Thou shalt, and help me to reform the world.
Mon. So the good genius warns his mortal charge
To fly the evil fate that still pursues him,
Till it have wrought his ruin. Sacred Tamerlane,
Thy words are as the breath of angels to me.
But, oh! too deep the wounding grief is fixt,
For any hand to heal.
Tam. This dull despair
Is the soul's laziness. Rouse to the combat,
And thou art sure to conquer. War shall restore thee;
The sound of arms shall wake thy martial ardour,
And cure this amorous sickness of thy soul,
Begun by sloth, and nursed by too much ease.
The idle god of love supinely dreams,
Amidst inglorious shades and purling streams;
In rosy fetters and fantastic chains,
He binds deluded maids and simple swains;
With soft enjoyments wooes them to forget
The hardy toils and labours of the great.
But, if the warlike trumpet's loud alarms
To virtuous acts excite, and manly arms,
The coward boy avows his abject fear,
On silken wings sublime he cuts the air,
Scared at the noble noise and thunder of the war.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Bajazet's Tent.*

Enter HALY, *and the Dervise.*

Haly. To 'scape with life from an attempt like this,
Demands my wonder justly.
Der. True, it may;
But 'tis a principle of his new faith;
'Tis what his Christian favourites have inspired,
Who fondly make a merit of forgiveness,
And give their foes a second opportunity,
If the first blow should miss. Failing to serve
The sultan to my wish, and even despairing
Of further means to effect his liberty,
A lucky accident retrieved my hopes.
Ha. The prophet and our master will reward
Thy zeal in their behalf; but speak thy purpose.
Der. Just entering here, I met the Tartar general,
Fierce Omar.
Ha. He commands, if I mistake not,
This quarter of the army, and our guards.
Der. The same. By his stern aspect, and the fires
That kindled in his eyes, I guessed the tumult
Some wrong had raised in his tempestuous soul;
A friendship of old date had given me privilege
To ask of his concerns. In short, I learned,
That, burning for the sultan's beauteous daughter,
He had begged her, as a captive of the war,
From Tamerlane; but meeting with denial
Of what he thought his services might claim,
Loudly he storms, and curses the Italian,
As cause of this affront. I joined his rage,

And added to his injuries, the wrongs
Our prophet daily meets with from Axalla.
But see, he comes. Improve what I shall tell,
And all we wish is ours.
[*They seem to talk together aside.*

Enter OMAR.

Om. No —— if I forgive it,
Dishonour blast my name! Was it for this
That I directed his first steps to greatness,
Taught him to climb, and made him what he is?
When our great Cham first bent his eyes towards him,
(Then petty prince of Parthia) and, by me
Persuaded, raised him to his daughter's bed,
Called him his son, and successor of the empire;
Was it for this, that like a rock I stood,
And stemmed a torrent of our Tartar lords,
Who scorned his upstart sway? When Calibes,
In bold rebellion, drew e'en half the provinces
To own his cause, I, like his better angel,
Stood by his shaking throne, and fixed it fast:
And am I now so lost to his remembrance,
That, when I ask a captive, he shall tell me,
She is Axalla's right, his Christian minion?
Der. Allow me, valiant Omar, to demand,
Since injured thus, why right you not yourself?
The prize you ask is in your power.
Om. It is,
And I will seize it in despite of Tamerlane,
And that Italian dog.
Ha. What need of force,
When every thing concurs to meet your wishes?
Our mighty master would not wish a son
Nobler than Omar. From a father's hand
Receive that daughter, which ungrateful Tamerlane
Has to your worth denied.
Om. Now, by my arms,
It will be great revenge. What will your sultan
Give to the man that shall restore his liberty,
His crown, and give him power to wreak his hatred
Upon his greatest foe?
Ha. All he can ask,
And far beyond his wish. [*Trumpets.*
Om. These trumpets speak
The emperor's approach; he comes once more
To offer terms of peace. Retire within.
I will know farther—he grows deadly to me;
And curse me, prophet, if I not repay
His hate with retribution full as mortal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Draws, and discovers ARPASIA *lying on a couch.*

SONG.

To thee, O gentle Sleep, alone
Is owing all our peace,
By thee our joys are heightened shown,
By thee our sorrows cease.
The nymph whose hand, by fraud or forte,
Some tyrant has possessed,
By thee, obtaining a divorce,
In her own choice is blessed.
Oh, stay! Arpasia bids thee stay;
The sadly weeping fair
Conjures thee, not to lose in day
The object of her care.
To grasp whose pleasing form she sought,
That motion chased her sleep;
Thus by ourselves are oft'nest wrought
The griefs, for which we weep.

Arp. Oh, death! thou gentle end of human sorrows,
Still must my weary eye-lids vainly wake
In tedious expectation of thy peace?
Why stand thy thousand thousand doors still open,
To take the wretched in, if stern religion
Guard every passage, and forbid my entrance?
Lucrece could bleed, and Portia swallow fire,
When urged with griefs beyond a mortal sufferance;
But here it must not be. Think then, Arpasia,
Think on the sacred dictates of thy faith,
And let that arm thy virtue to perform
What Cato's daughter durst not!—Live, Arpasia,
And dare to be unhappy.

Enter TAMERLANE.

Tam. When fortune smiles upon the soldier's arms,
And adds even beauty to adorn his conquest,
Yet she ordains the fair should know no fears,
No sorrows to pollute their lovely eyes,
But should be used even nobly, as herself,
The queen and goddess of the warrior's vows.
Such welcome as a camp can give, fair sultaness,
We hope you have received; it shall be larger,
And better as it may.
Arp. Since I have borne
That miserable mark of fatal greatness,
I have forgot all difference of conditions;
Sceptres and fetters are grown equal to me,
And the best change my fate can bring is death.
Tam. When sorrow dwells in such an angel form,
Well may we guess that those above are mourners;
Virtue is wronged, and bleeding innocence
Suffers some wondrous violation here,
To make the saints look sad. Oh! teach my power
To cure those ills which you unjustly suffer,
Lest Heaven should wrest it from my idle hand,
If I look on, and see you weep in vain.
Arp. Not that my soul disdains the generous aid
Thy royal goodness proffers; but, oh, emperor!
It is not in my fate to be made happy;

Nor will I listen to the cozener, Hope,
But stand resolved to bear the beating storm
That roars around me; safe in this alone,
That I am not immortal. Though 'tis hard,
'Tis wondrous hard, when I remember thee,
Dear native Greece! and you, ye weeping maids,
That were companions of my virgin youth!
My noble parents! Oh, the grief of heart,
The pangs, that, for unhappy me, bring down
Their reverend ages to the grave with sorrow.
And yet there is a woe surpassing all:
Ye saints and angels, give me of your constancy,
If you expect I shall endure it long!

Tam. Why is my pity all that I can give
To tears like yours? And yet I fear 'tis all;
Nor dare I ask, what mighty loss you mourn,
Lest honour should forbid to give it back.

Arp. No, Tamerlane, nor did I mean thou shouldst:
But know, (though to the weakness of my sex
I yield these tears) my soul is more than man.
Think, I am born a Greek, nor doubt my virtue;
A Greek! from whose famed ancestors of old
Rome drew the patterns of her boasted heroes.
They must be mighty evils that can vanquish
A Spartan courage, and a Christian faith.

Enter BAJAZET.

Baj. To know no thought of rest! to have the mind
Still ministering fresh plagues, as in a circle,
Where one dishonour treads upon another;
What know the fiends beyond it? Ha! by hell,
[*Seeing Arp. and Tam.*
There wanted only this to make me mad.
Comes he to triumph here? to rob my love,
And violate the last retreat of happiness?

Tam. But that I read upon thy frowning brow,
That war yet lives, and rages in thy breast,
Once more (in pity to the suffering world)
I meant to offer peace.

Baj. And meanest thou too
To treat it with our empress? and to barter
The spoils, which fortune gave thee, for her favours?

Arp. What would the tyrant? [*Aside.*

Baj. Seekest thou thus our friendship?
Is this the royal usage thou didst boast?

Tam. The boiling passion, that disturbs thy soul,
Spreads clouds around, and makes thy purpose dark—
Unriddle what thy mystic fury aims at.

Baj. Is it a riddle? Read it there explained;
There, in my shame. Now judge me thou, O prophet,
And equal Heaven, if this demand not rage!
The peasant-hind, begot and born to slavery,
Yet dares assert a husband's sacred right,
And guards his homely couch from violation:
And shall a monarch tamely bear the wrong
Without complaining?

Tam. If I could have wronged thee,
If conscious virtue, and all-judging Heaven,
Stood not between to bar ungoverned appetite,
What hindered, but in spite of thee, my captive,
I might have used a victor's boundless power,
And sated every wish my soul could form?
But to secure thy fears, know, Bajazet,
This is among the things I dare not do.

Baj. By hell, it is false! else wherefore art thou present?
What cam'st thou for, but to undo my honour?
I found thee holding amorous parly with her,
Gazing and glutting on her wanton eyes,
And bargaining for pleasures yet to come:
My life, I know, is the devoted price—
But take it! I am weary of the pain.

Tam. Yet ere thou rashly urge my rage too far,
I warn thee to take heed: I am a man,
And have the frailties common to man's nature:
The fiery seeds of wrath are in my temper,
And may be blown up to so fierce a blaze,
As wisdom cannot rule. Know, thou hast touched me
Even in the nicest, tenderest part, my honour;
My honour; which, like power, disdains being questioned;
Thy breath has blasted my fair virtue's fame,
And marked me for a villain, and a tyrant.

Arp. And stand I here an idle looker-on,
To see my innocence murdered and mangled
By barbarous hands, nor can revenge the wrong?
Art thou a man, and dar'st thou use me thus?
[*To Bajazet.*
Hast thou not torn me from my native country,
From the dear arms of my lamenting friends,
From my soul's peace, and from my injured love?
Hast thou not ruined, blotted me for ever,
And driven me to the brink of black despair?
And is it in thy malice yet to add
A wound more deep, to sully my white name,
My virtue?

Baj. Yes, thou hast thy sex's virtues,
Their affectation, pride, ill-nature, noise,
Proneness to change, even from the joy that pleased them:
So gracious is your idol, dear variety,
That for another love you would forego
An angel's form, to mingle with a devil's;
Through every state and rank of men you wander,
Till even your large experience takes in all
The different nations of the peopled earth.

Arp. Why soughtst thou not from thy own impious tribe
A wife like one of these? For such thy race
(If human nature brings forth such) affords.
Greece, for chaste virgins famed, and pious matrons,
Teems not with monsters like your Turkish wives,
Whom guardian eunuchs, haggard and deformed,
Whom walls and bars make honest by constraint.
Know, I detest, like hell, the crime thou mentionest:

Not that I fear, or reverence thee, thou tyrant!
But that my soul, conscious of whence it sprung,
Sits unpolluted in its sacred temple;
And scorns to mingle with a thought so mean.
Tam. Oh, pity! that a greatness so divine
Should meet a fate so wretched, so unequal.
Thou, blind and wilful to the good that courts thee, [*To Bajazet.*
With open-handed bounty Heaven pursues thee,
And bids thee, (undeserving as thou art,
And monstrous in thy crimes) be happy yet;
Whilst thou, in fury, dost avert the blessing,
And art an evil genius to thyself,
Baj. No—Thou! thou art my greatest curse on earth!
Thou, who hast robbed me of my crown and glory,
And now pursuest me to the verge of life,
To spoil me of my honour. Thou! thou hypocrite!
That wearest a pageant outside shew of virtue,
To cover the hot thoughts that glow within!
Thou rank adulterer!
Tam. Oh, that thou wert
The lord of all those thousands, that lie breathless,
On yonder field of blood, that I again
Might hunt thee, in the face of death and danger,
Through the tumultuous battle, and there force thee,
Vanquished and sinking underneath my arm,
To own thou hast traduced me like a villain!
Baj. Ha! Does it gall thee, Tartar? By revenge,
It joys me much to find thou feel'st my fury.
Yes, I will echo to thee, thou adulterer!
Thou dost prophane the name of king and soldier,
And like a ruffian bravo, cam'st with force
To violate the holy marriage-bed.
Tam. Wert thou not sheltered by thy abject state,
The captive of my sword, by my just anger,
My breath, like thunder, should confound thy pride,
And doom thee dead, this instant, with a word.
Baj. It is false! my fate's above thee, and thou darest not.
Tam. Ha! dare not! Thou hast raised my ponderous rage,
And now it falls, to crush thee at a blow.
A guard there! Seize and drag him to his fate! [*Enter a guard, they seize Bajazet.*
Tyrant, I will do a double justice on thee;
At once revenge myself, and all mankind.
Baj. Well dost thou, ere thy violence and lust
Invade my bed, thus to begin with murder:
Drown all thy fears in blood, and sin securely.
Tam. Away!
Arp. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, stay! I charge thee, by renown;
By that bright glory thy great soul pursues,
Call back the doom of death!
Tam. Fair injured excellence,
Why dost thou kneel, and waste such precious prayers,
As might even bribe the saints to partial justice,
For one to goodness lost; who first undid thee,
Who still pursues and aggravates the wrong?
Baj. By Alla! no, I will not wear a life
Bought with such vile dishonour. Death shall free me
At once from infamy, and thee, thou traitress!
Arp. No matter, though the whistling winds grow loud,
And the rude tempest roars, 'tis idle rage:
Oh! mark it not; but let thy steady virtue
Be constant to its temper. Save his life,
And save Arpasia from the sport of talkers.
Think, how the busy, meddling world will toss
Thy mighty name about, in scurril mirth;
Shall brand thy vengeance, as a foul design,
And make such monstrous legends of our lives,
As late posterity shall blush in reading.
Tam. Oh, matchless virtue! Yes, I will obey;
Though laggard in the race, admiring yet,
I will pursue the shining path thou tread'st.
Sultan, be safe! Reason resumes her empire, [*The guards release Bajazet.*
And I am cool again.—Here break we off.
Lest farther speech should minister new rage.
Wisely from dangerous passsons I retreat,
To keep a conquest which was hard to get:
And, oh! 'tis time I should for flight prepare,
A war more fatal seems to threaten there,
And all my rebel-blood assists the fair:
One moment more, and I too late shall find,
That love's the strongest power that lords it o'er the mind. [*Exit Tamerlane, followed by the guards.*
Baj. To what new shame, what plague am I reserved!
Why did my stars refuse me to die warm,
While yet my regal state stood unimpeached,
Nor knew the curse of having one above me?
Then too (although by force I grasped the joy)
My love was safe, nor felt the rack of doubt.
Why hast thou forced this nauseous life upon me?
Is it to triumph o'er me?—But I will,
I will be free; I will forget thee all;
The bitter and the sweet, the joy and pain,
Death shall expunge at once, and ease my soul.
Prophet, take notice, I disclaim thy Paradise,
Thy fragrant bowers, and everlasting shades;
Thou hast placed woman there, and all thy joys are tainted. [*Exit Bajazet.*
Arp. A little longer yet, be strong, my heart;
A little longer let the busy spirits
Keep on their cheerful round.—It will not be!
Love, sorrow, and the sting of vile reproach,
Succeeding one another in their course,
Like drops of eating water on the marble,
At length have worn my boasted courage down:

I will indulge the woman in my soul,
And give a loose to tears and to impatience;
Death is at last my due, and I will have it.——
And see, the poor Moneses comes, to take
One sad adieu, and then we part for ever.

Enter MONESES.

Mon. Already am I onward of my way,
Thy tuneful voice comes like a hollow sound
At distance, to my ears. My eyes grow heavy,
And all the glorious lights of Heaven look dim;
'Tis the last office they shall ever do me,
To view thee once, and then to close and die.

Arp. Alas! how happy have we been, Moneses!
Ye gentle days, that once were ours, what joys
Did every cheerful morning bring along!
No fears, no jealousies, no angry parents,
That for unequal births, or fortunes frowned;
But love, that kindly joined our hearts, to bless us,
Made us a blessing too to all besides.

Mon. Oh, cast not thy remembrance back, Arpasia!
'Tis rief unutterable, 'tis distraction!
But let this last of hours be peaceful sorrow!
Here let me kneel, and pay my latest vows.
Be witness, all ye saints, thou Heaven and Nature,
Be witness of my truth, for you have known it!
Be witness, that I never knew a pleasure,
In all the world could offer, like Arpasia!
Be witness, that I lived but in Arpasia!
And, oh, be witness, that her loss has killed me!

Arp. While thou art speaking, life begins to fail,
And every tender accent chills like death.
Oh! let me haste then, yet, ere day declines
And the long night prevail, once more to tell thee
What, and how dear, Moneses has been to me.
What has he not been?—All the names of love,
Brothers, or fathers, husbands, all are poor:
Moneses is myself; in my fond heart,
Even in my vital blood, he lives and reigns:
The last dear object of my parting soul
Will be Moneses; the last breath that lingers
Within my panting breast, shall sigh Moneses.

Mon. It is enough! Now to thy rest, my soul!
The world and thou have made an end at once.

Arp. Fain would I still detain thee, hold thee still:
Nor honour can forbid, that we together
Should share the few poor minutes that remain.
I swear, methinks this sad society
Has somewhat pleasing in it.—Death's dark shades
Seem, as we journey on, to lose their horror;
At near approach the monsters, formed by fear,
Are vanished all, and leave the prospect clear;
Amidst the gloomy vale, a pleasing scene,
With flowers adorned, and never-fading green,
Inviting stands, to take the wretched in:
No wars, no wrongs, no tyrants, no despair,
Disturb the quiet of a place so fair,
But injured lovers find Elysium there. [*Exeunt.*

Enter BAJAZET, OMAR, HALY, *and the Dervise.*

Baj. Now, by the glorious tomb that shrines our prophet,
By Mecca's sacred temple, here I swear,
Our daughter is thy bride! and to that gift
Such wealth, such power, such honours will I add,
That monarchs shall with envy view thy state,
And own thou art a demi-god to them.
Thou hast given me what I wished, power of revenge,
And when a king rewards, 'tis ample retribution.

Om. Twelve Tartar lords, each potent in his tribe,
Have sworn to own my cause, and draw their thousands,
To-morrow, from the ungrateful Parthian's side:
The day declining seems to yield to night,
Ere little more than half her course be ended.
In an auspicious hour prepare for flight;
The leaders of the troops, through which we pass,
Raised by my power, devoted to my service,
Shall make our passage secret and secure.

Der. Already, mighty sultan, art thou safe,
Since, by yon passing torches' light, I guess,
To his pavilion Tamerlane retires,
Attended by a train of waiting courtiers.
All who remain within these tents are thine,
And hail thee as their lord.——
Ha! the Italian prince,
With sad Moneses, are not yet gone forth.

Baj. Ha! with our queen and daughter!

Om. They are ours:
I marked the slaves, who waited on Axalla;
They, when the emperor past out, prest on,
And mingled with the crowd, nor missed their lord:
He is your prisoner, sir: I go this moment,
To seize, and bring him to receive his doom.
[*Exit Omar.*

Baj. Haste, Haly, follow, and secure the Greek:
Him too I wish to keep within my power.
[*Exit Haly.*

Der. If my dread lord permit his slave to speak,
I would advise to spare Axalla's life,
Till we are safe beyond the Parthian's power:
Him, as our pledge of safety, may we hold;
And, could you gain him to assist your flight,
It might import you much.

Baj. Thou counsellest well;
And though I hate him (for he is a Christian,
And to my mortal enemy devoted),
Yet, to secure my liberty and vengeance,
I wish he now were ours.

Der. And see, they come!
Fortune repents; again she courts your side,

And, with this first fair offering of success,
She wooes you to forget her crime of yesterday.

Enter Omar, *with* Axalla *Prisoner*, Selima *following, weeping.*

Ax. I will not call thee villain; 'tis a name
Too holy for thy crime: to break thy faith,
And turn a rebel to so good a master,
Is an ingratitude unmatched on earth.
The first revolting angel's pride could only
Do more than thou hast done. Thou copiest well,
And keepest the black original in view.

Om. Do rage, and vainly call upon thy master
To save his minion. My revenge has caught thee,
And I will make thee curse that fond presumption,
That set thee on to rival me in aught.

Baj. Christian, I hold thy fate at my disposal!
One only way remains to mercy open;
Be partner of my flight and my revenge,
And thou art safe. Thy other choice is death.

Om. What means the sultan?

Der. I conjure you, hold———
Your rival is devoted to destruction:
[*Aside to Omar.*
Nor would the sultan now defer his fate,
But for our common safety.—Listen further.
[*Whispers.*

Ax. Then briefly thus. Death is the choice I make;
Since, next to Heaven, my master and my friend
Has interest in my life, and still shall claim it.

Baj. Then take thy wish.—Call in our mutes!

Sel. My father,
If yet you have not sworn to cast me off,
And turn me out to wander in misfortune;
If yet my voice be gracious in your ears;
If yet my duty and my love offend not,
Oh, call your sentence back, and save Axalla!

Baj. Rise, Selima! The slave deserves to die,
Who durst, with sullen pride, refuse my mercy:
Yet, for thy sake, once more I offer life.

Sel. Some angel whisper to my anxious soul,
What I shall do to save him.—Oh, Axalla!
Is it so easy to thee to forsake me?
Canst thou resolve, with all this cold indifference,
Never to see me more? To leave me here
The miserable mourner of thy fate,
Condemned to waste my widowed virgin youth,
My tedious days and nights, in lonely weeping,
And never know the voice of comfort more?

Ax. Search not too deep the sorrows of my breast:
Thou say'st I am indifferent and cold;
Oh! is it possible my eyes should tell
So little of the fighting storm within?
Oh! turn thee from me, save me from thy beauties!
Falsehood and ruin all look lovely there.
Oh! let my labouring soul yet struggle through—
I will—I would resolve to die, and leave thee.

Baj. Then let him die!—He trifles with my favour.
I have too long attended his resolves.

Sel. Oh! stay a minute, yet a minute longer!
[*To Bajazet.*
A minute is a little space in life.
There is a kind consenting in his eyes,
And I shall win him to your royal will.
Oh, my Axalla! seem but to consent.—
[*To Ax. aside.*
Unkind and cruel, will you then do nothing?
I find I am not worth thy least of cares.

Ax. Oh! labour not to hang dishonour on me!
I could bear sickness, pain and poverty,
Those mortal evils worse than death, for thee.
But this—It has the force of fate against us,
And cannot be.

Sel. See, see, sir, he relents! [*To Bajazet.*
Already he inclines to own your cause.
A little longer, and he is all yours.

Baj. Then mark how far a father's fondness yields.
'Till midnight I defer the death he merits,
And give him up 'till then to thy persuasion.
If by that time he meets my will, he lives;
If not, thyself shalt own he dies with justice.

Ax. 'Tis but to lengthen life upon the rack.
I am resolved already.

Sel. Oh! be still,
Nor rashly urge a ruin on us both!
'Tis but a moment more I have to save thee.
Be kind, auspicious Alla, to my prayer!
More for my love, than for myself, I fear;
Neglect mankind awhile, and make him all thy care! [*Exeunt Axalla and Selima.*

Baj. Moneses—is that dog secured?

Om. He is.

Baj. 'Tis well—My soul perceives returning greatness,
As nature feels the spring. Lightly she bounds,
And shakes dishonour, like a burden, from her;
Once more imperial, awful, and herself.
So, when of old, Jove from the Titans fled,
Ammon's rude front his radiant face belied,
And all the majesty of Heaven lay hid.
At length, by fate, to power divine restored,
His thunder taught the world to know its Lord,
The God grew terrible again, and was again adored. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Bajazet's Tent.*

Arpasia.

SURE 'tis a horror, more than darkness brings,
That sits upon the night! Fate is abroad;
Some ruling fiend hangs in the dusky air,
And scatters ruin, death, and wild distraction,
O'er all the wretched race of man below.
Not long ago, a troop of ghastly slaves
Rushed in, and forced Moneses from my sight;
Death hung so heavy on his drooping spirits,
That scarcely could he say—Farewell—for ever!
And yet, methinks, some gentle spirit whispers,
Thy peace draws near, Arpasia, sigh no more!
And see! the king of terrors is at hand;
His minister appears.

Enter BAJAZET *and* HALY.

Baj. [*Aside to Haly.*] The rest I leave
To thy dispatch. For, oh! my faithful Haly,
Another care has taken up thy master.
Spite of the high-wrought tempest in my soul,
Spite of the pangs which jealousy has cost me,
This haughty woman reigns within my breast;
In vain I strive to put her from my thoughts,
To drive her out with empire, and revenge.
Still she comes back, like a retiring tide,
That ebbs awhile, but strait returns again,
And swells above the beach.

Ha. Why wears my lord
An anxious thought for what his power commands?
When, in a happy hour, you shall, ere long,
Have borne the empress from amidst your foes,
She must be yours, be only and all yours.

Baj. On that depends my fear. Yes, I must have her;
I own, I will not, cannot, go without her.
But such is the condition of our flight,
That should she not consent, 'twould hazard all
To bear her hence by force. Thus I resolve then,
By threats and prayers, by every way, to move her;
If all prevail not, force is left at last;
And I will set life, empire, on the venture,
To keep her mine—Be near to wait my will.
[*Exit Haly.*
When last we parted, 'twas on angry terms;
Let the remembrance die, or kindly think
That jealous rage is but a hasty flame,
That blazes out, when love too fiercely burns.

Arp. For thee to wrong me, and for me to suffer,
Is the hard lesson that my soul has learnt,
And now I stand prepared for all to come;
Nor is it worth my leisure to distinguish
If love or jealousy commit the violence.
Each have alike been fatal to my peace,
Confirming me a wretch, and thee a tyrant.

Baj. Still to deform thy gentle brow with frowns,
And still to be perverse, it is a manner
Abhorrent from the softness of thy sex:
Women, like summer storms, awhile are cloudy,
Burst out in thunder, and impetuous showers;
But strait, the sun of beauty dawns abroad,
And all the fair horizon is serene.

Arp. Then, to retrieve the honour of my sex,
Here I disclaim that changing and inconstancy:
To thee I will be ever as I am.

Baj. Thou sayest I am a tyrant; think so still,
And let it warn thy prudence to lay hold
On the good hour of peace, that courts thee now.
Souls, formed like mine, brook being scorned but ill.
Be well advised, and profit by my patience;
It is a short-lived virtue.

Arp. Turn thine eyes
Back on the story of my woes, barbarian!
Thou that hast violated all respects
Due to my sex, and honour of my birth.
Thou brutal ravisher! that hast undone me,
Ruined my love! Can I have peace with thee?
Impossible! First heaven and hell shall join;
They only differ more.

Baj. I see, 'tis vain
To court thy stubborn temper with endearments.
Resolve, this moment, to return my love,
And be the willing partner of my flight,
Or, by the prophet's holy law, thou diest!

Arp. And dost thou hope to fright me with the phantom,
Death? 'Tis the greatest mercy thou canst give;
So frequent are the murders of thy reign,
One day scarce passing by unmarked with blood,
That children, by long use, have learnt to scorn it.
Know, I disdain to aid thy treacherous purpose,
And shouldst thou dare to force me, with my cries
I will call Heaven and earth to my assistance.

Baj. Confusion! dost thou brave me? But my wrath
Shall find a passage to thy swelling heart,
And rack thee worse than all the pains of death.
That Grecian dog, the minion of thy wishes,
Shall be dragged forth, and butchered in thy sight;
Thou shalt behold him when his pangs are terrible,
Then, when he stares, and gasps, and struggles strongly,
Even in the bitterest agony of dying;
'Till thou shalt rend thy hair, tear out thy eyes,
And curse thy pride; while I applaud my vengeance.

Arp. Oh, fatal image! All my powers give way,
And resolution sickens at the thought;
A flood of passion rises in my breast,
And labours fiercely upward to my eyes.

Come, all ye great examples of my sex,
Chaste virgins, tender wives, and pious matrons!
Ye holy martyrs, who, with wondrous faith
And constancy unshaken, have sustained
The rage of cruel men, and fiery persecution,
Come to my aid, and teach me to defy
The malice of this fiend! I feel, I feel
Your sacred spirit arm me to resistance.
Yes, tyrant, I will stand this shock of fate;
Will live to triumph o'er thee, for a moment,
Then die well pleased, and follow my Moneses.

Baj. Thou talkest it well. But talking is thy privilege;
'Tis all the boasted courage of thy sex;
Though, for thy soul, thou darest not meet the danger.

Arp. By all my hopes of happiness, I dare!—
My soul is come within her ken of heaven;
Charmed with the joys and beauties of that place,
Her thoughts and all her cares she fixes there,
And 'tis in vain for thee to rage below:
Thus stars shine bright, and keep their place above,
Though ruffling winds deform this lower world.

Baj. This moment is the trial.

Arp. Let it come!
This moment then shall shew I am a Greek,
And speak my country's courage in my suffering.

Baj. Here, mercy, I disclaim thee! Mark me, traitress!
My love prepares a victim to thy pride,
And when it greets thee next, 'twill be in blood.
[*Exit Bajazet.*

Arp. My heart beats higher, and my nimble spirits
Ride swiftly through their purple channels round.
'Tis the last blaze of life. Nature revives,
Like a dim winking lamp, that flashes brightly
With parting light, and straight is dark for ever.
And see, my last of sorrows is at hand;
Death and Moneses come together to me;
As if my stars, that had so long been cruel,
Grew kind at last, and gave me all I wish.

Enter Moneses, *guarded by some Mutes; others attending with a cup of poison, and a bow-string.*

Mon. I charge ye, O ye ministers of fate!
Be swift to execute your master's will;
Bear me to my Arpasia; let me tell her,
The tyrant is grown kind. He bids me go,
And die beneath her feet. A joy shoots through
My drooping breast; as often, when the trumpet
Has called my youthful ardour forth to battle,
High in my hopes, and ravished with the sound,
I have rushed eager on, amidst the foremost,
To purchase victory, or glorious death.

Arp. If it be happiness, alas! to die,
To lie forgotten in the silent grave,
To love and glory lost, and from among
The great Creator's works expunged and blotted,
Then, very shortly, shall we both be happy.

Mon. There is no room for doubt; 'tis certain bliss.
The tyrant's cruel violence, thy loss,
Already seem more light; nor has my soul
One unrepented guilt upon remembrance,
To make me dread the justice of hereafter;
But standing now on the last verge of life,
Boldly I view the last abyss, eternity,
Eager to plunge, and leave my woes behind me.

Arp. By all the truth of our past loves, I vow,
To die appears a very nothing to me.
But, oh, Moneses! should I not allow
Somewhat to love, and to my sex's tenderness?
This very now I could put off my being
Without a groan; but to behold thee die!—
Nature shrinks in me at the dreadful thought,
Nor can my constancy sustain this blow.

Mon. Since thou art armed for all things after death,
Why should the pomp and preparation of it
Be frightful to thy eyes? There's not a pain,
Which age or sickness brings, the least disorder
That vexes any part of this fine frame,
But is full as grievous. All that the mind feels
Is much, much more. And see, I go to prove it.

Enter a Mute; he signs to the rest, who proffer a bow-string to Moneses.

Arp. Think, ere we part!

Mon. Of what?

Arp. Of something soft,
Tender and kind, of something wondrous sad.
Oh, my full soul!

Mon. My tongue is at a loss;
Thoughts crowd so fast, thy name is all I have left,
My kindest, truest, dearest, best Arpasia!
[*The Mutes struggle with him.*

Arp. I have a thousand, thousand things to utter,
A thousand more to hear yet. Barbarous villains!
Give me a minute. Speak to me, Moneses!

Mon. Speak to thee? 'Tis the business of my life,
'Tis all the use I have for vital air.
Stand off, ye slaves! To tell thee that my heart
Is full of thee; that, even at this dread moment,
My fond eyes gaze with joy and rapture on thee;
Angels, and light itself, are not so fair.

Enter Bajazet, Haly, *and Attendents.*

Baj. Ha! wherefore lives this dog? Be quick, ye slaves!
And rid me of my pain.

Mon. For only death,
And the last night, can shut out my Arpasia.
[*The Mutes strangle Moneses.*

Arp. Oh, dismal! 'tis not to be borne! Ye moralists!
Ye talkers! what are all your precepts now?

Patience! distraction! Blast the tyrant, blast him,
Avenging lightnings! Snatch him hence, ye fiends!
Love! Death! Moneses! Nature can no more;
Ruin is on her, and she sinks at once.
[*She sinks down.*
Baj. Help, Haly! raise her up, and bear her out!
Ha. Alas! She faints.
Arp. No, tyrant, 'tis in vain.
Oh! I am now beyond thy cruel power;
The peaceful slumber of the grave is on me:
Even all the tedious days of life I have wandered,
Bewildered with misfortunes:
At length 'tis night, and I have reached my home.
Forgetting all the toils and troubles past,
Weary I'll lay me down, and sleep, till——Oh!
[*She dies.*
Baj. Fly, ye slaves!
And fetch me cordials. No, she shall not die!
Spite of her sullen pride, I'll hold in life,
And force her to be blest against her will.
Ha. Already 'tis beyond the power of art;
For, see, a deadly cold has froze the blood,
The pliant limbs grow stiff, and lose their use,
And all the animating fire is quenched:
Even beauty too is dead; an ashy pale
Grows o'er the roses; the red lips have lost
Their fragrant hue, for want of that sweet breath,
That blest them with its odours as it past.
Baj. Can it be possible? Can rage and grief,
Can love and indignation be so fierce,
So mortal in a woman's heart? Confusion!
Is she escaped then? What is royalty,
If those, that are my slaves, and should live for me,
Can die, and bid defiance to my power?

Enter the Dervise.

Der. The valiant Omar sends, to tell thy greatness
The hour of flight is come, and urges haste;
Since he descries, near Tamerlane's pavilion,
Bright troops of crowding torches, who from thence,
On either hand, stretch far into the night,
And seem to form a shining front of battle.
Behold, even from this place thou mayst discern them. [*Looking out.*
Baj. By Alla, yes! they cast a day around them,
And the plain seems thick-set with stars, as heaven.
Ha! or my eyes are false, they move this way;
'Tis certain so. Fly, Haly, to our daughter.
[*Exit Haly.*
Let some secure the Christian prince, Axalla;
We will begone this minute.

Enter OMAR.

Om. Lost! undone!
Baj. What meanest thou?
Om. All our hopes of flight are lost.
Mirvan and Zama, with the Parthian horse,
Inclose us round; they hold us in a toil.
Baj. Ha! whence this unexpected curse of chance?
Om. Too late I learnt, that early in the night
A slave was suffered, by the princess' order,
To pass the guard. I clove the villain down,
Who yielded to his flight; but that's poor vengeance!
That fugitive has raised the camp upon us,
And unperceived, by favour of the night,
In silence they have marched to intercept us.
Baj. My daughter! Oh, the traitress!
Der. Yet we have
Axalla in our power, and angry Tamerlane
Will buy his favourite's life, on any terms.
Om. With those few friends I have, I for a while
Can face their force: if they refuse us peace,
Revenge shall sweeten ruin, and 'twill joy me,
To drag my foe down with me, in my fall.
[*Exit Omar.*

Enter HALY, *with* SELIMA, *weeping.*

Baj. See where she comes, with well-dissembled innocence;
With truth and faith so lovely in her face,
As if she durst even disavow the falsehood.——
Hop'st thou to make amends with trifling tears,
For my lost crown, and disappointed vengeance?
Ungrateful Selima! thy father's curse!
Bring forth the minion of her foolish heart!
He dies this moment.——
Ha. Would I could not speak
The crime of fatal love! The slave who fled,
By whom we are undone, was that Axalla.
Baj. Ha! sayest thou?
Ha. Hid beneath that vile appearance,
The princess found a means for his escape.
Sel. I am undone! even nature has disclaimed me!
My father! have I lost you all? My father!
Baj. Talk'st thou of nature, who hast broke her bands!
Thou art my bane, thou witch! thou infant parricide!
But I will study to be strangely cruel;
I will forget the folly of my fondness;
Drive all the father from my breast; now snatch thee,
Tear thee to pieces, drink thy treacherous blood,
And make thee answer all my great revenge!
Now, now, thou traitress! [*Offers to kill her.*
Sel. Plunge the poignard deep!
[*She embraces him.*
The life my father gave shall hear his summons,
And issue at the wound!——Start not to feel
My heart's warm blood gush out upon your hands;
Since from your spring I drew the purple stream,
And I must pay it back, if you demand it.

Baj. Hence, from my thoughts, thou soft relenting weakness!
Has thou not given me up a prey? betrayed me!
Sel. Oh, not for worlds! not even for all the joys,
Love, or the prophet's paradise can give!
Amidst the fears and sorrows of my soul,
Amidst the thousand pains of anxious tenderness,
I made the gentle, kind Axalla swear,
Your life, your crown, and honour, should be safe.
Baj. Away! my soul disdains the vile dependence!
No, let me rather die, die like a king!
Shall I fall down at the proud Tartar's foot,
And say, have mercy on me? Hark! they come!
[*Shout.*
Disgrace will overtake my lingering hand;
Die then! Thy father's shame, and thine, die with thee! [*Offers to kill her.*
Sel. For Heaven, for pity's sake!
Baj. No more, thou trifler!
[*She catches hold of his arm.*
Ha! darest thou bar my will? Tear off her hold!
Sel. What, not for life! Should I not plead for life?
When nature teaches even the brute creation
To hold fast that, her best, her noblest gift.
Look on my eyes, which you so oft have kissed,
And swore they were your best-loved queen's, my mother's;
Behold them now streaming for mercy, mercy!
Look on me, and deny me, if you can!
'Tis but for life I beg! Is that a boon
So hard for me to obtain, or you to grant?
Oh, spare me! Spare your Selima, my father!
Baj. A lazy sloth hangs on my resolution:
It is my Selima!—Ha! What, my child!
And can I murder her?—Dreadful imagination!
Again they come! I leave her to my foes!
[*Shouts.*
And shall they triumph o'er the race of Bajazet!
Die, Selima! Is that a father's voice?
Rouse, rouse, my fury! Yes, she dies the victim
To my lost hopes! Out, out, thou foolish nature!
Seize her, ye slaves! and strangle her this moment! [*To the Mutes.*
Sel. Oh, let me die by you! Behold my breast!
I would not shrink! Oh, save me but from these!
Baj. Dispatch! [*The Mutes seize her.*
Sel. But for a moment, while I pray
That Heaven may guard my royal father.
Baj. Dogs!
Sel. That you may only bless me, ere I die.
[*Shout.*
Baj. Ye tedious villains! then the work is mine!
[*As Bajazet runs at Selima, with his sword, enter Tamerlane, Axalla, &c. Axalla gets between Bajazet and Selima, whilst Tamerlane and the rest drive Bajazet and the Mutes off the Stage.*
Ax. And am I come to save thee? Oh, my joy!
Be this the whitest hour of all my life!
This one success is more than all my wars,
The noblest, dearest glory of my sword.
Sel. Alas, Axalla! Death has been around me;
My coward soul still trembles at the fright,
And seems but half secure, even in thy arms.
Ax. Retire, my fair, and let me guard thee forth:
Blood and tumultuous slaughter are about us,
And danger, in her ugliest forms, is here;
Nor will the pleasure of my heart be full,
Till all my fears are ended in thy safety.
[*Exeunt Axalla and Selima.*

Enter Tamerlane, *the* Prince *of* Tanais, Zama, Mirvan, *and Soldiers; with* Bajazet, Omar, *and the Dervise, prisoners.*

Tam. Mercy at length gives up her peaceful sceptre,
And justice sternly takes her turn to govern;
'Tis a rank world, and asks her keenest sword,
To cut up villainy of monstrous growth.
Zama, take care, that with the earliest dawn,
Those traitors meet the fate their treason merits!
[*Pointing to Omar and the Dervise.*
For thee, thou tyrant! [*To Baj.*] whose oppressive violence
Has ruined those thou shouldst protect at home;
Whose wars, whose slaughters, whose assassinations,
(That basest thirst of blood! that sin of cowards!)
Whose faith, so often given, and always violated,
Have been the offence of Heaven, and plague of earth——
What punishment is equal to thy crimes?
The doom, thy rage designed for me, be thine:
Closed in a cage, like some destructive beast,
I'll have thee borne about, in public view,
A great example of that righteous vengeance,
That waits on cruelty, and pride, like thine.
Baj. It is beneath me to decline my fate;
I stand prepared to meet thy utmost hate:
Yet think not I will long thy triumph see:
None want the means, when the soul dares be free.
I'll curse thee with my last, my parting breath,
And keep the courage of my life, in death;
Then boldly venture on that world unknown:
It cannot use me worse than this has done.
[*Exit Bajazet, guarded.*
Tam. Behold the vain effects of earth-born pride,
That scorned Heaven's laws, and all its power defied!
That could the hand, which formed it first, forget,
And fondly say, I made myself be great!
But justly those above assert their sway,
And teach even kings what homage they should pay,
Who then rule best, when mindful to obey.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

FAIR PENITENT.

BY

ROWE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
SCIOLTO, *a nobleman of Genoa.*	CALISTA, *daughter to Sciolto.*
ALTAMONT, *a young lord, in love with Calista.*	LAVINIA, *sister to Altamont, and wife to Horatio.*
HORATIO, *his friend.*	LUCILLA, *confident to Calista.*
LOTHARIO, *a young lord, and enemy to Altamont.*	
ROSSANO, *his friend.*	

Scene,—Sciolto's palace and garden, with some part of the street near it, in Genoa.

ACT I.

Alt. LET this auspicious day be ever sacred,
No mourning, no misfortunes happen on it:
Let it be marked for triumphs and rejoicings;
Let happy lovers ever make it holy,
Chuse it to bless their hopes, and crown their wishes,
This happy day, that gives me my Calista!
Hor. Yes, Altamont; to-day thy better stars
Are joined to shed their kindest influence on thee;
Sciolto's noble hand, that raised thee first,
Half dead and drooping o'er thy father's grave,
Completes it's bounty, and restores thy name
To that high rank and lustre which it boasted,
Before ungrateful Genoa had forgot
The merit of thy god-like father's arms;
Before that country, which he long had served,
In watchful councils, and in winter-camps,
Had cast off his white age to want and wretchedness,
And made their court to faction by his ruin.
Alt. Oh, great Sciolto! Oh, my more than father!
Let me not live, but at thy very name,
My eager heart springs up, and leaps with joy.
When I forget the vast, vast debt I owe thee——
Forget! (but 'tis impossible) then let me
Forget the use and privilege of reason,
Be driven from the commerce of mankind,
To wander in the desert among brutes,
To bear the various fury of the seasons,
The night's unwholsome dew, and noon-day's heat,
To be the scorn of earth and curse of heaven!
Hor. So open, so unbounded was his goodness,
It reached even me, because I was thy friend.
When that great man I loved, thy noble father,
Bequeathed thy gentle sister to my arms,
His last dear pledge and legacy of friendship,
That happy tie made me Sciolto's son;
He called us his, and, with a parent's fondness,
Indulged us in his wealth, blessed us with plenty,
Healed all our cares, and sweetened love itself.
Alt. By Heaven, he found my fortunes so abandoned,
That nothing but a miracle could raise them:
My father's bounty, and the state's ingratitude,
Had stripped him bare, not left him even a grave.
Undone myself and sinking with his ruin,
I had no wealth to bring, nothing to succour him,
But fruitless tears.

Hor. Yet what thou couldest, thou didst,
And didst it like a son; when his hard creditors,
Urged and assisted by Lothario's father,
(Foe to thy house, and rival of their greatness)
By sentence of the cruel law forbid
His venerable corpse to rest in earth,
Thou gav'st thyself a ransom for his bones;
With piety uncommon didst give up
Thy hopeful youth to slaves, who ne'er knew mercy,
Sour, unrelenting, money-loving villains,
Who laugh at human nature and forgiveness,
And are, like fiends, the factors of destruction.
Heaven, who beheld the pious act, approved it,
And bade Sciolto's bounty be its proxy,
To bless thy filial virtue with abundance.
Alt. But see, he comes, the author of my happiness,
The man who saved my life from deadly sorrow,
Who bids my days be blest with peace and plenty,
And satisfies my soul with love and beauty!

Enter SCIOLTO; *he runs to* ALTAMONT, *and embraces him.*

Sci. Joy to thee, Altamont! Joy to myself!
Joy to this happy morn that makes thee mine;
That kindly grants what nature had denied me,
And makes me father of a son like thee!
Alt. My father! Oh, let me unlade my breast,
Pour out the fulness of my soul before you;
Shew every tender, every grateful thought,
This wondrous goodness stirs. But it is impossible,
And utterance all is vile; since I can only
Swear you reign here, but never tell how much.
Sci. It is enough; I know thee, thou art honest;
Goodness innate, and worth hereditary,
Are in thy mind; thy noble father's virtues
Spring freshly forth, and blossom in thy youth.
Alt. Thus Heaven from nothing raised his faint creation,
And then, with wondrous joy, beheld its beauty,
Well pleased to see the excellence he gave.
Sci. O, noble youth! I swear, since first I knew thee,
Even from that day of sorrows when I saw thee,
Adorned and lovely in thy filial tears,
The mourner and redeemer of thy father,
I set thee down, and sealed thee for my own:
Thou art my son, even near me as Calista.
Horatio and Lavinia too are mine;
[*Embraces Horatio.*
All are my children, and shall share my heart.
But wherefore waste we thus this happy day?
The laughing minutes summon thee to joy,
And with new pleasures court thee as they pass;
Thy waiting bride even chides thee for delaying,
And swears thou com'st not with a bridegroom's haste.
Alt. Oh! could I hope there was one thought of Altamont,
One kind remembrance in Calista's breast,
The winds, with all their wings, would be too slow
To bear me to her feet. For oh, my father!
Amidst the stream of joy that bears me on,
Blest as I am, and honoured in your friendship,
There is one pain that hangs upon my heart.
Sci. What means my son?
Alt. When at your intercession,
Last night, Calista yielded to my happiness,
Just ere we parted, as I sealed my vows
With rapture on her lips, I found her cold,
As a dead lover's statue on his tomb;
A rising storm of passion shook her breast,
Her eyes a piteous shower of tears let fall,
And then she sighed, as if her heart were breaking.
With all the tenderest eloquence of love,
I begged to be a sharer in her grief:
But she, with looks averse, and eyes that froze me,
Sadly replied, her sorrows were her own,
Nor in a father's power to dispose of.
Sci. Away! it is the cozenage of their sex;
One of the common arts they practise on us:
To sigh and weep then when their hearts beat high
With expectation of the coming joy.
Thou hast in camps and fighting fields been bred,
Unknowing in the subtleties of women.
The virgin bride, who swoons with deadly fear,
To see the end of all her wishes near,
When blushing, from the light and public eyes,
To the kind covert of the night she flies,
With equal fires to meet the bridegroom moves,
Melts in his arms, and with a loose she loves.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter LOTHARIO *and* ROSSANO.

Loth. The father, and the husband!
Ros. Let them pass.
They saw us not.
Loth. I care not if they did;
Ere long I mean to meet them face to face,
And gall them with my triumph o'er Calista.
Ros. You lov'd her once.
Loth. I liked her, would have married her,
But that it pleased her father to refuse me,
To make this honourable fool her husband:
For which, if I forget him, may the shame
I mean to brand his name with, stick on mine!
Ros. She, gentle soul, was kinder than her father?
Loth. She was, and oft in private gave me hearing;
Till, by long listening to the soothing tale,
At length her easy heart was wholly mine.
Ros. I have heard you oft describe her, haughty, insolent,
And fierce with high disdain: it moves my wonder,
That virtue, thus defended, should be yielded
A prey to loose desires.

Loth. Hear then, I will tell thee:
Once in a lone and secret hour of night,
When every eye was closed, and the pale moon
And stars alone shone conscious of the theft,
Hot with the Tuscan grape, and high in blood,
Haply I stole unheeded to her chamber.
Ros. That minute sure was lucky.
Loth. Oh, it was great!
I found the fond, believing, love-sick maid,
Loose, unattired, warm, tender, full of wishes;
Fierceness and pride, the guardians of her honour,
Were charmed to rest, and love alone was waking.
Within her rising bosom all was calm,
As peaceful seas that know no storms, and only
Are gently lifted up and down by tides.
I snatched the glorious golden opportunity,
And with prevailing, youthful ardour pressed her,
'Till with short sighs, and murmuring reluctance,
The yielding fair one gave me perfect happiness.
Even all the live-long night we passed in bliss,
In ecstacies too fierce to last for ever;
At length the morn and cold indifference came;
When, fully sated with the luscious banquet,
I hastily took leave, and left the nymph
To think on what was past, and sigh alone.
Ros. You saw her soon again?
Loth. Too soon I saw her:
For, Oh! that meeting was not like the former:
I found my heart beat high no more with transport,
No more I sighed, and languished for enjoyment;
'Twas past, and reason took her turn to reign,
While every weakness fell before her throne.
Ros. What of the lady?
Loth. With uneasy fondness
She hung upon me, wept, and sighed, and swore
She was undone; talked of a priest, and marriage;
Of flying with me from her father's power;
Called every saint, and blessed angel down,
To witness for her that she was my wife.
I started at that name.
Ros. What answer made you?
Loth. None; but pretending sudden pain and illness,
Escaped the persecution. Two nights since,
By message urged and frequent importunity,
Again I saw her. Straight with tears and sighs,
With swelling breasts, with swooning, with distraction,
With all the subtleties and powerful arts
Of wilful woman, labouring for her purpose,
Again she told the same dull nauseous tale.
Unmoved, I begged her spare the ungrateful subject,
Since I resolved, that love and peace of mind
Might flourish long inviolate betwixt us,
Never to load it with the marriage chain;
That I would still retain her in my heart,
My ever gentle mistress and my friend!
But for those other names of wife and husband,
They only meant ill-nature, cares, and quarrels.
Ros. How bore she this reply?
Loth. Even as the earth,
When, winds pent up, or eating fires beneath,
Shaking the mass, she labours with destruction.
At first her rage was dumb, and wanted words;
But when the storm found way, it was wild and loud.
Mad as the priestess of the Delphic god,
Enthusiastic passion swelled her breast,
Enlarged her voice, and ruffled all her form.
Proud, and disdainful of the love I proffered,
She called me villain! monster! base betrayer!
At last, in very bitterness of soul,
With deadly imprecations on herself,
She vowed severely never to see me more;
Then bid me fly that minute: I obeyed,
And, bowing, left her to grow cool at leisure.
Ros. She has relented since, else why this message
To meet the keeper of her secrets here
This morning?
Loth. See the person whom you named!

Enter LUCILLA.

Well, my ambassadress, what must we treat of?
Come you to menace war, and proud defiance,
Or does the peaceful olive grace your message?
Is your fair mistress calmer! Does she soften?
And must we love again? Perhaps she means
To treat in juncture with her new ally,
And make her husband party to the agreement.
Luc. Is this well done, my lord! Have you put off
All sense of human nature? Keep a little,
A little pity, to distinguish manhood,
Lest other men, though cruel, should disclaim you,
And judge you to be numbered with the brutes.
Loth. I see thou hast learned to rail.
Luc. I have learned to weep:
That lesson my sad mistress often gives me:
By day she seeks some melancholy shade,
To hide her sorrows from the prying world;
At night she watches all the long, long hours,
And listens to the winds and beating rain,
With sighs as loud, and tears that fall as fast;
Then, ever and anon, she wrings her hands,
And cries, false, false Lothario!
Loth. Oh, no more!
I swear thou wilt spoil thy pretty face with crying,
And thou hast beauty that may make thy fortune:
Some keeping cardinal shall doat upon thee,
And barter his church treasure for thy freshness.
Luc. What! shall I sell my innocence and youth,
For wealth or titles, to perfidious man!
To man, who makes his mirth of our undoing!
The base, profest betrayer of our sex!
Let me grow old in all misfortunes else,
Rather than know the sorrows of Calista!

Loth. Does she send thee to chide in her behalf?
I swear thou dost it with so good a grace,
That I could almost love thee for thy frowning.
Luc. Read there, my lord, there, in her own sad lines, [*Giving a letter.*
Which best can tell the story of her woes,
That grief of heart which your unkindness gives her.
[*Loth.* reads.]—'*Your cruelty—Obedience to my father—Give my hand to Altamont.*'
By Heaven it is well! such ever be the gifts,
With which I greet the man whom my soul hates. [*Aside.*
But to go on!
'*Wish—heart—honour—too faithless—Weakness—to-morrow—last trouble—lost Calista.*'
Women, I see, can change as well as men.
She writes me here, forsaken as I am,
That I should bind my brows with mournful willow,
For she has given her hand to Altamont:
Yet, tell the fair inconstant——
Luc. How, my lord!
Loth. Nay, no more angry words: say to Calista,
The humblest of her slaves shall wait her pleasure;
If she can leave her happy husband's arms,
To think upon so lost a thing as I am.
Luc. Alas! for pity, come with gentler looks;
Wound not her heart with this unmanly triumph:
And, though you love her not, yet swear you do,
So shall dissembling once be virtuous in you.
Loth. Ha! who comes here?
Luc. The bridegroom's friend, Horatio.
He must not see me here. To-morrow early
Be at the garden gate.
Loth. Bear to my love
My kindest thoughts, and swear I will not fail her.
[*Lothario putting up the letter hastily, drops it as he goes out.*
[*Exeunt Lothario and Rossano one way, and Lucilla another.*

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Sure it is the very error of my eyes;
Waking I dream, or I beheld Lothario;
He seemed conferring with Calista's woman:
At my approach they started, and retired.
What business could he have here, and with her?
I know he bears the noble Altamont
Profest and deadly hate—What paper's this?
[*Taking up the letter.*
Ha! To Lothario!—'s death! Calista's name!
[*Opening it.*
Confusion and misfortunes! [*Reads it.*
'Your cruelty has at length determined me,
'and I have resolved this morning to yield a perfect obedience to my father, and to give my
'hand to Altamont, in spite of my weakness for
'the false Lothario. I could almost wish I had
'that heart, and that honour to bestow with it,
'which you have robbed me of:
Damnation! to the rest—— [*Reads again.*
'But, Oh! I fear, could I retrieve them, I should
'again be undone by the too faithless, yet too
'lovely Lothario. This is the last weakness of
'my pen, and to-morrow shall be the last in
'which I will indulge my eyes. Lucilla shall
'conduct you, if you are kind enough to let me
'see you; it shall be the last trouble you shall
'meet with from
'The lost CALISTA.
The lost, indeed! for thou art gone as far
As there can be perdition. Fire and sulphur!
Hell is the sole avenger of such crimes.
Oh, that the ruin were but all thy own!
Thou wilt even make thy father curse his age;
At sight of this black scroll, the gentle Altamont
(For, Oh! I know his heart is set upon thee)
Shall droop, and hang his discontented head,
Like merit scorned by insolent authority,
And never grace the public with his virtues.
Perhaps even now he gazes fondly on her,
And, thinking soul and body both alike,
Blesses the perfect workmanship of Heaven!
Then sighing, to his every care speaks peace,
And bids his heart be satisfied with happiness.
Oh, wretched husband! while she hangs about thee
With idle blandishments, and plays the fond one,
Even then her hot imagination wanders,
Contriving riot, and loose 'scapes of love;
And whilst she clasps thee close, makes thee a monster!
What if I give this paper to her father?
It follows, that his justice dooms her dead,
And breaks his heart with sorrow! hard return
For all the good his hand has heaped on us!
Hold, let me take a moment's thought——

Enter LAVINIA.

Lav. My lord!
Trust me, it joys my heart that I have found you.
Enquiring wherefore you had left the company,
Before my brother's nuptial rites were ended,
They told me you had felt some sudden illness.
Where are you sick? Is it your head? your heart?
Tell me, my love, and ease my anxious thoughts,
That I may take you gently in my arms,
Soothe you to rest, and soften all your pains.
Hor. It were unjust—No, let me spare my friend,
Lock up the fatal secret in my breast,
Nor tell him that which will undo his quiet.
Lav. What means my lord?
Hor. Ha! saidst thou, my Lavinia?
Lav. Alas! you know not what you make me suffer.
Why are you pale? Why did you start and tremble?

Whence is that sigh? and wherefore are your eyes
Severely raised to Heaven! The sick man thus,
Acknowledging the summons of his fate,
Lifts up his feeble hands and eyes for mercy,
And, with confusion, thinks upon his exit.
Hor. Oh, no! thou hast mistook my sickness quite;
These pangs are of the soul. Would I had met
Sharpest convulsions, spotted pestilence,
Or any other deadly foe to life,
Rather than heave beneath this load of thought!
Lav. Alas! what is it? Wherefore turn you from me?
Why did you falsely call me your Lavinia,
And swear I was Horatio's better half,
Since now you mourn unkindly by yourself,
And rob me of my partnership of sadness?
Witness, ye holy powers, who know my truth,
There cannot be a chance in life so miserable,
Nothing so very hard, but I could bear it,
Much rather than my love should treat me coldly,
And use me like a stranger to his heart.
Hor. Seek not to know what I would hide from all,
But most from thee. I never knew a pleasure,
Ought that was joyful, fortunate, or good,
But straight I ran to bless thee with the tidings,
And laid up all my happiness with thee:
But wherefore, wherefore should I give thee pain?
Then spare me, I conjure thee; ask no further;
Allow my melancholy thoughts this privilege,
And let them brood in secret o'er their sorrows.
Lav. It is enough; chide not, and all is well!
Forgive me if I saw you sad, Horatio,
And ask to weep out part of your misfortunes:
I would not press to know what you forbid me.
Yet, my loved lord, yet you must grant me this,
Forget your cares for this one happy day;
Devote this day to mirth, and to your Altamont;
For his dear sake, let peace be in your looks.
Even now the jocund bridegroom waits your wishes;
He thinks the priest has but half blessed his marriage,
Till his friend hails him with the sound of joy.
Hor. Oh, never, never, never! Thou art innocent:
Simplicity from ill, pure native truth,
And candour of the mind, adorn thee ever;
But there are such, such false ones, in the world,
'Twould fill thy gentle soul with wild amazement,
To hear their story told.
Lav. False ones, my lord!
Hor. Fatally fair they are, and in their smiles
The graces, little loves, and young desires, inhabit;
But all that gaze upon them are undone;
For they are false, luxurious in their appetites,
And all the Heaven they hope for, is variety:
One lover to another still succeeds,
Another, and another after that,
And the last fool is welcome as the former;
Till, having loved his hour out, he gives place,
And mingles with the herd that went before him.
Lav. Can there be such, and have they peace of mind?
Have they, in all the series of their changing,
One happy hour? If women are such things,
How was I formed so different from my sex?
My little heart is satisfied with you;
You take up all her room, as in a cottage
Which harbours some benighted princely stranger,
Where the good man, proud of his hospitality,
Yields all his homely dwelling to his guests,
And hardly keeps a corner for himself.
Hor. Oh! were they all like thee, men would adore them,
And all the business of their lives be loving;
The nuptial band should be the pledge of peace,
And all domestic cares and quarrels cease;
The world should learn to love by virtuous rules,
And marriage be no more the jest of fools.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Hall.*

Enter CALISTA *and* LUCILLA.

Cal. Be dumb for ever, silent as the grave,
Nor let thy fond officious love disturb
My solemn sadness with the sound of joy!
If thou wilt soothe me, tell me some dismal tale
Of pining discontent, and black despair;
For, oh! I've gone around through all my thoughts,
But all are indignation, love, or shame,
And my dear peace of mind is lost for ever!
Luc. Why do you follow still that wandering fire,
That has misled your weary steps, and leaves you
Benighted in a wilderness of woe,
That false Lothario? Turn from the deceiver;
Turn, and behold where gentle Altamont,
Kind as the softest virgin of our sex,
And faithful as the simple village swain,
That never knew the courtly vice of changing,
Sighs at your feet, and wooes you to be happy.
Cal. Away! I think not of him. My sad soul
Has formed a dismal melancholy scene,
Such a retreat as I would wish to find;
An unfrequented vale, o'ergrown with trees,
Mossy and old, within whose lonesome shade
Ravens, and birds ill-omened, only dwell:
No sound to break the silence, but a brook
That, bubbling, winds among the weeds: no mark
Of any human shape that had been there,
Unless a skeleton of some poor wretch,
Who had long since, like me, by love undone,

Sought that sad place out, to despair and die in!
Luc. Alas, for pity!
Cal. There I fain would hide me
From the base world, from malice, and from shame!
For 'tis the solemn counsel of my soul
Never to live with public loss of honour:
'Tis fixed to die, rather than bear the insolence
Of each affected she that tells my story,
And blesses her good stars that she is virtuous.
To be a tale for fools! Scorned by the women,
And pitied by the men! Oh, insupportable!
Luc. Can you perceive the manifest destruction,
The gaping gulf that opens just before you,
And yet rush on, though conscious of the danger?
Oh, hear me, hear your ever faithful creature!
By all the good I wish, by all the ill
My trembling heart forebodes, let me intreat you,
Never to see this faithless man again;
Let me forbid his coming.
Cal. On thy life
I charge thee no: my genius drives me on;
I must, I will behold him once again:
Perhaps it is the crisis of my fate,
And this one interview shall end my cares.
My labouring heart, that swells with indignation,
Heaves to discharge the burden; that once done,
The busy thing shall rest within its cell,
And never beat again.
Luc. Trust not to that:
Rage is the shortest passion of our souls:
Like narrow brooks, that rise with sudden showers,
It swells in haste, and falls again as soon;
Still, as it ebbs, the softer thoughts flow in,
And the deceiver Love supplies its place.
Cal. I have been wronged enough to arm my temper
Against the smooth delusion; but alas!
(Chide not my weakness, gentle maid, but pity me)
A woman's softness hangs about me still:
Then let me blush, and tell thee all my folly.
I swear I could not see the dear betrayer
Kneel at my feet, and sigh to be forgiven,
But my relenting heart would pardon all,
And quite forget 'twas he that had undone me.
Luc. Ye sacred powers, whose gracious providence
Is watchful for our good, guard me from men,
From their deceitful tongues, their vows, and flatteries!
Still let me pass neglected by their eyes,
Let my bloom wither, and my form decay,
That none may think it worth his while to ruin me,
And fatal love may never be my bane! [*Exit.*
Cal. Ha, Altamont! Calista, now be wary,
And guard thy soul's accesses with dissembling:
Nor let this hostile husband's eyes explore
The warring passions, and tumultuous thoughts,
That rage within thee, and deform thy reason.

Enter ALTAMONT.

Alt. Begone, my cares, I give you to the winds,
Far to be borne, far from the happy Altamont;
For from this sacred æra of my love,
A better order of succeeding days
Comes smiling forward, white and lucky all.
Calista is the mistress of the year;
She crowns the season with auspicious beauty,
And bids even all my hours be good and joyful.
Cal. If I were ever mistress of such happiness,
Oh! wherefore did I play the unthrifty fool,
And, wasting all on others, leave myself
Without one thought of joy to give me comfort!
Alt. Oh, mighty Love! Shall that fair face profane
This thy great festival with frowns and sadness!
I swear it shall not be, for I will woo thee
With sighs so moving, with so warm a transport,
That thou shalt catch the gentle flame from me,
And kindle into joy.
Cal. I tell thee, Altamont,
Such hearts as ours were never paired above:
Ill-suited to each other; joined, not matched;
Some sullen influence, a foe to both,
Has wrought this fatal marriage to undo us.
Mark but the frame and temper of our minds,
How very much we differ. Even this day,
That fills thee with such ecstacy and transport,
To me brings nothing that should make me bless it,
Or think it better than the day before,
Or any other in the course of time,
That duly took its turn, and was forgotten.
Alt. If to behold thee as my pledge of happiness,
To know none fair, none excellent but thee:
If still to love thee with unwearied constancy,
Through every season, every change of life,
Through wrinkled age, through sickness and misfortune,
Be worth the least return of grateful love,
Oh, then let my Calista bless this day,
And set it down for happy.
Cal. 'Tis the day
In which my father gave my hand to Altamont;
As such, I will remember it for ever.

Enter SCIOLTO, HORATIO, *and* LAVINIA.

Scio. Let mirth go on, let pleasure know no pause,
But fill up every minute of this day!
'Tis yours, my children, sacred to your loves;
The glorious sun himself for you looks gay;
He shines for Altamont and for Calista.
Let there be music; let the master touch
The sprightly string, and softly-breathing flute,
'Till harmony rouse every gentle passion,
Teach the cold maid to loose her fears in love,
And the fierce youth to languish at her feet.
Begin: even age itself is cheared with music;
It wakes a glad remembrance of our youth,

Calls back past joys, and warms us into transport. [*Music.*

SONG.

Ah, stay! ah, turn! ah, whither would you fly,
Too charming, too relentless maid?
I follow, not to conquer, but to die;
You of the fearful are afraid.
In vain I call; for she, like fleeting air,
When pressed by some tempestuous wind,
Flies swifter from the voice of my despair,
Nor casts one pitying look behind.

Sci. Take care my gates be open, bid all welcome;
All who rejoice with me to-day are friends:
Let each indulge his genius, each be glad,
Jocund and free, and swell the feast with mirth;
The sprightly bowl shall chearfully go round,
None shall be grave, nor too severely wise;
Losses and disappointments, cares and poverty,
The rich man's insolence, and great man's scorn,
In wine shall be forgotten all. To-morrow
Will be too soon to think, and to be wretched.
Oh, grant, ye powers, that I may see these happy,
[*Pointing to Alt. and Cal.*
Completely blest, and I have life enough;
And leave the rest indifferently to fate. [*Exeunt.*

Hor. What if, while all are here intent on revelling,
I privately went forth, and sought Lothario?
This letter may be forged; perhaps the wantonness
Of his vain youth, to stain a lady's fame;
Perhaps his malice to disturb my friend.
Oh, no! my heart forebodes it must be true.
Methought, even now, I marked the starts of guilt
That shook her soul; though damned dissimulation
Screened her dark thoughts, and set to public view
A specious face of innocence and beauty.
Oh, false appearance! What is all our sovereignty,
Our boasted power? When they oppose their arts,
Still they prevail, and we are found their fools.
With such smooth looks, and many a gentle word,
The first fair she beguiled her easy lord;
Too blind with love and beauty to beware,
He fell unthinking in the fatal snare;
Nor could believe that such a heavenly face
Had bargained with the devil, to damn her wretched race. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The street near Sciolto's Palace.*

Enter LOTHARIO *and* ROSSANO.

Loth. To tell thee then the purport of my thoughts;
The loss of this fond paper would not give me
A moment of disquiet, were it not
My instrument of vengeance on this Altamont;
Therefore I mean to wait some opportunity
Of speaking with the maid we saw this morning.

Ros. I wish you, sir, to think upon the danger
Of being seen; to-day their friends are round them;
And any eye that lights by chance on you,
Shall put your life and safety to the hazard.
[*They confer aside.*

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Still I must doubt some mystery of mischief,
Some artifice beneath. Lothario's father!
I knew him well; he was sagacious, cunning,
Fluent in words, and bold in peaceful counsels,
But of a cold, inactive hand in war;
Yet, with these coward's virtues, he undid
My unsuspecting, valiant, honest friend.
This son, if fame mistakes not, is more hot,
More open and unartful—Ha! he is here!
[*Seeing him.*

Loth. Damnation! He again! This second time
To-day he has crossed me, like my evil genius.

Hor. I sought you, sir.

Loth. 'Tis well, then, I am found.

Hor. 'Tis well you are. The man, who wrongs my friend,
To the earth's utmost verge I would pursue.
No place, though e'er so holy, should protect him;
No shape, that artful fear e'er formed, should hide him,
Till he fair answer made, and did me justice.

Loth. Ha! dost thou know me, that I am Lothario?
As great a name as this proud city boasts of?
Who is this mighty man, then, this Horatio,
That I should basely hide me from his anger,
Lest he should chide me for his friend's displeasure?

Hor. The brave, it is true, do never shun the light;
Just are their thoughts, and open are their tempers,
Freely without disguise they love and hate,
Still are they found in the fair face of day,
And Heaven and men are judges of their actions.

Loth. Such let them be of mine; there is not a purpose,
Which my soul ever framed, or my hand acted,
But I could well have bid the world look on,
And what I once durst do, have dared to justify.

Hor. Where was this open boldness, this free spirit,
When but this very morning I surprised thee,
In base, dishonest privacy, consulting
And bribing a poor mercenary wretch,
To sell her lady's secrets, stain her honour.

And, with a forged contrivance, blast her virtue?
At sight of me thou fled'st.
Loth. Ha! fled from thee?
Hor. Thou fled'st, and guilt was on thee, like a thief,
A pilferer, descried in some dark corner,
Who there had lodged, with mischievous intent,
To rob and ravish at the hour of rest,
And do a midnight murder on the sleepers!
Loth. Slave! villain!
[*Offers to draw, Rossano holds him.*
Ros. Hold, my lord! think where you are,
Think how unsafe and hurtful to your honour
It were to urge a quarrel in this place,
And shock the peaceful city with a broil.
Loth. Then, since thou dost provoke my vengeance, know,
I would not, for this city's wealth, for all
Which the sea wafts to our Ligurian shore,
But that the joys I reaped with that fond wanton,
The wife of Altamont, should be as public
As is the noon-day sun, air, earth, or water,
Or any common benefit of nature.
Think'st thou I meant the shame should be concealed?
Oh, no! by hell and vengeance, all I wanted
Was some fit messenger to bear the news
To the dull doating husband: now I have found him,
And thou art he.
Hor. I hold thee base enough
To break through law, and spurn at sacred order,
And do a brutal injury like this;
Yet mark me well, young lord; I think Calista
Too nice, too noble, and too great a soul,
To be the prey of such a thing as thou art.
'Twas base and poor, unworthy of a man,
To forge a scroll so villainous and loose,
And mark it with a noble lady's name:
These are the mean dishonest arts of cowards,
Strangers to manhood, and to glorious dangers;
Who, bred at home in idleness and riot,
Ransack for mistresses the unwholesome stews,
And never know the worth of virtuous love.
Loth. Think'st thou I forged the letter? Think so still,
Till the broad shame come staring in thy face,
And boys shall hoot the cuckold as he passes.
Hor. Away! no woman could descend so low:
A skipping, dancing, worthless tribe you are;
Fit only for yourselves, you herd together;
And when the circling glass warms your vain hearts,
You talk of beauties that you never saw,
And fancy raptures that you never knew.
Legends of saints, who never yet had being,
Or, being, ne'er were saints, are not so false
As the fond tales which you recount of love.
Loth. But that I do not hold it worth my leisure,
I could produce such damning proof——
Hor. 'Tis false!
You blame the fair with lies, because they scorn you,
Hate you like age, like ugliness and impotence:
Rather than make you blest, they would die virgins,
And stop the propagation of mankind.
Loth. It is the curse of fools to be secure;
And that be thine and Altamont's. Dream on;
Nor think upon my vengeance till thou feel'st it.
Hor. Hold, sir! another word, and then farewell:
Though I think greatly of Calista's virtue,
And hold it far beyond thy power to hurt;
Yet, as she shares the honour of my Altamont,
That treasure of a soldier, bought with blood,
And kept at life's expence, I must not have
(Mark me, young sir) her very name profaned.
Learn to restrain the licence of your speech;
'Tis held you are too lavish. When you are met
Among your set of fools, talk of your dress,
Of dice, of whores, of horses, and yourselves;
'Tis safer, and becomes your understandings.
Loth. What if we pass beyond this solemn order,
And, in defiance of the stern Horatio,
Indulge our gayer thoughts, let laughter loose,
And use his sacred friendship for our mirth?
Hor. 'Tis well, sir, you are pleasant——
Loth. By the joys
Which my soul yet has uncontrouled pursued,
I would not turn aside from my least pleasure,
Though all thy force were armed to bar my way;
But, like the birds, great Nature's happy commoners,
That haunt in woods, in meads, and flowery gardens,
Rifle the sweets, and taste the choicest fruits,
Yet scorn to ask the lordly owner's leave.
Hor. What liberty has vain presumptuous youth,
That thou shouldst dare provoke me unchastised?
But henceforth, boy, I warn thee, shun my walks!
If, in the bounds of yon forbidden place,
Again thou art found, expect a punishment,
Such as great souls, impatient of an injury,
Exact from those who wrong them much; even death,
Or something worse: an injured husband's vengeance
Shall print a thousand wounds, tear thy fair form,
And scatter thee to all the winds of Heaven!
Loth. Is, then, my way in Genoa prescribed
By a dependent on the wretched Altamont,
A talking sir, that brawls for him in taverns,
And vouches for his valour's reputation?
Hor. Away! thy speech is fouler than thy manners.
Loth. Or, if there be a name more vile, his parasite;
A beggar's parasite!
Hor. Now, learn humanity,
[*Offers to strike him, Rossano interposes*
Since brutes and boys are only taught with blows

Loth. Damnation! [*They draw.*
Ros. Hold, this goes no further here.
Horatio, 'tis too much; already see
The crowd are gathering to us.
Loth. Oh, Rossano!
Or give me way, or thou art no more my friend.
Ros. Sciolto's servants, too, have ta'en the alarm;
You'll be oppressed by numbers. Be advised,
Or I must force you hence. Take it on my word,
You shall have justice done you on Horatio.
Put up, my lord.
Loth. This will not brook delay;
West of the town a mile, among the rocks,
Two hours ere noon, to-morrow, I expect thee,
Thy single hand to mine.
Hor. I'll meet thee there.
Loth. To-morrow, oh, my better stars! to-morrow
Exert your influence: shine strongly for me;
'Tis not a common conquest I would gain,
Since love, as well as arms, must grace my triumph. [*Exeunt Lothario and Rossano.*
Hor. Two hours ere noon to-morrow! ha! ere that
He sees Calista! Oh, unthinking fool——
What if I urged her with the crime and danger?
If any spark from Heaven remain unquenched
Within her breast, my breath, perhaps, may wake it.
Could I but prosper there, I would not doubt
My combat with that loud vain-glorious boaster.
Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,
Did you but think how seldom fools are just,
So many of your sex would not, in vain,
Of broken vows, and faithless men, complain:
Of all the various wretches love has made,
How few have been by men of sense betrayed!
Convinced by reason, they your power confess,
Pleased to be happy, as you're pleased to bless,
And, conscious of your worth, can never love you less. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in Sciolto's palace.*

Enter SCIOLTO *and* CALISTA.

Sci. Now, by my life, my honour, 'tis too much!
Have I not marked thee, wayward as thou art,
Perverse and sullen all this day of joy?
When every heart was cheered, and mirth went round,
Sorrow, displeasure, and repining anguish,
Sat on thy brow, like some malignant planet,
Foe to the harvest and the healthy year,
Who scowls adverse, and lours upon the world;
When all the other stars, with gentle aspect,
Propitious shine, and meaning good to man.
Cal. Is then the task of duty half performed?
Has not your daughter given herself to Altamont,
Yielded the native freedom of her will
To an imperious husband's lordly rule,
To gratify a father's stern command?
Sci. Dost thou complain?
Cal. For pity do not frown then,
If, in despite of all my vowed obedience,
A sigh breaks out, or a tear falls by chance:
For, oh! that sorrow, which has drawn your anger,
Is the sad native of Calista's breast:
And once possessed, will never quit its dwelling,
Till life, the prop of all, shall leave the building,
To tumble down, and moulder into ruin.
Sci. Now by the sacred dust of that dear saint
That was thy mother; by her wondrous goodness,
Her soft, her tender, most complying sweetness,
I swear, some sullen thought, that shuns the light,
Lurks underneath that sadness in thy visage.
But mark me well! though, by yon Heaven, I love thee
As much, I think, as a fond parent can;
Yet shouldst thou, (which the powers above forbid)
E'er stain the honour of thy name with infamy,
I'll cast thee off, as one whose impious hands
Had rent asunder nature's dearest ties,
Which, once divided, never join again.
To-day I've made a noble youth thy husband!
Consider well his worth; reward his love;
Be willing to be happy, and thou art so.
[*Exit Sciolto.*
Cal. How hard is the condition of our sex,
Through every state of life the slaves of man!
In all the dear delightful days of youth
A rigid father dictates to our wills,
And deals out pleasure with a scanty hand.
To his, the tyrant husband's reign succeeds;
Proud with opinion of superior reason,
He holds domestic business and devotion
All we are capable to know, and shuts us,
Like cloistered ideots, from the world's acquaintance,
And all the joys of freedom. Wherefore are we
Born with high souls, but to assert ourselves,
Shake off this vile obedience they exact,
And claim an equal empire o'er the world?

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. She's here! yet, oh! my tongue is at a loss.
Teach me, some power, that happy art of speech,
To dress my purpose up in gracious words;
Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
And never waken the tempestuous passions.
By Heaven she weeps!———Forgive me, fair Calista,
If I presume on privilege of friendship,
To join my grief to yours, and mourn the evils

That hurt your peace, and quench those eyes in tears.
Cal. To steal, unlooked for, on my private sorrow,
Speaks not the man of honour, nor the friend,
But rather means the spy.
Hor. Unkindly said!
For, oh! as sure as you accuse me falsely,
I come to prove myself Calista's friend.
Cal. You are my husband's friend, the friend of Altamont.
Hor. Are you not one? Are you not joined by Heaven,
Each interwoven with the other's fate?
Are you not mixt, like streams of meeting rivers,
Whose blended waters are no more distinguished,
But roll into the sea, one common flood?
Then who can give his friendship but to one?
Who can be Altamont's and not Calista's?
Cal. Force, and the wills of our imperious rulers,
May bind two bodies in one wretched chain;
But minds will still look back to their own choice.
So the poor captive in a foreign realm,
Stands on the shore, and sends his wishes back
To the dear native land from whence he came.
Hor. When souls, that should agree to will the same,
To have one common object for their wishes,
Look different ways, regardless of each other,
Think what a train of wretchedness ensues:
Love shall be banished from the genial bed,
The night shall all be lonely and unquiet,
And every day shall be a day of cares.
Cal. Then all the boasted office of thy friendship,
Was but to tell Calista what a wretch she is.
Alas! what needed that?
Hor. Oh! rather say,
I came to tell her how she might be happy;
To soothe the secret anguish of her soul;
To comfort that fair mourner, that forlorn one,
And teach her steps to know the paths of peace.
Cal. Say thou, to whom this paradise is known,
Where lies the blissful region? Mark my way to it,
For, oh! 'tis sure I long to be at rest.
Hor. Then—to be good is to be happy—Angels
Are happier than mankind, because they're better.
Guilt is the source of sorrow! 'tis the fiend,
The avenging fiend, that follows us behind,
With whips and stings. The blest know none of this,
But rest in everlasting peace of mind,
And find the height of all their heaven is goodness.
Cal. And what bold parasite's officious tongue
Shall dare to tax Calista's name with guilt?
Hor. None should; but 'tis a busy, talking world,
That, with licentious breath, blows, like the wind,
As freely on the palace as the cottage.
Cal. What mystic riddle lurks beneath thy words,
Which thou would'st seem unwilling to express,
As if it meant dishonour to my virtue?
Away with this ambiguous shuffling phrase,
And let thy oracle be understood.
Hor. Lothario!
Cal. Ha! what would'st thou mean by him?
Hor. Lothario and Calista! thus they join
Two names, which Heaven decreed should never meet.
Hence have the talkers of this populous city
A shameful tale to tell, for public sport,
Of an unhappy beauty, a false fair one,
Who plighted to a noble youth her faith,
When she had given her honour to a wretch.
Cal. Death and confusion! Have I lived to this?
Thus to be treated with unmanly insolence!
To be the sport of a loose ruffian's tongue!
Thus to be used! thus! like the vilest creature,
That ever was a slave to vice and infamy!
Hor. By honour and fair truth, you wrong me much;
For on my soul, nothing but strong necessity
Could urge my tongue to this ungrateful office.
I came with strong reluctance, as if death
Had stood across my way, to save your honour,
Your's and Sciolto's, your's and Altamont's;
Like one who ventures through a burning pile,
To save his tender wife, with all her brood
Of little fondlings, from the dreadful ruin.
Cal. Is this the famous friend of Altamont,
For noble worth and deeds of arms renowned?
Is this the tale-bearing officious fellow,
That watches for intelligence from eyes;
This wretched Argus of a jealous husband,
That fills his easy ears with monstrous tales,
And makes him toss, and rave, and wreak at length
Bloody revenge on his defenceless wife,
Who guiltless dies, because her fool ran mad?
Hor. Alas! this rage is vain; for if your fame
Or peace be with your care, you must be calm,
And listen to the means are left to save them.
'Tis now the lucky minute of your fate.
By me your genius speaks, by me it warns you,
Never to see that curst Lothario more;
Unless you mean to be despised, be shunned
By all our virtuous maids and noble matrons;
Unless you have devoted this rare beauty
To infamy, diseases, prostitution——
Cal. Dishonour blast thee, base, unmannered slave!
That darest forget my birth, and sacred sex,
And shock me with the rude, unhallowed sound!
Hor. Here kneel, and in the awful face of Heaven
Breathe out a solemn vow, never to see,
Nor think, if possible, on him that ruined thee;
Or, by my Altamont's dear life, I swear,

This paper; nay, you must not fly—This paper,
[*Holding her.*
This guilty paper shall divulge your shame——
Cal. What meanest thou by that paper? What contrivance
Hast thou been forging to deceive my father;
To turn his heart against his wretched daughter,
That Altamont and thou may share his wealth?
A wrong like this will make me even forget
The weakness of my sex.——Oh, for a sword,
To urge my vengeance on the villain's hand,
That forged the scroll!
Hor. Behold! Can this be forged?
See where Calista's name——
[*Shewing the letter near.*
Cal. To atoms thus, [*Tearing it.*
Thus let me tear the vile, detested falsehood,
The wicked, lying evidence of shame.
Hor. Confusion!
Cal. Henceforth, thou officious fool,
Meddle no more, nor dare, even on thy life,
To breathe an accent that may touch my virtue.
I am myself the guardian of my honour,
And will not bear so insolent a monitor.

Enter ALTAMONT.

Alt. Where is my life, my love, my charming bride,
Joy of my heart, and pleasure of my eyes,
The wish, and care, and business of my youth?
Oh, let me find her, snatch her to my breast,
And tell her she delays my bliss too long,
Till my soft soul even sickens with desire.
Disordered!—and in tears!—Horatio too!
My friend is in amaze—What can it mean?
Tell me, Calista, who has done thee wrong,
That my swift sword may find out the offender,
And do thee ample justice.
Cal. Turn to him.
Alt. Horatio!
Cal. To that insolent.
Alt. My friend!
Could he do this? He, who was half myself?
One faith has ever bound us, and one reason
Guided our wills. Have I not found him just,
Honest as truth itself? And could he break
The sanctity of friendship? Could he wound
The heart of Altamont in his Calista?
Cal. I thought what justice I should find from thee!
Go fawn upon him, listen to his tale,
Applaud his malice, that would blast my fame,
And treat me like a common prostitute.
Thou art perhaps confederate in his mischief,
And wilt believe the legend, if he tells it.
Alt. Oh, impious! what presumptuous wretch shall dare
To offer at an injury like that?
Priesthood, nor age, nor cowardice itself,
Shall save him from the fury of my vengeance.
Cal. The man who dared to do it was Horatio;
Thy darling friend; 'twas Altamont's Horatio.

But mark me well; while thy divided heart
Doats on a villain that has wronged me thus,
No force shall drag me to thy hated bed.
Nor can my cruel father's power do more
Than shut me in a cloister: there, well pleased,
Religious hardships will I learn to bear,
To fast and freeze at midnight hours of prayer:
Nor think it hard, within a lonely cell,
With melancholy, speechless saints to dwell;
But bless the day I to that refuge ran,
Free from the marriage chain, and from that tyrant man. [*Exit Calista.*
Alt She's gone; and, as she went, ten thousand fires
Shot from her angry eyes; as if she meant
Too well to keep the cruel vow she made.
Now, as thou art a man, Horatio, tell me,
What means this wild confusion in thy looks,
As if thou wert at variance with thyself,
Madness and reason combating within thee,
And thou wert doubtful which should get the better?
Hor. I would be dumb for ever; but thy fate
Has otherwise decreed it. Thou hast seen
That idol of thy soul, that fair Calista;
Thou hast beheld her tears.
Alt. I have seen her weep;
I have seen that lovely one, that dear Calista,
Complaining, in the bitterness of sorrow,
That thou, my friend, Horatio, thou hast wronged her.
Hor. That I have wronged her! had her eyes been fed
From that rich stream which warms her heart, and numbered
For every falling tear a drop of blood,
It had not been too much; for she has ruined thee,
Even thee, my Altamont. She has undone thee.
Alt. Dost thou join ruin with Calista's name?
What is so fair, so exquisitely good?
Is she not more than painting can express,
Or youthful poets fancy when they love?
Does she not come, like wisdom, or good fortune,
Replete with blessings, giving wealth and honour?
The dowry which she brings is peace and pleasure,
And everlasting joys are in her arms.
Hor. It had been better thou had'st lived a beggar,
And fed on scraps at great men's surly doors,
Than to have matched with one so false, so fatal.—
Alt. It is too much for friendship to allow thee.
Because I tamely bore the wrong thou didst her,
Thou dost avow the barbarous, brutal part,
And urge the injury even to my face!
Hor. I see she has got possession of thy heart;
She has charmed thee, like a syren, to her bed,
With looks of love, and with enchanting sounds:
Too late the rocks and quicksands will appear,
When thou art wrecked upon the faithless shore,

Then vainly wish thou had'st not left thy friend,
To follow her delusion.
Alt. If thy friendship
Do churlishly deny my love a room,
It is not worth my keeping; I disclaim it.
Hor. Canst thou so soon forget what I've been to thee?
I shared the task of nature with thy father,
And formed with care thy inexperienced youth
To virtue and to arms.
Thy noble father, oh, thou light young man!
Would he have used me thus? One fortune fed us;
For his was ever mine, mine his, and both
Together flourished, and together fell.
He called me friend, like thee: would he have left me
Thus, for a woman, and a vile one, too?
Alt. Thou canst not, dar'st not mean it! Speak again!
Say, who is vile; but dare not name Calista.
Hor. I had not spoke at first, unless compelled,
And forced to clear myself; but since thus urged,
I must avow, I do not know a viler.
Alt. Thou wert my father's friend; he loved thee well;
A kind of venerable mark of him
Hangs round thee, and protects thee from my vengeance.
I cannot, dare not, lift my sword against thee,
But henceforth never let me see thee more.
[*Going out.*
Hor. I love thee still, ungrateful as thou art,
And must and will preserve thee from dishonour,
Even in despite of thee. [*Holds him.*
Alt. Let go my arm!
Hor. If honour be thy care, if thou would'st live
Without the name of credulous, wittol husband,
Avoid thy bride, shun her detested bed,
The joys it yields are dashed with poison——
Alt. Off!
To urge me but a minute more is fatal.
Hor. She is polluted, stained——
Alt. Madness and raging!
But hence—
Hor. Dishonoured by the man you hate——
Alt. I prithee loose me yet, for thy own sake,
If life be worth the keeping——
Hor. By Lothario.
Alt. Perdition take thee, villain, for the falsehood! [*Strikes him.*
Now, nothing but thy life can make atonement.
Hor. A blow! thou hast used me well——
[*Draws.*
Alt. This to thy heart——
Hor. Yet hold—By Heaven, his father's in his face!
Spite of my wrongs, my heart runs o'er with tenderness
And I could rather die myself than hurt him.
Alt. Defend thyself; for, by my much wronged love,
I swear, the poor evasion shall not save thee.
Hor. Yet hold—thou know'st I dare—think how we've lived——
[*They fight; Altamont presses on Horatio, who retires.*
Nay then, 'tis brutal violence; and thus,
Thus Nature bids me guard the life she gave.
[*They fight.*

LAVINIA *enters, and runs between their swords.*

Lav. My brother, my Horatio! Is it possible!
Oh, turn your cruel swords upon Lavinia!
If you must quench your impious rage in blood,
Behold, my heart shall give you all her store,
To save those dearer streams that flow from yours.
Alt. 'Tis well thou hast found a safe-guard; none but this,
No power on earth could save thee from my fury.
Lav. O fatal, deadly sound!
Hor. Safety from thee!
Away, vain boy! Hast thou forgot the reverence
Due to my arm, thy first, thy great example,
Which pointed out thy way to noble daring,
And shewed thee what it was to be a man?
Lav. What busy, meddling fiend, what foe to goodness,
Could kindle such a discord? Oh, lay by
Those most ungentle looks, and angry weapons,
Unless you mean my griefs and killing fears
Should stretch me out at your relentless feet,
A wretched corse, the victim of your fury.
Hor. Ask'st thou what made us foes? 'Twas base ingratitude,
'Twas such a sin to friendship, as Heaven's mercy
That strives with man's untoward, monstrous wickedness,
Unwearied with forgiving, scarce could pardon.
He, who was all to me, child, brother, friend,
With barbarous, bloody malice, sought my life.
Alt. Thou art my sister, and I would not make thee
The lonely mourner of a widowed bed;
Therefore, thy husband's life is safe! but warn him,
No more to know this hospitable roof.
He has but ill repaid Sciolto's bounty.
We must not meet; 'tis dangerous. Farewell.
[*He is going out, Lavinia holds him.*
Lav. Stay, Altamont, my brother, stay; if ever
Nature, or what is nearer much than nature,
The kind consent of our agreeing minds,
Have made us dear to one another, stay,
And speak one gentle word to your Horatio!
Behold, his anger melts, he longs to love you,
To call you friend, then press you hard, with all
The tender, speechless joy of reconcilement.
Alt. It cannot, shall not be—you must not hold me.
Lav. Look kindly, then.
Alt. Each minute that I stay,
Is a new injury to fair Calista.

From thy false friendship to her arms I'll fly;
There, if in any pause of love I rest,
Breathless with bliss, upon her panting breast,
In broken, melting accents, I will swear,
Henceforth to trust my heart with none but her;
Then own, the joys which on her charms attend,
Have more than paid me for my faithless friend.
[*Altamont breaks from Lavinia, and exit.*
Hor. Oh, raise thee, my Lavinia, from the earth!
It is too much; this tide of flowing grief,
This wondrous waste of tears, too much to give
To an ungrateful friend, and cruel brother.
Lav. Is there not cause for weeping? Oh, Horatio!
A brother and a husband were my treasure;
'Twas all the little wealth that poor Lavinia
Saved from the shipwreck of her father's fortunes.
One half is lost already. If thou leav'st me;
If thou should'st prove unkind to me, as Altamont,
Whom shall I find to pity my distress,
To have compassion on a helpless wanderer,
And give her where to lay her wretched head?
Hor. Why dost thou wound me with thy soft complainings?
Though Altamont be false, and use me hardly,
Yet think not I impute his crimes to thee.
Talk not of being forsaken; for I'll keep thee
Next to my heart, my certain pledge of happiness.
Heaven formed thee gentle, fair, and full of goodness,
And made thee all my portion here on earth:
It gave thee to me, as a large amends
For fortune, friends, and all the world beside.
Lav. Then you will love me still, cherish me ever;
And hide me from misfortune in your bosom?
Here end my cares, nor will I lose one thought,
How we shall live, or purchase food and raiment.
The holy Power, who cloathes the senseless earth
With woods, with fruits, with flowers, and verdant grass,
Whose bounteous hand feeds the whole brute creation,
Knows all our wants, and has enough to give us,
Hor. From Genoa, from falsehood and inconstancy,
To some more honest, distant clime we'll go.
Nor will I be beholden to my country,
For aught but thee, the partner of my flight.
Lav. Yes, I will follow thee; forsake, for thee,
My country, brother, friends, even all I have.
Though mine's a little all, yet were it more,
And better far, it should be left for thee,
And all that I would keep, should be Horatio.
So, when a merchant sees his vessel lost,
Though richly freighted from a foreign coast,
Gladly, for life, the treasure he would give,
And only wishes to escape, and live:
Gold, and his gains, no more employ his mind;
But, driving o'er the billows with the wind,
Cleaves to one faithful plank, and leaves the rest behind. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Garden.*

Enter ALTAMONT.

Alt. With what unequal tempers are we formed?
One day the soul, supine with ease and fulness,
Revels secure, and fondly tells herself
The hour of evil can return no more;
The next, the spirits, pall'd and sick of riot,
Turn all to discord, and we hate our beings,
Curse the past joy, and think it folly all,
And bitterness and anguish. Oh, last night!
What has ungrateful beauty paid me back,
For all the mass of friendship which I squandered?
Coldness, aversion, tears, and sullen sorrow,
Dashed all my bliss, and damped my bridal bed.
Soon as the morning dawned, she vanished from me,
Relentless to the gentle call of love.
I've lost a friend, and I have gained——a wife!
Turn not to thought, my brain! but let me find
Some unfrequented shade; there lay me down,
And let forgetful dulness steal upon me,
To soften and assuage this pain of thinking. [*Exit.*

LOTHARIO *and* CALISTA *discovered.*

Loth. Weep not, my fair; but let the God of Love
Laugh in thy eyes, and revel in thy heart,
Kindle again his torch, and hold it high,
To light us to new joys. Nor let a thought
Of discord, or disquiet past, molest thee;
But to a long oblivion give thy cares,
And let us melt the present hour in bliss.
Cal. Seek not to soothe me with thy false endearments,
To charm me with thy softness: 'tis in vain:
Thou can'st no more betray, nor I be ruined.
The hours of folly, and of fond delight,
Are wasted all, and fled; those that remain
Are doomed to weeping, anguish, and repentance.
I come to charge thee with a long account,
Of all the sorrows I have known already,
And all I have to come; thou hast undone me.
Loth. Unjust Calista! dost thou call it ruin,
To love as we have done; to melt, to languish,
To wish for somewhat exquisitely happy,
And then be blest even to that wish's height?

To die with joy, and straight to live again;
Speechless to gaze, and with tumultuous transport—
Cal. Oh, let me hear no more! I cannot bear it;
'Tis deadly to remembrance. Let that night,
That guilty night, be blotted from the year!
Let not the voice of mirth or music know it!
Let it be dark and desolate; no stars
To glitter o'er it! let it wish for light,
Yet want it still, and vainly wait the dawn!
For 'twas the night that gave me up to shame,
To sorrow, to the false Lothario.
Loth. Hear this, ye powers! mark, how the fair deceiver
Sadly complains of violated truth;
She calls me false, even she, the faithless she,
Whom day and night, whom heaven and earth have heard
Sighing to vow, and tenderly protest,
Ten thousand times, she would be only mine;
And yet, behold, she has given herself away,
Fled from my arms, and wedded to another,
Even to the man whom most I hate on earth.—
Cal. Art thou so base to upbraid me with a crime,
Which nothing but thy cruelty could cause?
If indignation, raging in my soul,
For thy unmanly insolence and scorn,
Urged me to a deed of desperation,
And wound myself to be revenged on thee,
Think whom I should devote to death and hell,
Whom curse as my undoer, but Lothario!
Hadst thou been just, not all Sciolto's power,
Not all the vows and prayers of sighing Altamont,
Could have prevailed, or won me to forsake thee.
Loth. How have I failed in justice, or in love?
Burns not my flame as brightly as at first?
Even now my heart beats high, I languish for thee,
My transports are as fierce, as strong my wishes,
As if thou ne'er hadst blest me with thy beauty.
Cal. How! didst thou dare to think that I would live
A slave to base desires, and brutal pleasures,
To be a wretched wanton for thy leisure,
To toy, and waste an hour of idle time with?
My soul disdains thee for so mean a thought.
Loth. The driving storm of passion will have way,
And I must yield before it. Wert thou calm,
Love, the poor criminal, whom thou hast doomed,
Has yet a thousand tender things to plead,
To charm thy rage, and mitigate his fate.

Enter behind them Altamont.

Alt. I have lost my peace—Ha! do I live and wake?
Cal. Hadst thou been true, how happy had I been!
Not Altamont, but thou, hadst been my lord.
But wherefore named I happiness with thee?
It is for thee, for thee, that I am curst;
For thee my secret soul each hour arraigns me,
Calls me to answer for my virtue stained,
My honour lost to thee: for thee it haunts me,
With stern Sciolto vowing vengeance on me,
With Altamont complaining for his wrongs——
Alt. Behold him here! [*Coming forward.*
Cal. Ah! [*Starting.*
Alt. The wretch, whom thou hast made!
Curses and sorrows hast thou heaped upon him,
And vengeance is the only good that's left.
[*Drawing.*
Loth. Thou hast taken me somewhat unawares, 'tis true:
But love and war take turns, like day and night,
And little preparation serves my turn,
Equal to both, and armed for either field.
We've long been foes, this moment ends our quarrel;
Earth, Heaven, and fair Calista judge the combat!
Cal. Distraction! Fury! Sorrow! Shame! and death!
Alt. Thou hast talked too much, thy breath is poison to me;
It taints the ambient air; this for my father—
This for Sciolto—and this last for Altamont.
[*They fight; Lothario is wounded once or twice, and then falls.*
Loth. Oh, Altamont! thy genius is the stronger!
Thou hast prevailed!—My fierce ambitious soul
Declining droops, and all her fires grow pale;
Yet let not this advantage swell thy pride;
I conquered in my turn, in love I triumphed.
Those joys are lodged beyond the reach of fate;
That sweet revenge comes smiling to my thoughts,
Adorns my fall, and cheers my heart in dying.
[*Dies.*
Cal. And what remains for me, beset with shame,
Encompassed round with wretchedness? There is
But this one way to break the toil, and 'scape.
[*She catches up Lothario's sword, and offers to kill herself; Altamont runs to her, and wrests it from her.*
Alt. What means thy frantic rage?
Cal. Off! let me go.
Alt. Oh! thou hast more than murdered me; yet still,
Still art thou here! and my soul starts with horror,
At thought of any thing that may reach thee.
Cal. Think'st thou I mean to live to be forgiven?
Oh, thou hast known but little of Calista!
If thou hadst never heard my shame, if only
The midnight moon and silent stars had seen it,
I would not bear to be reproached by them,
But dig down deep to find a grave beneath,
And hide me from their beams.
Sciolto within. What, ho! my son!

Alt. It is Sciolto calls; come near and find me;
The wretchedest thing of all my kind on earth.
Cal. Is it the voice of thunder, or my father!
Madness! Confusion! let the storm come on,
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me;
Dash my devoted bark, ye surges, break it!
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,
Peace shall return, and all be calm again.

Enter SCIOLTO.

Sci. Even now Rossano leaped the garden wall——
Ha! Death has been among you—Oh, my fears!
Last night thou had'st a difference with thy friend;
The cause thou gavest me was a damned one.
Didst thou not wrong the man who told thee truth?
Answer me quick——
Alt. Oh! press me not to speak;
Even now my heart is breaking, and the mention
Will lay me dead before thee. See that body,
And guess my shame, my ruin! Oh, Calista!
Sci. It is enough! but I am slow to execute,
And justice lingers in my lazy hand;
Thus let me wipe dishonour from my name,
And cut thee from the earth, thou stain to goodness—
[*Offers to kill Calista, Altamont holds him.*
Alt. Stay thee, Sciolto! thou rash father, stay!
Or turn the point on me, and through my breast
Cut out the bloody passage to Calista!
So shall my love be perfect, while for her
I die, for whom I wished to live.
Cal. No, Altamont; my heart, that scorned thy love,
Shall never be indebted to thy pity.
Thus torn, defaced, and wretched as I seem,
Still I have something of Sciolto's virtue.
Yes, yes, my father, I applaud thy justice;
Strike home, and I will bless thee for the blow!
Be merciful, and free me from my pain;
'Tis sharp, 'tis terrible, and I could curse
The cheerful day, men, earth, and heaven, and thee,
Even thee, thou venerable good old man,
For being author of a wretch like me.
Alt. Listen not to the wildness of her raving;
Remember nature! Should thy daughter's murder
Defile that hand, so just, so great in arms,
Her blood would rest upon thee to posterity,
Pollute thy name, and sully all thy wars.
Cal. Have I not wronged his gentle nature much?
And yet behold him pleading for my life!
Lost as thou art to virtue, oh, Calista!
I think thou can'st not bear to be outdone;
Then haste to die, and be obliged no more.
Sci. Thy pious care has given me time to think,
And saved me from a crime; then rest, my sword:
To honour have I kept thee ever sacred,
Nor will I stain thee with a rash revenge.
But mark me well! I will have justice done;
Hope not to bear away thy crimes unpunished:
I will see justice executed on thee,
Even to a Roman strictness; and thou, Nature,
Or whatsoe'er thou art, that plead'st within me,
Be still; thy tender strugglings are in vain.
Cal. Then am I doomed to live, and bear your triumph?
To groan beneath your scorn and fierce upbraiding,
Daily to be reproached, and have my misery
At morn, at noon, at night, told over to me,
Lest my remembrance might grow pitiful,
And grant a moment's interval of peace!
Is this, is this the mercy of a father?
I only beg to die, and he denies me.
Sci. Hence, from my sight! thy father cannot bear thee;
Fly with thy infamy to some dark cell,
Where, on the confines of eternal night,
Mourning, misfortune, cares, and anguish dwell;
Where ugly shame hides her opprobrious head,
And death and hell detested rule maintain;
There howl out the remainder of thy life,
And wish thy name may be no more remembered!
Cal. Yes, I will fly to some such dismal place,
And be more cursed than you can wish I were;
This fatal form, that drew on my undoing,
Fasting, and tears, and hardships shall destroy;
Nor light, nor food, nor comfort will I know,
Nor ought that may continue hated life.
Then, when you see me meagre, wan, and changed,
Stretched at my length, and dying in my cave,
On that cold earth I mean shall be my grave,
Perhaps you may relent, and sighing say,
At length her tears have washed her stains away;
At length 'tis time her punishment should cease;
Die, thou poor suffering wretch, and be at peace.
[*Exit Calista.*
Sci. Who of my servants wait there?

Enter two or three Servants.

Raise that body, and bear it in. On your lives
Take care my doors be guarded well, that none
Pass out, or enter, but by my appointment.
Exeunt Servants, with Lothario's body.
Alt. There is a fatal fury in your visage;
It blazes fierce, and menaces destruction.
My father, I am sick of many sorrows,
Even now my easy heart is breaking with them;
Yet, above all, one fear distracts me most;
I tremble at the vengeance which you meditate
On the poor, faithless, lovely, dear Calista.
Sci. Hast thou not read what brave Virginius did?
With his own hand he slew his only daughter,
To save her from the fierce Decemvir's lust.
He slew her, yet unspotted, to prevent
The shame which she might know. Then what should I do?

But thou hast tied my hand.—I will not kill her;
Yet, by the ruin she has brought upon us,
The common infamy that brands us both,
She shall not 'scape.

Alt. You mean that she shall die then?

Sci. Ask me not what, nor how, I have resolved,
For all within is anarchy and uproar!
Oh, Altamont! What a vast scheme of joy
Has this one day destroyed? Well did I hope
This daughter would have blest my latter days;
That I should live to see you the world's wonder,
So happy, great, and good, that none were like you.
While I, from busy life and care set free,
Had spent the evening of my age at home,
Among a little prattling race of yours!
There, like an old man, talked awhile, and then
Lain down and slept in peace. Instead of this,
Sorrow and shame must bring me to my grave—
Oh, damn her! damn her!

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Arm yourself, my lord:
Rossano, who but now escaped the garden,
Has gathered in the street a band of rioters,
Who threaten you, and all your friends, with ruin,
Unless Lothario be returned in safety. [*Exit.*

Sci. By Heaven, their fury rises to my wish,
Nor shall misfortune know my house alone,
But thou, Lothario, and thy race, shall pay me
For all the sorrows which my age is cursed with!
I think my name as great, my friends as potent,
As any in the state; all shall be summoned;
I know that all will join their hands to ours,
And vindicate thy vengeance. When our force
Is full, and armed, we shall expect thy sword
To join with us, and sacrifice to justice.——
[*Exit Sciolto.*

Alt. There is a stupid weight upon my senses;
A dismal sullen stillness, that succeeds
The storm of rage and grief, like silent death,
After the tumult and the noise of life.
Would it were death, as sure 'tis wondrous like it,
For I am sick of living; my soul's palled,
She kindles not with anger and revenge:
Love was the informing, active fire within:
Now that is quenched, the mass forgets to move,
And longs to mingle with its kindred earth.

[*A tumultuous noise, with clashing of swords, as at a little distance.*

Enter Lavinia, *with two Servants, their swords drawn.*

Lav. Fly, swiftly fly, to my Horatio's aid,
Nor lose your vain officious cares on me!
Bring me my lord, my husband, to my arms!
He is Lavinia's life! bring him me safe,
And I shall be at ease, be well, and happy.
[*Exeunt Servants.*

Alt. Art thou Lavinia? Oh! what barbarous hand
Could wrong thy poor defenceless innocence,
And leave such marks of more than savage fury?

Lav. My brother! Oh! my heart is full of fears;
Perhaps even now my dear Horatio bleeds!—
Nor far from hence, as passing to the port,
By a mad multitude we were surrounded,
Who ran upon us with uplifted swords,
And cried aloud for vengeance, and Lothario.
My lord, with ready boldness, stood the shock,
To shelter me from danger; but in vain,
Had not a party from Sciolto's palace
Rushed out, and snatched me from amidst the fray.

Alt. What of my friend?

Lav. Ha! by my joys, 'tis he! [*Looking out.*
He lives, he comes to bless me! he is safe!——

Enter Horatio, *with two or three Servants, their swords drawn.*

1*st Ser.* 'Twere at the utmost hazard of your life
To venture forth again, till we are stronger:
Their number trebles ours.

Hor. No matter; let it:
Death is not half so shocking as that traitor.
My honest soul is mad with indignation,
To think her plainness could be so abused,
As to mistake that wretch, and call him friend;
I cannot bear the sight!

Alt. Open, thou earth,
Gape wide, and take me down to thy dark bosom,
To hide me from Horatio!

Hor. Oh, Lavinia!
Believe not but I joy to see thee safe:
Would our ill-fortune had not drove us hither:
I could even wish we rather had been wrecked
On any other shore, than saved on this.

Lav. Oh! let us bless the mercy that preserved us,
That gracious power that saved us for each other:
And, to adorn the sacrifice of praise,
Offer forgiveness too; be thou like Heaven,
And put away the offences of thy friend,
Far, far from thy remembrance.

Alt. I have marked him,
To see if one forgiving glance stole hither;
If any spark of friendship were alive,
That would, by sympathy, at meeting glow,
And strive to kindle up the flame a-new;
'Tis lost, 'tis gone; his soul is quite estranged,
And knows me for its counterpart no more!

Hor. Thou know'st thy rule, thy empire in Horatio;
Nor canst thou ask in vain, command in vain,
Where nature, reason, nay, where love is judge;
But when you urge my temper to comply
With what it most abhors, I cannot do it.

Lav. Where didst thou get this sullen gloomy hate?
It was not in thy nature to be thus;

Come, put it off, and let thy heart be cheerful!
Be gay again, and know the joys of friendship,
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,
The double joys, where each is glad for both;
Friendship, the wealth, the last retreat and strength,
Secure against ill-fortune, and the world.
Hor. I am not apt to take a light offence,
But patient of the failings of my friends,
And willing to forgive; but when an injury
Stabs to the heart, and rouses my resentment,
(Perhaps it is the fault of my rude nature)
I own I cannot easily forgive it.
Alt. Thou hast forgot me!
Hor. No.
Alt. Why are thy eyes
Impatient of me then, scornful, and fierce?
Hor. Because they speak the meaning of my heart;
Because they are honest, and disdain a villain!
Alt. I've wronged thee much, Horatio.
Hor. True, thou hast.
When I forget it, may I be a wretch,
Vile as thyself, a false perfidious fellow,
An infamous, believing, British husband.
Alt. I've wronged thee much, and Heaven has well avenged it.
I have not, since we parted, been at peace,
Nor known one joy sincere; our broken friendship
Pursued me to the last retreat of love,
Stood glaring like a ghost, and made me cold with horror.
Misfortunes on misfortunes press upon me,
Swell o'er my head like waves, and dash me down;
Sorrow, remorse, and shame, have torn my soul;
They hang, like winter, on my youthful hopes,
And blast the spring and promise of my year.
Lav. So flowers are gathered to adorn a grave,
To lose their freshness amongst bones and rottenness,
And have their odours stifled in the dust.
Canst thou hear this, thou cruel, hard Horatio?
Canst thou behold thy Altamont undone?
That gentle, that dear youth! canst thou behold him,
His poor heart broken, death in his pale visage,
And groaning out his woes, yet stand unmoved?
Hor. The brave and wise I pity in misfortune;
But when ingratitude and folly suffers,
'Tis weakness to be touched.
Alt. I will not ask thee
To pity or forgive me; but confess,
This scorn, this insolence of hate, is just;
'Tis constancy of mind, and manly in thee.
But, Oh! had I been wronged by thee, Horatio,
There is a yielding softness in my heart
Could ne'er have stood it out; but I had ran,
With streaming eyes, and open arms, upon thee,
And pressed thee close, close!
Hor. I must hear no more;
Thy weakness is contagious; I shall catch it,
And be a tame, fond wretch.
Lav. Where wouldst thou go?
Wouldst thou part thus? you shalt not, 'tis impossible;
For I will bar thy passage, kneeling thus:
Perhaps, thy cruel hand may spurn me off,
But I will throw my body in thy way,
And thou shalt trample over my faithful bosom,
Tread on me, wound me, kill me, ere thou pass.
Alt. Urge not in vain thy pious suit, Lavinia,
I have enough to rid me of my pain.
Calista, thou hadst reached my heart before;
To make all sure, my friend repeats the blow:
But in the grave our cares shall be forgotten,
There love and friendship cease. [*Falls.*
[*Lavinia runs to him, and endeavours to raise him.*
Lav. Speak to me, Altamont!
He faints! He dies! Now, turn and see thy triumph!
My brother! But our cares shall end together;
Here will I lay me down by thy dear side,
Bemoan thy too hard fate, then share it with thee,
And never see my cruel lord again.
[*Horatio runs to Altamont, and raises him in his arms.*
Hor. It is too much to bear! Look up, my Altamont!
My stubborn, unrelenting heart has killed him.
Look up and bless me! tell me that thou livest!
Oh! I have urged thy gentleness too far;
[*He revives.*
Do thou and my Lavinia both forgive me;
A flood of tenderness comes o'er my soul;
I cannot speak—I love, forgive, and pity thee—
Alt. I thought that nothing could have stayed my soul;
That long ere this her flight had reached the stars;
But thy known voice has lured her back again.
Methinks, I fain would set all right with thee,
Make up this most unlucky breach, and then,
With thine and Heaven's forgiveness on my soul,
Shrink to my grave, and be at ease for ever.
Hor. By Heaven, my heart bleeds for thee; even this moment,
I feel thy pangs of disappointed love.
Is it not pity that this youth should fall,
That all his wondrous goodness should be lost,
And the world never know it? Oh, my Altamont!
Give me thy sorrows, let me bear them for thee,
And shelter thee from ruin!
Lav. Oh, my brother,
Think not but we will share in all thy woes;
We'll sit all day, and tell sad tales of love:
And when we light upon some faithless woman,
Some beauty, like Calista, false and fair,
We'll fix our grief, and our complaining there;
We'll curse the nymph that drew the ruin on,
And mourn the youth that was, like thee, undone. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room hung with black; on one side Lothario's body on a bier; on the other a table, with a skull and other bones, a book and a lamp on it.*

Calista is discovered on a couch, in black; her hair hanging loose and disordered. After soft music, she rises and comes forward.

SONG.

Hear, you midnight phantoms, hear,
You who pale and wan appear,
And fill the wretch who wakes with fear;
You, who wander, scream and groan
Round the mansions once your own;
You, who still your crimes upbraid;
You, who rest not with the dead;
From the coverts where you stray,
Where you lurk and shun the day,
From the charnel and the tomb,
Hither haste ye, hither come.

Chide Calista for delay,
Tell her, 'tis for her you stay;
Bid her die and come away.
See the sexton with his spade,
See the grave already made;
Listen, fair one, to thy knell,
This music is thy passing bell.

Cal. 'Tis well! these solemn sounds, this pomp of horror,
Are fit to feed the frenzy in my soul.
Here's room for meditation even to madness;
Till the mind burst with thinking. This dull flame
Sleeps in the socket. Sure the book was left
To tell me something; for instruction then—
He teaches holy sorrow and contrition,
And penitence. Is it become an art, then?
A trick, that lazy, dull, luxurious gownmen
Can teach us to do over? I'll no more on't;
[*Throwing away the book.*
I have more real anguish in my heart,
Than all their pedant discipline ever knew.
What charnel has been rifled for these bones?
Fie! this is pageantry; they look uncouthly.
But what of that, if he or she, that owned them,
Safe from disquiet sit, and smile to see
The farce their miserable relicks play?
But here's a sight is terrible indeed!
Is this that haughty, gallant, gay, Lothario?
That dear perfidious—Ah! how pale he looks!
How grim with clotted blood, and those dead eyes!
Ascend, ye ghosts, fantastic forms of night,
In all your different dreadful shapes ascend,
And match the present horror, if ye can!

Enter Sciolto.

Sci. This dead of night, this silent hour of darkness,
Nature for rest ordained, and soft repose;
And yet distraction, and tumultuous jars,
Keep all our frighted citizens awake:
The senate, weak, divided, and irresolute,
Want power to succour the afflicted state.
Vainly in words and long debates they are wise,
While the fierce factions scorn their peaceful orders,
And drown the voice of law in noise and anarchy.
Amidst the general wreck, see where she stands,
[*Pointing to* Calista.
Like Helen, in the night when Troy was sacked,
Spectatress of the mischief which she made.
Cal. It is Sciolto! Be thyself, my soul;
Be strong to bear his fatal indignation,
That he may see thou art not lost so far,
But somewhat still of his great spirit lives
In the forlorn Calista.
Sci. Thou wert once
My daughter.
Cal. Happy were it had I died,
And never lost that name.
Sci. That's something yet;
Thou wert the very darling of my age:
I thought the day too short to gaze upon thee,
That all the blessings I could gather for thee,
By cares on earth, and by my prayers to Heaven,
Were little for my fondness to bestow;
Why didst thou turn to folly, then, and curse me?
Cal. Because my soul was rudely drawn from yours;
A poor imperfect copy of my father,
Where goodness, and the strength of manly virtue,
Was thinly planted, and the idle void
Filled up with light belief, and easy fondness;
It was, because I loved, and was a woman.
Sci. Hadst thou been honest, thou hadst been a cherubim;
But of that joy, as of a gem long lost,
Beyond redemption gone, think we no more.
Hast thou e'er dared to meditate on death?
Cal. I have, as on the end of shame and sorrow.
Sci. Ha! answer me! Say, hast thou coolly thought?
'Tis not the stoick's lessons got by rote,
The pomp of words, and pedant dissertations,
That can sustain thee in that hour of terror;
Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it,
But when the trial comes, they stand aghast:
Hast thou considered what may happen after it?

How thy account may stand, and what to answer?
Cal. I have turned my eyes inward upon myself,
Where foul offence and shame have laid all waste;
Therefore my soul abhors the wretched dwelling,
And longs to find some happy place of rest.
Sci. 'Tis justly thought, and worthy of that spirit,
That dwelt in antient Latian breasts, when Rome
Was mistress of the world. I would go on
And tell thee all my purpose; but it sticks
Here at my heart, and cannot find a way.
Cal. Then spare the telling, if it be a pain,
And write the meaning with your poignard here.
Sci. Oh! truly guessed—see'st thou, this trembling hand— [*Holding up a dagger.*
Thrice justice urged—and thrice the slackening sinews
Forgot their office, and confessed the father.
At length the stubborn virtue has prevailed,
It must, it must be so——Oh! take it then,
[*Giving the dagger.*
And know the rest untaught!
Cal. I understand you.
It is but thus, and both are satisfied.
[*She offers to kill herself: Sciolto catches hold of her arm.*
Sci. A moment, give me yet a moment's space.
The stern, the rigid judge has been obeyed;
Now nature, and the father, claim their turns.
I've held the balance with an iron hand,
And put off every tender human thought,
To doom my child to death; but spare my eyes
The most unnatural sight, lest their strings crack,
My old brain split, and I grow mad with horror!
Cal. Ha! Is it possible! and is there yet
Some little dear remain of love and tenderness
For poor, undone Calista, in your heart!
Sci. Oh! when I think what pleasure I took in thee,
What joys thou gavest me in thy prattling infancy,
Thy sprightly wit, and early blooming beauty!
How have I stood, and fed my eyes upon thee,
Then, lifting up my hands, and wondering, blest thee—
By my strong grief, my heart even melts within me;
I could curse Nature, and that tyrant, honour,
For making me thy father, and thy judge;
Thou art my daughter still!
Cal. For that kind word,
Thus let me fall, thus humbly to the earth,
Weep on your feet, and bless you for this goodness.
Oh! 'tis too much for this offending wretch,
This parricide, that murders with her crimes,
Shortens her father's age, and cuts him off,
Ere little more than half his years be numbered.
Sci. Would it were otherwise—but thou must die.——
Cal. That I must die, it is my only comfort;
Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life without it were not worth our taking:
Thither the poor, the prisoner, and the mourner,
Fly for relief, and lay their burthens down.
Come then, and take me into thy cold arms,
Thou meagre shade; here let me breathe my last,
Charmed with my father's pity and forgiveness,
More than if angels tuned their golden viols,
And sung a requiem to my parting soul.
Sci. I am summoned hence; ere this my friends expect me.
There is I know not what of sad presage,
That tells me, I shall never see thee more;
If it be so, this is our last farewell,
And these the parting pangs, which nature feels,
When anguish rends the heart-strings—Oh, my daughter! [*Exit Sciolto.*
Cal. Now think, thou cursed Calista! now behold
The desolation, horror, blood, and ruin,
Thy crimes and fatal folly spread around,
That loudly cry for vengeance on thy head.
Yet Heaven, who knows our weak, imperfect natures,
How blind with passions, and how prone to evil,
Makes not too strict inquiry for our offences,
But is atoned by penitence and prayer:
Cheap recompence! here 'twould not be received,
Nothing but blood can make the expiation,
And cleanse the soul from inbred, deep pollution.
And see, another injured wretch is come,
To call for justice from my tardy hand.

Enter ALTAMONT.

Alt. Hail to you, horrors! hail, thou house of death!
And thou, the lovely mistress of the shades,
Whose beauty gilds the more than midnight darkness,
And makes it grateful as the dawn of day,
Oh, take me in, a fellow-mourner, with thee,
I'll number groan for groan, and tear for tear;
And when the fountain of thy eyes is dry,
Mine shall supply the stream, and weep for both.
Cal. I know thee well; thou art the injured Altamont;
Thou comest to urge me with the wrongs I've done thee;
But know, I stand upon the brink of life,
And in a moment mean to set me free
From shame and thy upbraiding.
Alt. Falsely, falsely
Dost thou accuse me! When did I complain,
Or murmur at my fate? For thee I have
Forgot the temper of Italian husbands,
And fondness has prevailed upon revenge.

I bore my load of infamy with patience,
As holy men do punishment from Heaven;
Nor thought it hard, because it came from thee.
Oh, then, forbid me not to mourn thy loss,
To wish some better fate had ruled our loves,
And that Calista had been mine, and true.
Cal. Oh, Altamont! 'tis hard for souls like mine,
Haughty and fierce, to yield they've done amiss.
But, oh, behold! my proud disdainful heart
Bends to thy gentler virtue. Yes, I own,
Such is thy truth, thy tenderness, and love,
Such are the graces that adorn thy youth,
That, were I not abandoned to destruction,
With thee I might have lived for ages blessed,
And died in peace within thy faithful arms.
Alt. Then happiness is still within our reach.
Here let remembrance lose our past misfortunes,
Tear all records that hold the fatal story;
Here let our joys begin, from hence go on,
In long successive order.
Cal. What! in death?
Alt. Then, art thou fixed to die?—But be it so;
We'll go together; my adventurous love
Shall follow thee to those uncertain beings.
Whether our lifeless shades are doomed to wander
In gloomy groves, with discontented ghosts;
Or whether through the upper air we flit,
And tread the fields of light; still I'll pursue thee,
'Till fate ordains that we shall part no more.
Cal. Oh, no! Heaven has some other better lot in store
To crown thee with. Live, and be happy long;
Live, for some maid that shall deserve thy goodness,
Some kind, unpractised heart, that never yet
Has listened to the false ones of thy sex,
Nor known the arts of ours; she shall reward thee,
Meet thee with virtues equal to thy own,
Charm thee with sweetness, beauty, and with truth;
Be blest in thee alone, and thou in her.

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Now, mourn indeed, ye miserable pair;
For now the measure of your woes is full.
Alt. What dost thou mean, Horatio?
Hor. Oh, 'tis dreadful!
The great, the good Sciolto dies this moment.
Cal. My father!
Alt. That's a deadly stroke, indeed.
Hor. Not long ago he privately went forth,
Attended but by few, and those unbidden.
I heard which way he took, and straight pursued him;
But found him compassed by Lothario's faction,
Almost alone, amidst a croud of foes.
Too late we brought him aid, and drove them back;
Ere that, his frantic valour had provoked
The death he seemed to wish for from their swords.
Cal. And dost thou bear me yet, thou patient earth?
Dost thou not labour with thy murderous weight?
And you, ye glittering, heavenly host of stars,
Hide your fair heads in clouds, or I shall blast you;
For I am all contagion, death, and ruin,
And nature sickens at me. Rest, thou world,
This parricide shall be thy plague no more;
Thus, thus I set thee free. [*Stabs herself.*
Hor. Oh, fatal rashness!
Alt. Thou dost instruct me well. To lengthen life,
Is but to trifle now.
[*Altamont offers to kill himself; Horatio prevents him, and wrests his sword from him.*
Hor. Ha! what means
The frantic Altamont? Some foe to man
Has breathed on every breast contagious fury,
And epidemic madness.

Enter Sciolto, *pale and bloody, supported by servants.*

Cal. Oh, my heart!
Well may'st thou fail; for see, the spring that fed
Thy vital stream is wasted, and runs low.
My father! will you now, at last, forgive me,
If, after all my crimes, and all your sufferings,
I call you once again by that dear name?
Will you forget my shame, and those wide wounds?
Lift up your hand, and bless me, ere I go
Down to my dark abode?
Sci. Alas, my daughter!
Thou hast rashly ventured on a stormy sea,
Where life, fame, virtue, all were wrecked and lost.
But sure thou hast borne thy part in all the anguish,
And smarted with the pain. Then, rest in peace:
Let silence and oblivion hide thy name,
And save thee from the malice of posterity;
And may'st thou find with Heaven the same forgiveness,
As with thy father here.—Die, and be happy.
Cal. Celestial sounds! Peace dawns upon my soul,
And every pain grows less—Oh, gentle Altamont!
Think not too hardly of me when I'm gone;
But pity me—Had I but early known
Thy wond'rous worth, thou excellent young man,
We had been happier both—Now, 'tis too late;
And yet my eyes take pleasure to behold thee:
Thou art their last dear object—Mercy, Heaven!
[*She dies.*
Alt. Cold! dead, and cold! and yet thou art not changed,
But lovely still. Hadst thou a thousand faults,
What heart so hard, what virtue so severe,

But at that beauty must of force relented,
Melted to pity, love, and to forgiveness?
Sci. Oh, turn thee from that fatal object, Altamont!
Come near, and let me bless thee, ere I die.
To thee, and brave Horatio, I bequeath
My fortunes—Lay me by thy noble father,
And love my memory, as thou hast his;
For thou hast been my son—Oh, gracious Heaven!
Thou that hast endless blessings still in store
For virtue, and for filial piety,
Let grief, disgrace, and want be far away;
But multiply thy mercies on his head.
Let honour, greatness, goodness, still be with him,
And peace in all his ways— [*He dies.*

Alt. Take, take it all:
To thee, Horatio, I resign the gift,
Whilst I pursue my father, and my love,
And find my only portion in the grave.
Hor. The storm of grief bears hard upon his youth,
And bends him, like a drooping flower, to earth.
By such examples are we taught to prove
The sorrows, that attend unlawful love.
Death, or some worse misfortune, soon divide,
The injured bridegroom from his guilty bride.
If you would have the nuptial union last,
Let virtue be the bond that ties it fast.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

CATO.

BY

ADDISON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CATO,
LUCIUS, } *senators,*
SEMPRONIUS, }
JUBA, *prince of Numidia,*
SYPHAX, *general of the Numidians,*
PORTIUS, } *sons of Cato.*
MARCUS, }

DECIUS, *ambassador from Cæsar.*

WOMEN.

MARCIA, *daughter of Cato.*
LUCIA, *daughter of Lucius.*

Mutineers, Guards, &c.

Scene,—A hall in the governor's palace in Utica.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter PORTIUS *and* MARCUS.

Por. THE dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day;
The great, the important day, big with the fate
Of Cato and of Rome. Our father's death
Would fill up all the guilt of civil war,
And close the scene of blood. Already Cæsar
Has ravaged more than half the globe, and sees
Mankind grown thin by his destructive sword:
Should he go farther, numbers would be wanting
To form new battles, and support his crimes.
Ye gods, what havock does ambition make
Among your works!

Marc. Thy steady temper, Portius,
Can look on guilt, rebellion, fraud, and Cæsar,
In the calm lights of mild philosophy;
I'm tortured, even to madness, when I think
On the proud victor: every time he's named,
Pharsalia rises to my view!—I see
The insulting tyrant prancing o'er the field,
Strewed with Rome's citizens, and drenched in slaughter,
His horse's hoofs wet with patrician blood!
Oh, Portius! is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the stores of Heaven,
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man,
Who owes his greatness to his country's ruin?

Por. Believe me, Marcus, 'tis an impious greatness,
And mixed with too much horror to be envied;
How does the lustre of our father's actions,
Through the dark cloud of ills that cover him,
Break out, and burn with more triumphant brightness!
His sufferings shine, and spread a glory round him;
Greatly unfortunate, he fights the cause
Of honour, virtue, liberty, and Rome.
His sword ne'er fell, but on the guilty head;
Oppression, tyranny, and power usurped,
Draw all the vengeance of his arm upon them.

Marc. Who knows not this! But what can Cato do
Against a world, a base, degenerate world,
That courts the yoke, and bows the neck to Cæsar?

Pent up in Utica, he vainly forms
A poor epitome of Roman greatness,
And, covered with Numidian guards, directs
A feeble army, and an empty senate,
Remnants of mighty battles fought in vain.
By Heaven, such virtue, joined with such success,
Distracts my very soul! our father's fortune
Would almost tempt us to renounce his precepts.
Por. Remember what our father oft has told us:
The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate,
Puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with errors;
Our understanding traces them in vain,
Lost and bewildered in the fruitless search;
Nor sees with how much art the windings run,
Nor where the regular confusion ends.
Marc. These are suggestions of a mind at ease:
Oh, Portius, didst thou taste but half the griefs
That wring my soul, thou couldst not talk thus coldly.
Passion unpitied, and successless love,
Plant daggers in my heart, and aggravate
My other griefs. Were but my Lucia kind—
Por. Thou seest not that thy brother is thy rival;
But I must hide it, for I know thy temper. [*Aside.*
Now, Marcus, now thy virtue's on the proof:
Put forth thy utmost strength, work every nerve,
And call up all thy father in thy soul:
To quell the tyrant, Love, and guard thy heart
On this weak side, where most our nature fails,
Would be a conquest worthy Cato's son.
Marc. Portius, the counsel which I cannot take,
Instead of healing, but upbraids my weakness.
Bid me for honour plunge into a war
Of thickest foes, and rush on certain death,
Then shalt thou see that Marcus is not slow
To follow glory, and confess his father.
Love is not to be reasoned down, or lost
In high ambition or a thirst of greatness;
'Tis second life, it grows into the soul,
Warms every vein, and beats in every pulse;
I feel it here: my resolution melts——
Por. Behold young Juba, the Numidian prince,
With how much care he forms himself to glory,
And breaks the fierceness of his native temper,
To copy out our father's bright example.
He loves our sister Marcia, greatly loves her;
His eyes, his looks, his actions, all betray it;
But still the smothered fondness burns within him;
When most it swells, and labours for a vent,
The sense of honour, and desire of fame,
Drive the big passion back into his heart.
What! shall an African, shall Juba's heir
Reproach great Cato's son, and shew the world
A virtue, wanting in a Roman soul!
Marc. Portius, no more! your words leave stings behind them.
Whene'er did Juba, or did Portius, shew
A virtue that has cast me at a distance,
And thrown me out in the pursuits of honour?
Por. Marcus, I know thy generous temper well;
Fling but the appearance of dishonour on it,
It straight takes fire, and mounts into a blaze.
Marc. A brother's sufferings claim a brother's pity.
Por. Heaven knows I pity thee! Behold my eyes,
Even whilst I speak—do they not swim in tears?
Were but my heart as naked to thy view,
Marcus would see it bleed in his behalf.
Marc. Why then dost treat me with rebukes, instead
Of kind condoling cares, and friendly sorrow?
Por. Oh, Marcus! did I know the way to ease
Thy troubled heart, and mitigate thy pains,
Marcus, believe me, I could die to do it.
Marc. Thou best of brothers, and thou best of friends!
Pardon a weak distempered soul, that swells
With sudden gusts, and sinks as soon in calms,
The sport of passions. But Sempronius comes:
He must not find this softness hanging on me.
[*Exit Marc.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS.

Sem. Conspiracies no sooner should be formed
Than executed. What means Portius here?
I like not that cold youth. I must dissemble,
And speak a language foreign to my heart. [*Aside.*
Good-morrow, Portius; let us once embrace,
Once more embrace, while yet we both are free.
To-morrow, should we thus express a friendship,
Each might receive a slave into his arms.
This sun, perhaps, this morning's sun's the last,
That e'er shall rise on Roman liberty.
Por. My father has this morning called together
To this poor hall, his little Roman senate,
(The leavings of Pharsalia) to consult
If he can yet oppose the mighty torrent
That bears down Rome, and all her gods before it,
Or must at length give up the world to Cæsar.
Sem. Not all the pomp and majesty of Rome
Can raise her senate more than Cato's presence.
His virtues render our assembly awful;
They strike with something like religious fear,
And make even Cæsar tremble at the head
Of armies flushed with conquest. Oh, my Portius!
Could I but call that wondrous man my father,
Would but thy sister Marcia be propitious
To thy friend's vows, I might be blessed indeed!
Por. Alas, Sempronius! wouldst thou talk of love
To Marcia, whilst her father's life's in danger?
Thou mightst as well court the pale, trembling vestal,
When she beholds the holy flame expiring.

Sem. The more I see the wonders of thy race,
The more I'm charmed. Thou must take heed, my Portius;
The world has all its eyes on Cato's son;
Thy father's merit sets thee up to view,
And shews in the fairest point of light,
To make thy virtues or thy faults conspicuous.
Por. Well dost thou seem to check my lingering here
On this important hour—I'll straight away,
And while the fathers of the senate meet
In close debate, to weigh the event of war,
I'll animate the soldiers' drooping courage
With love of freedom, and contempt of life;
I'll thunder in their ears their country's cause,
And try to rouse up all that's Roman in them.
'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it.
[*Exit.*
Sem. Curse on the stripling! how he apes his sire!
Ambitiously sententious—But I wonder
Old Syphax comes not; his Numidian genius
Is well disposed to mischief, were he prompt
And eager on it; but he must be spurred,
And every moment quickened to the course.
Cato has used me ill: he has refused
His daughter Marcia to my ardent vows.
Besides, his baffled arms, and ruined cause,
Are bars to my ambition. Cæsar's favour,
That showers down blessings on his friends, will raise me
To Rome's first honours. If I give up Cato,
I claim, as my reward, his captive daughter.
But Syphax comes——

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. Sempronius, all is ready;
I've sounded my Numidians, man by man,
And find them ripe for a revolt: they all
Complain aloud of Cato's discipline,
And wait but the command to change their master.
Sem. Believe me, Syphax, there's no time to waste;
Even while we speak our conqueror comes on,
And gathers ground upon us every moment.
Alas! though know'st not Cæsar's active soul,
With what a dreadful course he rushes on
From war to war. In vain has nature formed
Mountains and oceans to oppose his passage;
He bounds o'er all; victorious in his march,
The Alps and Pyreneans sink before him:
Through winds, and waves, and storms, he works his way,
Impatient for the battle; one day more
Will see the victor thundering at our gates.
But, tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young Juba?
That still would recommend thee more to Cæsar,
And challenge better terms.
Syph. Alas, he's lost!
He's lost, Sempronius; all his thoughts are full
Of Cato's virtues—But I'll try once more
(For every instant I expect him here),
If yet I can subdue those stubborn principles
Of faith and honour, and I know not what,
That have corrupted his Numidian temper,
And struck the infection into all his soul.
Sem. Be sure to press upon him every motive.
Juba's surrender, since his father's death,
Would give up Afric into Cæsar's hands,
And make him lord of half the burning zone.
Syph. But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate
Is called together? Gods! thou must be cautious;
Cato has piercing eyes, and will discern
Our frauds, unless they're covered thick with art.
Sem. Let me alone, good Syphax; I'll conceal
My thoughts in passion ('tis the surest way);
I'll bellow out for Rome, and for my country,
And mouth at Cæsar, till I shake the senate.
Your cold hypocrisy's a stale device,
A worn-out trick; wouldst thou be thought in earnest,
Clothe thy feigned zeal in rage, in fire, in fury!
Syph. In troth, thou'rt able to instruct grey hairs,
And teach the wily African deceit.
Sem. Once more be sure to try thy skill on Juba.
Meanwhile I'll hasten to my Roman soldiers,
Inflame the mutiny, and underhand
Blow up their discontent, till they break out
Unlooked for, and discharge themselves on Cato.
Remember, Syphax, we must work in haste:
Oh! think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plots, and their last fatal periods!
Oh! 'tis a dreadful interval of time,
Filled up with horror all, and big with death!
Destruction hangs on every word we speak,
On every thought, till the concluding stroke
Determines all, and closes our design. [*Exit.*
Syph. I'll try if yet I can reduce to reason
This headstrong youth, and make him spurn at Cato.
The time is short; Cæsar comes rushing on us—
But hold! young Juba sees me, and approaches.

Enter JUBA.

Juba. Syphax, I joy to meet thee thus alone.
I have observed of late thy looks are fallen,
O'ercast with gloomy cares and discontent:
Then tell me, Syphax, I conjure thee, tell me,
What are the thoughts that knit thy brow in frowns,
And turn thine eye thus coldly on thy prince?
Syph. 'Tis not my talent to conceal my thoughts,
Or carry smiles and sunshine in my face,
When discontent sits heavy at my heart;
I have not yet so much the Roman in me.
Juba. Why dost thou cast out such ungenerous terms
Against the lords and sovereigns of the world?

Dost thou not see mankind fall down before them,
And own the force of their superior virtue?
Is there a nation in the wilds of Afric,
Amidst our barren rocks, and burning sands,
That does not tremble at the Roman name?
Syph. Gods! where's the worth that sets these people up
Above our own Numidia's tawny sons?
Do they, with tougher sinews, bend the bow?
Or flies the javelin swifter to its mark,
Launched from the vigour of a Roman arm?
Who, like our active African, instructs
The fiery steed, and trains him to his hand?
Or guides, in troops, the embattled elephant,
Laden with war? These, these, are arts, my prince,
In which your Zama does not stoop to Rome.
Juba. These all are virtues of a meaner rank;
Perfections that are placed in bones and nerves.
A Roman soul is bent on higher views:
To civilize the rude, unpolished world,
And lay it under the restraint of laws;
To make man mild, and sociable to man;
To cultivate the wild, licentious savage,
With wisdom, discipline, and liberal arts;
The embellishments of life: virtues like these
Make human nature shine, reform the soul,
And break our fierce barbarians into men.
Syph. Patience, kind Heaven!—excuse an old man's warmth:
What are those wondrous civilizing arts,
This Roman polish, and this smooth behaviour,
That renders man thus tractable and tame?
Are they not only to disguise our passions,
To set our looks at variance with our thoughts,
To check the starts and sallies of the soul,
And break off all its commerce with the tongue?
In short, to change us into other creatures,
Than what our nature and the gods designed us?
Juba. To strike thee dumb—turn up thy eyes to Cato!
There may'st thou see to what a god-like height
The Roman virtues lift up mortal man.
While good, and just, and anxious for his friends,
He's still severely bent against himself;
Renouncing sleep, and rest, and food, and ease,
He strives with thirst and hunger, toil and heat;
And, when his fortune sets before him all
The pomps and pleasures that his soul can wish,
His rigid virtue will accept of none.
Syph. Believe me, prince, there's not an African,
That traverses our vast Numidian desarts
In quest of prey, and lives upon his bow,
But better practises those boasted virtues.
Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chace;
Amidst the running stream he slakes his thirst;
Toils all the day, and, at the approach of night,
On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
Or rests his head upon a rock till morn;
Then rises fresh, pursues his wonted game,
And if the following day he chance to find
A new repast, or an untasted spring,
Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.
Juba. Thy prejudices, Syphax, wont discern
What virtues grow from ignorance and choice,
Nor how the hero differs from the brute.
But grant that others could, with equal glory,
Look down on pleasures, and the baits of sense,
Where shall we find the man that bears affliction,
Great and majestic in his griefs, like Cato?
Heavens! with what strength, what steadiness of mind,
He triumphs in the midst of all his sufferings!
How does he rise against a load of woes,
And thank the gods that throw the weight upon him!
Syph. 'Tis pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul;
I think the Romans call it stoicism.
Had not your royal father thought so highly
Of Roman virtue, and of Cato's cause,
He had not fallen by a slave's hand inglorious:
Nor would his slaughtered army now have lain
On Afric's sands disfigured with their wounds,
To gorge the wolves and vultures of Numidia.
Juba. Why dost thou call my sorrows up afresh?
My father's name brings tears into my eyes.
Syph. Oh, that you would profit by your father's ills!
Juba. What wouldst thou have me do?
Syph. Abandon Cato.
Juba. Syphax, I should be more than twice an orphan
By such a loss.
Syph. Aye, there's the tie that binds you!
You long to call him father. Marcia's charms
Work in your heart unseen, and plead for Cato.
No wonder you are deaf to all I say.
Juba. Syphax, your zeal becomes importunate;
I have hitherto permitted it to rave,
And talk at large; but learn to keep it in,
Lest it should take more freedom than I will give it.
Syph. Sir, your great father never used me thus.
Alas, he is dead! but can you e'er forget
The tender sorrows, and the pangs of nature,
The fond embraces, and repeated blessings,
Which you drew from him in your last farewell?
Still must I cherish the dear, sad remembrance,
At once to torture and to please my soul.
The good old king at parting wrung my hand,
(His eyes brim-full of tears) then sighing, cried,
Pr'ythee be careful of my son! His grief
Swelled up so high, he could not utter more.
Juba. Alas! thy story melts away my soul;
That best of fathers! how shall I discharge
The gratitude and duty which I owe him!
Syph. By laying up his counsels in your heart.
Juba. His counsels bade me yield to thy directions:

Then, Syphax, chide me in severest terms;
Vent all thy passion, and I will stand its shock,
Calm and unruffled as a summer sea,
When not a breath of wind flies o'er its surface.
Syph. Alas! my prince, I would guide thee to your safety.
Juba. I do believe thou wouldst; but tell me how?
Syph. Fly from the fate that follows Cæsar's foes!
Juba. My father scorned to do it.
Syph. And therefore died.
Juba. Better to die ten thousand thousand deaths,
Than wound my honour.
Syph. Rather say your love.
Juba. Syphax, I have promised to preserve my temper.
Why wilt thou urge me to confess a flame,
I long have stifled, and would fain conceal?
Syph. Believe me, prince, though hard to conquer love,
'Tis easy to divert and break its force.
Absence might cure it, or a second mistress
Light up another flame and put out this.
The glowing dames of Zama's royal court
Have faces flushed with more exalted charms;
The sun that rolls his chariot o'er their heads,
Works up more fire and colour in their cheeks;
Were you with these, my prince, you would soon forget
The pale, unripened beauties of the north.
Juba. 'Tis not a set of features, or complexion,
The tincture of a skin, that I admire:
Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense.
The virtuous Marcia towers above her sex:
True, she is fair, (Oh, how divinely fair!)
But still the lovely maid improves her charms
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners; Cato's soul
Shines out in every thing she acts or speaks,
While winning mildness and attractive smiles,
Dwell in her looks, and, with becoming grace,
Soften the rigour of her father's virtue.
Syph. How does your tongue grow wanton in her praise!
But on my knees I beg you would consider——
Juba. Ha! Syphax, is it not she? She moves this way:
And with her Lucia, Lucius's fair daughter.
My heart beats thick—I prithee, Syphax, leave me.
Syph. Ten thousand curses fasten on them both!
Now will the woman, with a single glance,
Undo what I have been labouring all this while.
[*Exit Syphax.*

Enter MARCIA *and* LUCIA.

Juba. Hail, charming maid! How does thy beauty smooth
The face of war, and make even horror smile!
At sight of thee my heart shakes off its sorrows;
I feel a dawn of joy break in upon me,
And for a while forget the approach of Cæsar.
Mar. I should be grieved, young prince, to think my presence
Unbent your thoughts, and slackened them to arms,
While, warm with slaughter, our victorious foe
Threatens aloud, and calls you to the field.
Juba. Oh, Marcia, let me hope thy kind concerns
And gentle wishes follow me to battle!
The thought will give new vigour to my arm,
Add strength and weight to my descending sword,
And drive it in a tempest on the foe.
Mar. My prayers and wishes always shall attend
The friends of Rome, the glorious cause of virtue,
And men approved of by the gods and Cato.
Juba. That Juba may deserve thy pious cares,
I'll gaze for ever on thy god-like father,
Transplanting, one by one, into my life,
His bright perfections, 'till I shine like him.
Mar. My father never, at a time like this,
Would lay out his great soul in words, and waste
Such precious moments.
Juba. Thy reproofs are just,
Thou virtuous maid! I will hasten to my troops,
And fire their languid souls with Cato's virtue.
If e'er I lead them to the field, when all
The war shall stand, ranged in its just array,
And dreadful pomp; then will I think on thee!
Oh, lovely maid! then will I think on thee;
And, in the shock of charging hosts, remember
What glorious deeds should grace the man, who hopes
For Marcia's love. [*Exit Juba.*
Luc. Marcia, you're too severe;
How could you chide the young good-natured prince,
And drive him from you with so stern an air?
A prince, that loves and doats on you to death?
Mar. 'Tis therefore, Lucia, that I chid him from me.
His air, his voice, his looks, and honest soul,
Speak all so movingly in his behalf,
I dare not trust myself to hear him talk.
Luc. Why will you fight against so sweet a passion,
And steel your heart to such a world of charms?
Mar. How, Lucia! wouldst thou have me sink away
In pleasing dreams, and lose myself in love,
When every moment Cato's life's at stake?
Cæsar comes armed with terror and revenge,
And aims his thunder at my father's head.
Should not the sad occasion swallow up
My other cares, and draw them all into it?

Luc. Why have not I this constancy of mind,
Who have so many griefs to try its force?
Sure, nature formed me of her softest mould,
Enfeebled all my soul with tender passions,
And sunk me even below my own weak sex:
Pity and love, by turns, oppress my heart.
Mar. Lucia, disburthen all thy cares on me,
And let me share thy most retired distress.
Tell me who raises up this conflict in thee?
Luc. I need not blush to name them, when I tell thee,
They are Marcia's brothers, and the sons of Cato.
Mar. They both behold thee with their sister's eyes,
And often have revealed their passion to me.
But tell me, whose address thou favourest most?
I long to know, and yet I dread to hear it.
Luc. Which is it Marcia wishes for?
Mar. For neither——
And yet for both—The youths have equal share
In Marcia's wishes, and divide their sister:
But tell me which of them is Lucia's choice?
Luc. Marcia, they both are high in my esteem,
But in my love—Why wilt thou make me name him!
Thou knowest it is a blind and foolish passion,
Pleased and disgusted with it knows not what—
Mar. Oh, Lucia, I'm perplexed! Oh, tell me which
I must hereafter call my happy brother?
Luc. Suppose 'twere Portius, could you blame my choice?
——Oh, Portius, thou hast stolen away my soul!
With what a graceful tenderness he loves!
And breathes the softest, the sincerest vows!
Complacency, and truth, and manly sweetness,
Dwell ever on his tongue, and smooth his thoughts.
Marcus is over-warm, his fond complaints
Have so much earnestness and passion in them,
I hear him with a secret kind of horror,
And tremble at his vehemence of temper.
Mar. Alas, poor youth! how canst thou throw him from thee?
Lucia, thou knowest not half the love he bears thee;
Whene'er he speaks of thee, his heart's in flames,
He sends out all his soul in every word,
And thinks, and talks, and looks like one transported.
Unhappy youth! How will thy coldness raise
Tempests and storms in his afflicted bosom!
I dread the consequence.
Luc. You seem to plead
Against your brother Portius.
Mar. Heaven forbid!
Had Portius been the unsuccessful lover,
The same compassion would have fallen on him.
Luc. Was ever virgin love distrest like mine!
Portius himself oft falls in tears before me,
As if he mourned his rival's ill success,
Then bids me hide the motions of my heart,
Nor shew which way it turns. So much he fears
The sad effects that it will have on Marcus.
Mar. He knows too well how easily he is fired,
And would not plunge his brother in despair,
But waits for happier times, and kinder moments.
Luc. Alas! too late I find myself involved
In endless griefs, and labyrinths of woe,
Born to afflict my Marcia's family,
And sow dissention in the hearts of brothers.
Tormenting thought! It cuts into my soul.
Mar. Let us not, Lucia, aggravate our sorrows,
But to the gods submit the event of things.
Our lives, discoloured with our present woes,
May still grow bright, and smile with happier hours.
So the pure limpid stream, when foul with stains
Of rushing torrents, and descending rains,
Works itself clear, and as it runs, refines,
Till, by degrees, the floating mirror shines,
Reflects each flower that on the border grows,
And a new heaven in its fair bosom shows.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Senate.* LUCIUS, SEMPRONIUS, *and Senators.*

Sem. Rome still survives in this assembled senate.
Let us remember we are Cato's friends,
And act like men who claim that glorious title.
Luc. Cato will soon be here, and open to us
The occasion of our meeting. Hark! he comes!
[*A sound of trumpets.*
May all the guardian gods of Rome direct him!

Enter CATO.

Cato. Fathers, we once again are met in council:
Cæsar's approach has summoned us together,
And Rome attends her fate from our resolves.
How shall we treat this bold aspiring man?
Success still follows him, and backs his crimes;
Pharsalia gave him Rome, Egypt has since
Received his yoke, and the whole Nile is Cæsar's.
Why should I mention Juba's overthrow,
And Scipio's death? Numidia's burning sands
Still smoke with blood. 'Tis time we should decree
What course to take. Our foe advances on us,
And envies us even Lybia's sultry desarts.
Fathers, pronounce your thoughts: are they still fixed

To hold it out and fight it to the last?
Or are your hearts subdued at length, and wrought
By time, and ill success, to a submission?
Sempronius, speak.
Sem. My voice is still for war.
Gods! can a Roman senate long debate
Which of the two to chuse, slavery or death!
No; let us rise at once, gird on our swords,
And, at the head of our remaining troops,
Attack the foe, break through the thick array
Of his thronged legions, and charge home upon him.
Perhaps some arm, more lucky than the rest,
May reach his heart, and free the world from bondage.
Rise, fathers, rise! 'Tis Rome demands your help:
Rise, and revenge your slaughtered citizens,
Or share their fate! The corpse of half her senate
Manure the fields of Thessaly, while we
Sit here deliberating in cold debates,
If we should sacrifice our lives to honour,
Or wear them out in servitude and chains.
Rouse up, for shame! our brothers of Pharsalia
Point at their wounds, and cry aloud—To battle!
Great Pompey's shade complains that we are slow;
And Scipio's ghost walks unrevenged amongst us.
Cato. Let not a torrent of impetuous zeal
Transport thee thus beyond the bounds of reason:
True fortitude is seen in great exploits,
That justice warrants, and that wisdom guides;
All else is towering frenzy and distraction.
Are not the lives of those, who draw the sword
In Rome's defence, intrusted to our care?
Should we thus lead them to a field of slaughter,
Might not the impartial world with reason say,
We lavished at our deaths the blood of thousands,
To grace our fall, and make our ruin glorious?
Lucius, we next would know what's your opinion?
Luc. My thoughts, I must confess, are turned on peace.
Already have our quarrels filled the world
With widows, and with orphans: Scythia mourns
Our guilty wars, and earth's remotest regions
Lie half unpeopled by the feuds of Rome:
'Tis time to sheath the sword, and spare mankind.
It is not Cæsar, but the gods, my fathers,
The gods declare against us, and repel
Our vain attempts. To urge the foe to battle,
(Prompted by blind revenge and wild despair)
Were to refuse the awards of Providence,
And not to rest in Heaven's determination.
Already have we shewn our love to Rome,
Now let us shew submission to the gods.
We took up arms, not to revenge ourselves,
But free the commonwealth: when this end fails,
Arms have no further use. Our country's cause,
That drew our swords, now wrests them from our hands,
And bids us not delight in Roman blood
Unprofitably shed. What men could do,
Is done already: heaven and earth will witness,
If Rome must fall, that we are innocent.
Sem. This smooth discourse, and mild behaviour, oft
Conceal a traitor—something whispers me
All is not right—Cato, beware of Lucius.
[*Aside to Cato.*
Cato. Let us appear nor rash nor diffident;
Immoderate valour swells into a fault;
And fear, admitted into public councils,
Betrays like treason. Let us shun them both.
Fathers, I cannot see that our affairs
Are grown thus desperate: we have bulwarks round us;
Within our walls are troops inured to toil
In Afric's heat, and seasoned to the sun;
Numidia's spacious kingdom lies behind us,
Ready to rise at its young prince's call.
While there is hope do not distrust the gods;
But wait at least till Cæsar's near approach
Force us to yield. 'Twill never be too late
To sue for chains, and own a conqueror.
Why should Rome fall a moment ere her time;
No, let us draw her term of freedom out
In its full length, and spin it to the last,
So shall we gain still one day's liberty:
And let me perish, but in Cato's judgment,
A day, an hour, of virtuous liberty,
Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.

Enter MARCUS.

Marc. Fathers, this moment, as I watched the gate,
Lodged on my post, a herald is arrived
From Cæsar's camp, and with him comes old Decius,
The Roman knight; he carries in his looks
Impatience, and demands to speak with Cato.
Cato. By your permission, fathers—bid him enter. [*Exit Marcus.*
Decius was once my friend, but other prospects
Have loosed those ties, and bound him fast to Cæsar.
His message may determine our resolves.

Enter DECIUS.

Dec. Cæsar sends health to Cato—
Cato. Could he send it,
To Cato's slaughtered friends, it would be welcome.
Are not your orders with the senate?
Dec. My business is with Cato; Cæsar sees
The straits to which you're driven; and, as he knows
Cato's high worth, is anxious for your life.
Cato. My life is grafted on the fate of Rome.
Would he save Cato, bid him spare his country.
Tell your dictator this; and tell him, Cato

Disdains a life which he has power to offer.
Dec. Rome and her senators submit to Cæsar;
Her generals and her consuls are no more,
Who checked his conquests, and denied his triumphs.
Why will not Cato be this Cæsar's friend?
Cato. These very reasons thou has urged forbid it.
Dec. Cato, I have orders to expostulate,
And reason with you, as from friend to friend:
Think on the storm that gathers o'er your head,
And threatens every hour to burst upon it;
Still may you stand high in your country's honours;
Do but comply, and make your peace with Cæsar,
Rome will rejoice, and cast its eyes on Cato,
As on the second of mankind.
Cato. No more:
I must not think of life on such conditions.
Dec. Cæsar is well acquainted with your virtues,
And therefore sets this value on your life.
Let him but know the price of Cato's friendship,
And name your terms.
Cato. Bid him disband his legions,
Restore the commonwealth to liberty,
Submit his actions to the public censure,
And stand the judgment of a Roman senate.
Bid him do this, and Cato is his friend.
Dec. Cato, the world talks loudly of your wisdom—
Cato. Nay, more; though Cato's voice was ne'er employed
To clear the guilty, and to varnish crimes,
Myself will mount the rostrum in his favour,
And strive to gain his pardon from the people.
Dec. A style like this becomes a conqueror.
Cato. Decius, a style like this becomes a Roman.
Dec. What is a Roman, that is Cæsar's foe?
Cato. Greater than Cæsar: he is a friend to virtue.
Dec. Consider, Cato, you are in Utica,
And at the head of your own little senate;
You don't now thunder in the capitol,
With all the mouths of Rome to second you.
Cato. Let him consider that, who drives us hither.
'Tis Cæsar's sword has made Rome's senate little,
And thinned its ranks. Alas! thy dazzled eye
Beholds this man in a false glaring light,
Which conquest and success have thrown upon him;
Did'st thou but view him right, thou'dst see him black
With murder, treason, sacrilege, and crimes,
That strike my soul with horror but to name them.
I know thou look'st on me, as on a wretch
Beset with ills, and covered with misfortunes;
But, by the gods I swear, millions of worlds
Should never buy me to be like that Cæsar.
Dec. Does Cato send this answer back to Cæsar,
For all his generous cares and proffered friendship?
Cato. His cares for me are insolent and vain.
Presumptuous man! the gods take care of Cato:
Would Cæsar shew the greatness of his soul,
Bid him employ his care for these my friends,
And make good use of his ill-gotten power,
By sheltering men much better than himself.
Dec. Your high unconquered heart makes you forget
You are a man. You rush on your destruction.
But I have done. When I relate hereafter
The tale of this unhappy embassy,
All Rome will be in tears. [*Exit Decius.*
Sem. Cato, we thank thee.
The mighty genius of immortal Rome
Speaks in thy voice; thy soul breathes liberty.
Cæsar will shrink to hear the words thou utterest,
And shudder in the midst of all his conquests.
Luc. The senate owns its gratitude to Cato,
Who with so great a soul consults its safety,
And guards our lives while he neglects his own.
Sem. Sempronius gives no thanks on this account.
Lucius seems fond of life; but what is life?
'Tis not to walk about, and draw fresh air
From time to time, or gaze upon the sun;
'Tis to be free. When liberty is gone,
Life grows insipid, and has lost its relish.
Oh, could my dying hand but lodge a sword
In Cæsar's bosom, and revenge my country!
By heavens I could enjoy the pangs of death,
And smile in agony!
Luc. Others, perhaps,
May serve their country with as warm a zeal,
Though 'tis not kindled into so much rage.
Sem. This sober conduct is a mighty virtue
In lukewarm patriots.
Cato. Come; no more, Sempronius:
All here are friends to Rome, and to each other.
Let us not weaken still the weaker side
By our divisions.
Sem. Cato, my resentments
Are sacrificed to Rome—I stand reproved.
Cato. Fathers, 'tis time you come to a resolve.
Luc. Cato, we all go into your opinion.
Cæsar's behaviour has convinced the senate,
We ought to hold it out till terms arrive.
Sem. We ought to hold it out till death; but, Cato,
My private voice is drowned amidst the senate's.
Cato. Then let us rise, my friends, and strive to fill
This little interval, this pause of life,
(While yet our liberty and fates are doubtful)
With resolution, friendship, Roman bravery,
And all the virtues we can crowd into it,
That Heaven may say it ought to be prolonged.
Fathers, farewell—The young Numidian prince
Comes forward, and expects to know our counsels. [*Exeunt Senators.*

Enter JUBA.

Juba, the Roman senate has resolved,
Till time give better prospects, still to keep
The sword unsheathed, and turn its edge on Cæsar.
Juba. The resolution fits a Roman senate.
But, Cato, lend me for a while thy patience,
And condescend to hear a young man speak.
My father, when, some days before his death,
He ordered me to march for Utica,
(Alas! I thought not then his death so near!)
Wept o'er me, pressed me in his aged arms,
And, as his griefs gave way, 'My son,' said he,
'Whatever fortune shall befal thy father,
'Be Cato's friend; he'll train thee up to great
'And virtuous deeds; do but observe him well,
'Thou'lt shun misfortunes, or thou'lt learn to bear them.'
Cato. Juba, thy father was a worthy prince,
And merited, alas! a better fate;
But Heaven thought otherwise.
Juba. My father's fate,
In spite of all the fortitude that shines
Before my face in Cato's great example,
Subdues my soul, and fills my eyes with tears.
Cato. It is an honest sorrow, and becomes thee.
Juba. My father drew respect from foreign climes:
The kings of Afric sought him for their friend;
Kings far remote, that rule, as fame reports,
Behind the hidden sources of the Nile,
In distant worlds, on the other side the sun;
Oft have their black ambassadors appeared,
Loaden with gifts, and filled the courts of Zama.
Cato. I am no stranger to thy father's greatness.
Juba. I would not boast the greatness of my father,
But point out new alliances to Cato.
Had we not better leave this Utica,
To arm Numidia in our cause, and court
The assistance of my father's powerful friends?
Did they know Cato, our remotest kings
Would pour embattled multitudes about him;
Their swarthy hosts would darken all our plains,
Doubling the native horrors of the war,
And making death more grim.
Cato. And canst thou think
Cato will fly before the sword of Cæsar!
Reduced, like Hannibal, to seek relief
From court to court, and wander up and down
A vagabond in Afric?
Juba. Cato, perhaps
I am too officious; but my forward cares
Would fain preserve a life of so much value.
My heart is wounded, when I see such virtue
Afflicted by the weight of such misfortunes.
Cato. Thy nobleness of soul obliges me.
But know, young prince, that valour soars above
What the world calls misfortune and affliction.
These are not ills; else would they never fall
On Heaven's first favourites and the best of men.
The gods, in bounty, work up storms about us,
That give mankind occasion to exert
Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
Virtues that shun the day, and lie concealed
In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.
Juba. I am charmed whene'er thou talkest; pant for virtue;
And all my soul endeavours at perfection.
Cato. Dost thou love watchings, abstinence, and toil,
Laborious virtues all? Learn them from Cato;
Success and fortune must thou learn from Cæsar.
Juba. The best good fortune that can fall on Juba,
The whole success at which my heart aspires,
Depends on Cato.
Cato. What does Juba say?
Thy words confound me.
Juba. I would fain retract them,
Give them me back again: they aimed at nothing.
Cato. Tell me thy wish, young prince; make not my ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.
Juba. Oh! they are extravagant;
Still let me hide them.
Cato. What can Juba ask
That Cato will refuse?
Juba. I fear to name it.
Marcia—inherits all her father's virtues.
Cato. What wouldst thou say?
Juba. Cato, thou hast a daughter.
Cato. Adieu, young prince; I would not hear a word
Should lessen thee in my esteem. Remember,
The hand of Fate is over us, and Heaven
Exacts severity from all our thoughts.
It is not now a time to talk of ought
But chains, or conquest; liberty, or death.—
[*Exit.*

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. How is this, my prince! What, covered with confusion?
You look as if yon stern philosopher
Had just now chid you.
Juba. Syphax, I am undone!
Syph. I know it well.
Juba. Cato thinks meanly of me.
Syph. And so will all mankind.
Juba. I have opened to him
The weakness of my soul, my love for Marcia.
Syph. Cato's a proper person to entrust
A love-tale with!
Juba. Oh, I could pierce my heart,
My foolish heart. Was ever wretch like Juba!
Syph. Alas, my prince, how are you changed of late!
I have known young Juba rise before the sun,

To beat the thickst where the tiger slept,
Or seek the lion in his dreadful haunts:
How did the colour mount into your cheeks,
When first you roused him to the chace! I have seen you,
Even in the Lybian dog-days, hunt him down,
Then charge him close, provoke him to the rage
Of fangs and claws, and, stooping from your horse,
Rivet the panting savage to the ground.
Juba. Prithee, no more.
Syph. How would the old king smile
To see you weigh the paws, when tipped with gold,
And throw the shaggy spoils about your shoulders!
Juba. Syphax, this old man's talk (though honey flowed
In every word) would now lose its sweetness.
Cato's displeased, and Marcia lost for ever.
Syph. Young prince, I yet could give you good advice;
Marcia might still be yours.
Juba. What sayest thou, Syphax?
By Heavens, thou turnest me all into attention.
Syph. Marcia might still be yours.
Juba. As how, dear Syphax?
Syph. Juba commands Numidia's hardy troops,
Mounted on steeds unused to the restraint
Of curbs or bits, and fleeter than the winds.
Give but the word, we'll snatch this damsel up,
And bear her off.
Juba. Can such dishonest thoughts
Rise up in man! Wouldst thou seduce my youth
To do an act that would destroy mine honour?
Syph. Gods, I could tear my hair to hear you talk!
Honour's a fine imaginary notion,
That draws in raw and inexperienced men,
To real mischiefs, while they hunt a shadow.
Juba. Wouldst thou degrade thy prince into a ruffian?
Syph. The boasted ancestors of those great men,
Whose virtues you admire, were all such ruffians.
This dread of nations, this almighty Rome,
That comprehends in her wide empire's bounds
All under Heaven, was founded on a rape;
Your Scipios, Cæsars, Pompeys, and your Catos
(The gods on earth), are all the spurious blood
Of violated maids, of ravished Sabines.
Juba. Syphax, I fear that hoary head of thine
Abounds too much in our Numidian wiles.
Syph. Indeed, my prince, you want to know the world.
You have not read mankind; your youth admires
The throes and swellings of a Roman soul,
Cato's bold flights, the extravagance of virtue.
Juba. If knowledge of the world make men perfidious,
May Juba ever live in ignorance!
Syph. Go, go; you are young.
Juba. Gods, must I tamely bear
This arrogance unanswered! Thou art a traitor,
A false old traitor.
Syph. I have gone too far. [*Aside.*
Juba. Cato shall know the baseness of thy soul.
Syph. I must appease this storm, or perish in it. [*Aside.*
Young prince, behold these locks, that are grown white
Beneath a helmet in your father's battles.
Juba. Those locks shall ne'er protect thy insolence.
Syph. Must one rash word, the infirmity of age,
Throw down the merit of my better years?
This the reward of a whole life of service!
Curse on the boy! how steadily he hears me! [*Aside.*
Juba. Is it because the throne of my forefathers
Still stands unfilled, and that Numidia's crown
Hangs doubtful yet whose head it shall inclose,
Thou thus presumest to treat thy prince withscorn?
Syph. Why will you rive my heart with such expressions!
Does not old Syphax follow you to war?
What are his aims? Why does he load with darts
His trembling hand, and crush beneath a casque
His wrinkled brows? What is it he aspires to?
Is it not this? to shed the slow remains,
His last poor ebb of blood in your defence?
Juba. Syphax, no more! I would not hear you talk.
Syph. Not hear me talk! what, when my faith to Juba,
My royal master's son, is called in question?
My prince may strike me dead, and I'll be dumb;
But whilst I live I must not hold my tongue,
And languish out old age in his displeasure.
Juba. Thou knowest the way too well into my heart;
I do believe thee loyal to thy prince.
Syph. What greater instance can I give? I've offered
To do an action which my soul abhors,
And gain you whom you love, at any price.
Juba. Was this thy motive? I have been too hasty.
Syph. And 'tis for this my prince has called me traitor!
Juba. Sure thou mistakest; I did not call thee so.
Syph. You did, indeed, my prince, you called me traitor.
Nay, further, threatened you would complain to Cato.
Of what, my prince, would you complain to Cato?
That Syphax loved you, and would sacrifice
His life, nay, more, his honour, in your service?
Juba. Syphax, I know thou lovest me; but indeed
Thy zeal for Juba carried thee too far.
Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind's distinguishing perfection;

That aids and strengthens virtue where it meets her,
And imitates her actions where she is not:
It ought not to be sported with.
Syph. By Heavens,
I am ravished when you talk thus, though you chide me!
Alas! I have hitherto been used to think
A blind officious zeal to serve my king,
The ruling principle, that ought to burn
And quench all others in a subject's heart.
Happy the people who preserve their honour
By the same duties that oblige their prince!
Juba. Syphax, thou now beginnest to speak thyself.
Numidia's grown a scorn among the nations,
For breach of public vows. Our Punic faith
Is infamous, and branded to a proverb.
Syphax, we'll join our cares, to purge away
Our country's crimes, and clear her reputation.
Syph. Believe me, prince, you make old Syphax weep,
To hear you talk—but 'tis with tears of joy.
If e'er your father's crown adorn your brows,
Numidia will be blest by Cato's lectures.
Juba. Syphax, thy hand; we'll mutually forget
The warmth of youth, and frowardness of age;
Thy prince esteems thy worth, and loves thy person.
If e'er the sceptre come into my hand,
Syphax shall stand the second in my kingdom.
Syph. Why will you overwhelm my age with kindness?
My joy grows burdensome, I shan't support it.
Juba. Syphax, farewell. I'll hence, and try to find
Some blest occasion that may set me right
In Cato's thoughts. I would rather have that man
Approve my deeds, than worlds for my admirers.
[*Exit.*
Syph. Young men soon give, and soon forget affronts;
Old age is slow in both—A false old traitor!
These words, rash boy, may chance to cost thee dear.
My heart had still some foolish fondness for thee:
But hence, 'tis gone! I give it to the winds:
Cæsar, I am wholly thine.

Enter SEMPRONIUS.

All hail, Sempronius!
Well, Cato's senate is resolved to wait
The fury of a siege before it yields.
Sem. Syphax, we both were on the verge of fate:
Lucius declared for peace, and terms were offered
To Cato, by a messenger from Cæsar.
Should they submit ere our designs are ripe,
We both must perish in the common wreck,
Lost in the general undistinguished ruin.
Syph. But how stands Cato?
Sem. Thou hast seen mount Atlas:
Whilst storms and tempests thunder on its brows,
And oceans break their billows at its feet,
It stands unmoved, and glories in its height:
Such is that haughty man; his towering soul,
'Midst all the shocks and injuries of fortune,
Rises superior, and looks down on Cæsar.
Syph. But what's this messenger?
Sem. I have practised with him,
And found a means to let the victor know
That Syphax and Sempronius are his friends.
But let me now examine in my turn:
Is Juba fixed?
Syph. Yes—but it is to Cato.
I have tried the force of every reason on him,
Soothed and caressed; been angry, soothed again;
Laid safety, life, and interest in his sight.
But all are vain; he scorns them all for Cato.
Sem. Come, 'tis no matter; we shall do without him.
He'll make a pretty figure in a triumph,
And serve to trip before the victor's chariot.
Syphax, I now may hope thou hast forsook
Thy Juba's cause, and wishest Marcia mine.
Syph. May she be thine as fast as thou wouldst have her.
Sem. Syphax, I love that woman; though I curse
Her and myself, yet, spite of me, I love her.
Syph. Make Cato sure, and give up Utica,
Cæsar will ne'er refuse thee such a trifle.
But are thy troops prepared for a revolt?
Does the sedition catch from man to man,
And run among the ranks?
Sem. All, all is ready;
The factious leaders are our friends, that spread
Murmurs and discontents among the soldiers;
They count their toilsome marches, long fatigues,
Unusual fastings, and will bear no more
This medley of philosophy and war.
Within an hour they'll storm the senate-house.
Syph. Meanwhile I'll draw up my Numidian troops
Within the square, to exercise their arms,
And, as I see occasion, favour thee.
I laugh to see how your unshaken Cato
Will look aghast, while unforeseen destruction
Pours in upon him thus from every side.
So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden, the impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel through the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller, with wild surprise,
Sees the dry desart all around him rise,
And, smothered in the dusty whirlwind, dies.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter MARCUS *and* PORTIUS.

Marc. THANKS to my stars I have not ranged about
The wilds of life, ere I could find a friend;
Nature first pointed out my Portius to me,
And early taught me, by her secret force,
To love thy person, ere I knew thy merit,
Till what was instinct, grew up into friendship.
Por. Marcus, the friendships of the world are oft
Confederacies in vice, or leagues of pleasure;
Ours has severest virtue for its basis,
And such a friendship ends not but with life.
Marc. Portius, thou know'st my soul in all its weakness;
Then, prithee, spare me on its tender side.
Indulge me but in love, my other passions
Shall rise and fall by virtue's nicest rules.
Por. When love's well-timed, 'tis not a fault to love.
The strong, the brave, the virtuous, and the wise,
Sink in the soft captivity together.
I would not urge thee to dismiss thy passion,
(I know 'twere vain) but to suppress its force,
Till better times may make it look more graceful.
Marc. Alas! thou talk'st like one who never felt
The impatient throbs and longings of a soul,
That pants and reaches after distant good.
A lover does not live by vulgar time:
Believe me, Portius, in my Lucia's absence
Life hangs upon me, and becomes a burden;
And yet, when I behold the charming maid,
I'm ten times more undone; while hope and fear,
And grief, and rage, and love, rise up at once,
And with variety of pain distract me.
Por. What can thy Portius do to give thee help?
Marc. Portius, thou oft enjoy'st the fair-one's presence;
Then undertake my cause, and plead it to her
With all the strength and heat of eloquence,
Fraternal love and friendship can inspire.
Tell her thy brother languishes to death,
And fades away, and withers in his bloom;
That he forgets his sleep, and loaths his food;
That youth, and health, and war are joyless to him;
Describe his anxious days, and restless nights,
And all the torments that thou see'st me suffer.
Por. Marcus, I beg thee give me not an office
That suits with me so ill. Thou knowest my temper.
Marc. Wilt thou behold me sinking in my woes,
And wilt thou not reach out a friendly arm,
To raise me from amidst this plunge of sorrows?
Por. Marcus, thou can'st not ask what I'd refuse.
But here, believe me, I have a thousand reasons—
Marc. I know thou'lt say my passion's out of season,
That Cato's great example and misfortunes
Should both conspire to drive it from my thoughts.
But what's all this to one that loves like me?
O Portius, Portius, from my soul I wish
Thou did'st but know thyself what 'tis to love
Then wouldst thou pity and assist thy brother.
Por. What should I do! If I disclose my passion
Our friendship's at an end; if I conceal it,
The world will call me false to a friend and brother. [*Aside.*
Marc. But see where Lucia, at her wonted hour,
Amid the cool of yon high marble arch,
Enjoys the noon-day breeze! Observe her, Portius;
That face, that shape, those eyes, that heaven of beauty!
Observe her, well, and blame me if thou canst.
Por. She sees us, and advances——
Marc. I'll withdraw,
And leave you for a while. Remember, Portius,
Thy brother's life depends upon thy tongue.
[*Exit.*

Enter LUCIA.

Luc. Did I not see your brother Marcus here?
Why did he fly the place, and shun my presence?
Por. Oh, Lucia, language is too faint to shew
His rage of love; it preys upon his life;
He pines, he sickens, he despairs, he dies:
His passions, and his virtues lie confused,
And mixt together in so wild a tumult,
That the whole man is quite disfigured in him.
Heavens, would one think 'twere possible for love
To make such ravage in a noble soul!
Oh, Lucia, I'm distressed; my heart bleeds for him:
Even now, while thus I stand blest in thy presence,
A secret damp of grief comes o'er my thoughts,
And I'm unhappy, though thou smilest upon me.
Luc. How wilt thou guard thy honour, in the shock
Of love and friendship? Think betimes, my Portius,
Think how the nuptial tie, that might ensure
Our mutual bliss, would raise to such a height
Thy brother's grief, as might perhaps destroy him.
Por. Alas, poor youth! What dost thou think, my Lucia?
His generous, open, undesigning heart
Has begged his rival to solicit for him;
Then do not strike him dead with a denial;

But hold him up in life, and cheer his soul
With the faint glimmering of a doubtful hope;
Perhaps when we have passed these gloomy hours,
And weathered out the storm that beats upon us——
Luc. No, Portius, no; I see thy sister's tears,
Thy father's anguish, and thy brother's death,
In the pursuit of our ill-fated loves:
And, Portius, here I swear, to Heaven I swear,
To Heaven and all the powers that judge mankind,
Never to mix my plighted hands with thine,
While such a cloud of mischief hangs upon us!
But to forget our loves, and drive thee out
From all my thoughts as far—as I am able.
Por. What hast thou said! I'm thunderstruck—recall
Those hasty words, or I am lost for ever.
Luc. Has not the vow already passed my lips?
The gods have heard it, and 'tis sealed in Heaven.
May all the vengeance, that was ever poured
On perjured heads, o'erwhelm me, if I break it!
Por. Fixed in astonishment, I gaze upon thee,
Like one just blasted by a stroke from Heaven,
Who pants for breath, and stiffens, yet alive,
In dreadful looks; a monument of wrath!
Luc. At length I've acted my severest part;
I feel the woman breaking in upon me,
And melt about my heart; my tears will flow.
But, oh, I'll think no more! the hand of fate
Has torn thee from me, and I must forget thee.
Por. Hard-hearted, cruel maid!
Luc. Oh, stop those sounds,
Those killing sounds! Why dost thou frown upon me?
My blood runs cold, my heart forgets to heave,
And life itself goes out at thy displeasure.
The gods forbid us to indulge our loves;
But, oh! I cannot bear thy hate, and live.
Por. Talk not of love, thou never knew'st its force.
I've been deluded, led into a dream
Of fancied bliss. Oh, Lucia, cruel maid!
Thy dreadful vow, loaden with death, still sounds
In my stunned ears. What shall I say or do?
Quick let us part! Perdition's in thy presence,
And horror dwells about thee! Ha! she faints!
Wretch that I am, what has my rashness done!
Lucia, thou injured innocence! thou best
And loveliest of thy sex! awake, my Lucia,
Or Portius rushes on his sword to join thee.
—Her imprecations reach not to the tomb,
They shut not out society in death—
But ah! she moves, life wanders up and down
Through all her face, and lights up every charm.
Luc. Oh, Portius, was this well—to frown on her
That lives upon thy smiles? To call in doubt
The faith of one expiring at thy feet,
That loves thee more than ever woman loved?
—What do I say? My half-recovered sense
Forgets the vow in which my soul was bound.
Destruction stands betwixt us; we must part.
Por. Name not the word! my frighted thoughts run back,
And startle into madness at the sound.
Luc. What wouldst thou have me do? Consider well
The train of ills our love would draw behind it.
Think, Portius, think thou seest thy dying brother
Stabbed at his heart, and all besmeared with blood,
Storming at Heaven and thee! Thy awful sire
Sternly demands the cause, the accursed cause,
That robs him of his son: poor Marcia trembles,
Then tears her hair, and, frantic in her grief,
Calls out on Lucia. What could Lucia answer,
Or how stand up in such a scene of sorrow?
Por. To my confusion, and eternal grief,
I must approve the sentence that destroys me.
The mist, that hung upon my mind, clears up;
And now, athwart the terrors that thy vow
Has planted round thee, thou appear'st more fair,
More amiable, and risest in thy charms.
Loveliest of women! Heaven is in thy soul;
Beauty and virtue shine for ever round thee,
Brightening each other: thou art all divine.
Luc. Portius, no more; thy words shoot through my heart,
Melt my resolves, and turn me all to love.
Why are those tears of fondness in thy eyes?
Why heaves thy heart? Why swells thy soul with sorrow?
It softens me too much—farewell, my Portius;
Farewell, though death is in the word—for ever.
Por. Stay, Lucia, stay? What dost thou say? For ever?
Luc. Have I not sworn? If, Portius, thy success
Must throw thy brother on his fate, farewell—
Oh, how shall I repeat the word! for ever.
Por. Thus o'er the dying lamp the unsteady flame
Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
—Thou must not go, my soul still hovers o'er thee,
And can't get loose.
Luc. If the firm Portius shake
To hear of parting, think what Lucia suffers!
Por. 'Tis true, unruffled and serene, I've met
The common accidents of life; but here
Such an unlooked-for storm of ills falls on me,
It beats down all my strength. I cannot bear it.
We must not part.
Luc. What dost thou say? Not part!
Hast thou forgot the vow that I have made?
Are there not heavens, and gods, that thunder o'er us?
—But see, thy brother Marcus bends this way:
I sicken at the sight. Once more, farewell,
Farewell! and know thou wrong'st me, if thou think'st
Ever was love, or ever grief like mine.
[*Exit Lucia.*

Enter MARCUS.

Marc. Portius, what hopes? How stands she? Am I doomed
To life or death?
Por. What wouldst thou have me say?
Marc. What means this pensive posture? Thou appearest
Like one amazed and terrified.
Por. I've reason.
Marc. Thy down-cast looks, and thy disordered thoughts,
Tell me my fate. I ask not the success
My cause has found.
Por. I'm grieved I undertook it.
Marc. What? does the barbarous maid insult my heart,
My aching heart, and triumph in my pains?
That I could cast her from my thoughts for ever!
Por. Away, you're too suspicious in your griefs;
Lucia, though sworn never to think of love,
Compassionates your pains, and pities you.
Marc. Compassionates my pains, and pities me!
What is compassion, when 'tis void of love?
Fool that I was to chuse so cold a friend
To urge my cause!—Compassionates my pains!
Prithee, what art, what rhetoric didst thou use
To gain this mighty boon?—She pities me!
To one that asks the warm returns of love,
Compassion's cruelty, 'tis scorn, 'tis death——
Por. Marcus, no more; have I deserved this treatment?
Marc. What have I said! Oh, Portius, oh forgive me!
A soul, exasperated in ills, falls out
With every thing, its friend, itself—but, hah!
What means that shout, big with the sounds of war?
What new alarm?
Por. A second, louder yet,
Swells in the wind, and comes more full upon us.
Marc. Oh, for some glorious cause to fall in battle!
Lucia, thou hast undone me; thy disdain
Has broke my heart: 'tis death must give me ease.
Por. Quick, let us hence. Who knows if Cato's life
Stands sure? Oh, Marcus, I am warmed, my heart
Leaps at the trumpet's voice, and burns for glory.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS, *with the Leaders of the mutiny.*

Sem. At length the winds are raisod, the storm blows high;
Be it your care, my friends, to keep it up
In its full fury, and direct it right,
Till it has spent itself on Cato's head.
Mean-while I'll herd amongst his friends, and seem
One of the number, that whate'er arrive,
My friends and fellow-soldiers may be safe.
[*Exit.*
1 *Lead.* We are all safe, Sempronius is our friend.
Sempronius is as brave a man as Cato.
But hark! he enters. Bear up boldly to him:
Be sure you beat him down, and bind him fast.
This day will end our toils, and give us rest:
Fear nothing, for Sempronius is our friend.

Re-enter SEMPRONIUS, *with* CATO, LUCIUS, PORTIUS, *and* MARCUS.

Cato. Where are those bold intrepid sons of war,
That greatly turn their backs upon their foe,
And to their general send a brave defiance?
Sem. Curse on their dastard souls, they stand astonished! [*Aside.*
Cato. Perfidious men! And will you thus dishonour
Your past exploits, and sully all your wars?
Do you confess 'twas not a zeal for Rome,
Nor love of liberty, nor thirst of honour,
Drew you thus far; but hopes to share the spoil
Of conquered towns, and plundered provinces?
Fired with such motives, you do well to join
With Cato's foes, and follow Cæsar's banners.
Why did I 'scape the envenomed aspic's rage,
And all the fiery monsters of the desert,
To see this day? Why could not Cato fall
Without your guilt? Behold, ungrateful men,
Behold my bosom naked to your swords,
And let the man that's injured strike the blow.
Which of you all suspects that he is wronged?
Or thinks he suffers greater ills than Cato?
Am I distinguished from you but by toils,
Superior toils, and heavier weight of cares?
Painful pre-eminence!
Sem. By Heavens they droop!
Confusion to the villains! all is lost! [*Aside.*
Cato. Have you forgotten Lybia's burning waste,
Its barren rocks, parched earth, and hills of sand,
Its tainted air, and all its broods of poison?
Who was the first to explore the untrodden path,
When life was hazarded in every step?
Or, fainting in the long laborious march,
When, on the banks of an unlooked for stream,
You sunk the river with repeated draughts,
Who was the last of all your host that thirsted?
Sem. If some penurious source by chance appeared,
Scanty of waters, when you scooped it dry,
And offered the full helmet up to Cato,
Did he not dash the untasted moisture from him?
Did he not lead you through the mid-day sun,
And clouds of dust? Did not his temples glow
In the same sultry winds, and scorching heats?
Cato. Hence, worthless men! hence! and complain to Cæsar,
You could not undergo the toil of war,
Nor bear the hardships that your leader bore.

Luc. See, Cato, see the unhappy men; they weep!
Fear and remorse, and sorrow for their crime,
Appear in every look, and plead for mercy.
Cato. Learn to be honest men, give up your leaders,
And pardon shall descend to all the rest,
Sem. Cato, commit these wretches to my care:
First let them each be broken on the rack,
Then, with what life remains, impaled, and left
To writhe at leisure round the bloody stake;
There let them hang, and taint the southern wind.
The partners of their crime will learn obedience,
When they look up, and see their fellow-traitors
Stuck on a fork, and blackening in the sun.
Luc. Sempronius, why, why wilt thou urge the fate
Of wretched men?
Sem. How! wouldst thou clear rebellion?
Lucius (good man) pities the poor offenders,
That would imbrue their hands in Cato's blood!
Cato. Forbear, Sempronius!—see they suffer death,
But, in their deaths, remember they are men;
Strain not the laws to make their tortures grievous.
Lucius, the base degenerate age requires
Severity, and justice in its rigour:
This awes an impious, bold, offending world,
Commands obedience, and gives force to laws.
When, by just vengeance, guilty mortals perish,
The gods behold the punishment with pleasure,
And lay the uplifted thunderbolt aside.
Sem. Cato, I execute thy will with pleasure.
Cato. Mean-while we'll sacrifice to Liberty.
Remember, O my friends! the laws, the rights,
The generous plan of power delivered down
From age to age, by your renowned forefathers
(So dearly bought, the price of so much blood):
Oh, let it never perish in your hands!
But piously transmit it to your children.
Do thou, great Liberty, inspire our souls,
And make our lives, in thy possession, happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.
[*Exeunt Cato, &c.*
1 *Lead.* Sempronius, you have acted like yourself.
One would have thought you had been half in earnest.
Sem. Villain, stand off, base, grovelling, worthless wretches,
Mongrels in faction, poor faint-hearted traitors!
2 *Lead.* Nay, now you carry it too far, Sempronius;
Throw off the mask; there are none here but friends.
Sem. Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
They're thrown neglected by: but if it fails,
They are sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.
Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
To sudden death!
1 *Lead.* Nay, since it comes to this—
Sem. Dispatch them quick, but first pluck out their tongues,
Lest, with their dying breath, they sow sedition.
[*Exeunt guards, with their leaders.*

Enter SYPHAX.

Syph. Our first design, my friend, has proved abortive:
Still there remains an after-game to play.
My troops are mounted; their Numidian steeds
Snuff up the wind, and long to scour the desert:
Let but Sempronius head us in our flight,
We'll force the gate where Marcus keeps his guard,
And hew down all that would oppose our passage.
A day will bring us into Cæsar's camp.
Sem. Confusion! I have failed of half my purpose:
Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind!
Syph. How! will Sempronius turn a woman's slave?
Sem. Think not thy friend can ever feel the soft
Unmanly warmth and tenderness of love.
Syphax, I long to clasp that haughty maid,
And bend her stubborn virtue to my passion:
When I have gone thus far, I'd cast her off.
Syph. Well said! that's spoken like thyself, Sempronius.
What hinders, then, but that thou find her out,
And hurry her away by manly force?
Sem. But how to gain admission? For access
Is given to none but Juba, and her brothers.
Syph. Thou shalt have Juba's dress, and Juba's guards;
The doors will open when Numidia's prince
Seems to appear before the slaves that watch them.
Sem. Heavens, what a thought is there! Marcia's my own!
How will my bosom swell with anxious joy,
When I behold her struggling in my arms,
With glowing beauty, and disordered charms,
While fear and anger, with alternate grace,
Pant in her breast, and vary in her face!
So Pluto seized of Proserpine, conveyed
To hell's tremendous gloom the affrighted maid:
There grimly smiled, pleased with the beauteous prize,
Nor envied Jove his sunshine and his skies.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter LUCIA *and* MARCIA.

Luc. Now tell me, Marcia, tell me from thy soul,
If thou believest 'tis possible for woman
To suffer greater ills than Lucia suffers?
Mar. Oh, Lucia, Lucia, might my big swoln heart,
Vent all its griefs, and give a loose to sorrow,
Marcia could answer thee in sighs, keep pace
With all thy woes, and count out tear for tear.
Luc. I know thou art doomed alike to be beloved
By Juba, and thy father's friend, Sempronius:
But which of these has power to charm like Portius!
Mar. Still I must beg thee not to name Sempronius;
Lucia, I like not that loud boisterous man;
Juba, to all the bravery of a hero,
Adds softest love, and more than female sweetness;
Juba might make the proudest of our sex,
Any of woman kind, but Marcia, happy.
Luc. And why not Marcia? Come, you strive in vain
To hide your thoughts from one who knows too well
The inward glowings of a heart in love.
Mar. While Cato lives, his daughter has no right
To love or hate, but as his choice directs.
Luc. But should this father give you to Sempronius?
Mar. I dare not think he will: but if he should—
Why wilt thou add, to all the griefs I suffer,
Imaginary ills, and fancied tortures?
I hear the sound of feet! They march this way:
Let us retire, and try if we can drown
Each softer thought in sense of present danger:
When love once pleads admission to our hearts,
In spite of all the virtues we can boast,
The woman, that deliberates, is lost. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SEMPRONIUS, *dressed like* JUBA, *with Numidian guards.*

Sem. The deer is lodged, I've tracked her to her covert.
Be sure you mind the word, and, when I give it,
Rush in at once, and seize upon your prey.
Let not her cries or tears have force to move you.
——How will the young Numidian rave to see
His mistress lost! If ought could glad my soul,
Beyond the enjoyment of so bright a prize,
'Twould be to torture that young, gay barbarian.
—But hark! what noise! Death to my hopes! 'tis he,
'Tis Juba's self! there is but one way left——
He must be murdered, and a passage cut
Through those his guards——Ha! dastards, do you tremble;——
Or act like men, or by yon azure heaven——

Enter JUBA.

Juba. What do I see? Who's this, that dares usurp
The guards and habit of Numidia's prince?
Sem. One that was born to scourge thy arrogance,
Presumptuous youth!
Juba. What can this mean? Sempronius!
Sem. My sword shall answer thee. Have at thy heart!
Juba. Nay, then, beware thy own, proud, barbarous man.
[*Sem. falls. His guards surrender.*
Sem. Curse on my stars! Am I then doomed to fall
By a boy's hand, disfigured in a vile
Numidian dress, and for a worthless woman?
Gods, I'm distracted! This my close of life!
Oh! for a peal of thunder, that would make
Earth, sea, and air, and heaven, and Cato, tremble!
[*Dies.*
Juba. With what a spring his furious soul broke loose,
And left the limbs still quivering on the ground!
Hence let us carry off those slaves to Cato,
That we may there at length unravel all
This dark design, this mystery of fate.
[*Exit Juba, with prisoners, &c.*

Enter LUCIA *and* MARCIA.

Luc. Sure 'twas the clash of swords: my troubled heart
Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows,
It throbs with fear, and aches at every sound.
Oh, Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake!—
I die away with horror at the thought.
Mar. See, Lucia, see! here's blood! here's blood and murder!
Ha! a Numidian! Heaven preserve the prince!
The face lies muffled up within the garment,
But, ha! death to my sight! a diadem,
And royal robes! O gods! 'tis he, 'tis he!
Juba, the loveliest youth that ever warmed
A virgin's heart, Juba lies dead before us!
Luc. Now, Marcia, now call up to thy assistance
Thy wonted strength and constancy of mind!
Thou can'st not put it to a greater trial.
Mar. Lucia, look there, and wonder at my patience;
Have I not cause to rave, and beat my breast,
To rend my heart with grief, and run distracted!
Luc. What can I think or say to give thee comfort?

Mar. Talk not of comfort! 'tis for lighter ills:
Behold a sight that strikes all comfort dead!

Enter JUBA *listening.*

I will indulge my sorrows, and give way
To all the pangs and fury of despair;
That man, that best of men, deserved it from me.
Juba. What do I hear? And was the false Sempronius
That best of men? Oh, had I fallen like him,
And could have been thus mourned, I had been happy.
Luc. Here will I stand, companion in thy woes,
And help thee with my tears; when I behold
A loss like thine, I half forget my own.
Mar. 'Tis not in fate to ease my tortured breast;
This empty world, to me a joyless desert,
Has nothing left to make poor Marcia happy.
Juba. I'm on the rack! Was he so near her heart?
Mar. Oh, he was all made up of love and charms!
Whatever maid could wish, or man admire:
Delight of every eye; when he appeared,
A secret pleasure gladdened all that saw him;
But when he talked, the proudest Roman blushed
To hear his virtues, and old age grew worse.
Juba. I shall run mad——
Mar. Oh, Juba! Juba! Juba!
Juba. What means that voice? Did she not call on Juba?
Mar. Why do I think on what he was! he's dead!
He's dead, and never knew how much I loved him.
Lucia, who knows but his poor bleeding heart,
Amidst its agonies, remembered Marcia,
And the last words he uttered, called me cruel!
Alas! he knew not, hapless youth, he knew not
Marcia's whole soul was full of love and Juba!
Juba. Where am I? Do I live? or am indeed
What Marcia thinks? All is Elysium round me!
Mar. Ye dear remains of the most loved of men,
Nor modesty nor virtue here forbid
A last embrace, while thus——
Juba. See, Marcia, see,
[*Throwing himself before her.*
The happy Juba lives! He lives to catch
That dear embrace, and to return it too
With mutual warmth and eagerness of love.
Mar. With pleasure and amaze I stand transported!
Sure 'tis a dream! dead and alive at once!
If thou art Juba, who lies there?
Juba. A wretch,
Disguised like Juba on a cursed design.
The tale is long, nor have I heard it out:
Thy father knows it all. I could not bear
To leave thee in the neighbourhood of death,
But flew, in all the haste of love, to find thee;
I found thee weeping, and confess this once,
Am rapt with joy to see my Marcia's tears.
Mar. I've been surprised in an unguarded hour,
But must not now go back; the love, that lay
Half smothered in my breast, has broke through all
Its weak restraints, and burns in its full lustre.
I cannot, If I would, conceal it from thee.
Juba. I'm lost in ecstacy! and dost thou love,
Thou charming maid?——
Mar. And dost thou live to ask it?
Juba. This, this is life indeed! life worth preserving,
Such life as Juba never felt 'till now!
Mar. Believe me, prince, before I thought thee dead,
I did not know myself how much I loved thee.
Juba. Oh, fortunate mistake!
Mar. O happy Marcia!
Juba. My joy, my best beloved, my only wish!
How shall I speak the transport of my soul!
Mar. Lucia, thy arm. Oh, let me rest upon it!
The vital blood, that had forsook my heart,
Returns again in such tumultuous tides,
It quite o'ercomes me. Lead to my apartment—
Oh, prince! I blush to think what I have said,
But fate has wrested the confession from me;
Go on, and prosper in the paths of honour.
Thy virtue will excuse my passion for thee,
And make the gods propitious to our love.
[*Exeunt Mar. and Luc.*
Juba. I am so blest, I fear 'tis all a dream.
Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all
Thy past unkindness: I absolve my stars.
What though Numidia add her conquered towns
And provinces to swell the victor's triumph,
Juba will never at his fate repine:
Let Cæsar have the world, if Marcia's mine
[*Exit.*

A march at a distance.—Enter CATO *and* LUCIUS.

Luc. I stand astonished! What, the bold Sempronius,
That still broke foremost through the crowd of patriots,
As with a hurricane of zeal transported,
And virtuous even to madness—
Cato. Trust me, Lucius,
Our civil discords have produced such crimes,
Such monstrous crimes! I am surprised at nothing.
—Oh, Lucius, I am sick of this bad world!
The day-light and the sun grow painful to me.

Enter PORTIUS.

But see where Portius comes: what means this haste?
Why are thy looks thus changed?
Por. My heart is grieved,
I bring such news as will affect my father.

Cato. Has Cæsar shed more Roman blood?
Por. Not so.
The traitor Syphax, as within the square
He exercised his troops, the signal given,
Flew off at once, with his Numidian horse,
To the south gate, where Marcus holds the watch;
I saw, and called to stop him, but in vain:
He tossed his arm aloft, and proudly told me,
He would not stay and perish like Sempronius.
Cato. Perfidious man! But haste, my son, and see
Thy brother Marcus acts a Roman's part.
[*Exit Por.*
—Lucius, the torrent bears too hard upon me:
Justice gives way to force: the conquered world
Is Cæsar's! Cato has no business in it.
Luc. While pride, oppression, and injustice reign,
The world will still demand her Cato's presence.
In pity to mankind submit to Cæsar,
And reconcile thy mighty soul to life!
Cato. Would Lucius have me live to swell the number
Of Cæsar's slaves, or, by a base submission,
Give up the cause of Rome, and own a tyrant?
Luc. The victor never will impose on Cato
Ungenerous terms. His enemies confess
The virtues of humanity are Cæsar's.
Cato. Curse on his virtues! they have undone his country.
Such popular humanity is treason——
But see young Juba; the good youth appears,
Full of the guilt of his perfidious subjects!
Luc. Alas, poor prince! his fate deserves compassion.

Enter JUBA.

Juba. I blush, and am confounded to appear
Before thy presence, Cato.
Cato. What's thy crime?
Juba. I am a Numidian.
Cato. And a brave one too. Thou hast a Roman soul.
Juba. Hast thou not heard of my false countrymen?
Cato. Alas, young prince! falsehood and fraud shoot up in every soil,
The product of all climes—Rome has its Cæsars.
Juba. 'Tis generous thus to comfort the distressed.
Cato. 'Tis just to give applause where 'tis deserved;
Thy virtue, prince, has stood the test of fortune,
Like purest gold, that, tortured in the furnace,
Comes out more bright, and brings forth all its weight.
Juba. What shall I answer thee? My ravished heart
Overflows with sacred joy: I would rather gain
Thy praise, O Cato! than Numidia's empire.

Enter PORTIUS.

Por. Misfortune on misfortune! grief on grief!
My brother Marcus——
Cato. Ha! what has he done?
Has he forsook his post? Has he given way?
Did he look tamely on, and let them pass?
Por. Scarce had I left my father, but I met him
Borne on the shields of his surviving soldiers,
Breathless and pale, and covered o'er with wounds.
Long, at the head of his few faithful friends,
He stood the shock of a whole host of foes;
Till, obstinately brave, and bent on death,
Oppressed with multitudes, he greatly fell.
Cato. I am satisfied.
Por. Nor did he fall before
His sword had pierced through the false heart of Syphax.
Yonder he lies. I saw the hoary traitor
Grin in the pangs of death, and bite the ground,
Cato. Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty!
—Portius, when I am dead, be sure you place
His urn near mine.
Por. Long may they keep asunder!
Luc. Oh, Cato, arm thy soul with all its patience;
See where the corpse of thy dead son approaches!
The citizens and senators, alarmed,
Have gathered round it, and attend it weeping.

CATO, *meeting the corpse.*

Cato. Welcome, my son! Here lay him down, my friends,
Full in my sight, that I may view at leisure
The bloody corse, and count those glorious wounds.
—How beautiful is death, when earned by virtue!
Who would not be that youth? What pity is it
That we can die but once to serve our country!
—Why sits this sadness on your brows, my friends?
I should have blushed if Cato's house had stood
Secure, and flourished in a civil war.
—Portius, behold thy brother, and remember
Thy life is not thy own, when Rome demands it.
Juba. Was ever man like this!
Cato. Alas, my friends,
Why mourn you thus! let not a private loss
Afflict your hearts. 'Tis Rome requires our tears,
The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
And set the nations free, Rome is no more!
Oh, liberty! Oh, virtue! Oh, my country!
Juba. Behold that upright man! Rome fills his eyes
With tears, that flowed not o'er his own dead son.
[*Aside.*

Cato. Whate'er the Roman virtue has subdued,
The sun's whole course, the day and year are Cæsar's:
For him the self-devoted Decii died,
The Fabii fell, and the great Scipios conquered;
Even Pompey fought for Cæsar. Oh, my friends,
How is the toil of fate, the work of ages,
The Roman empire, fallen! Oh, cursed ambition!
Fallen into Cæsar's hand: Our great forefathers
Had left him nought to conquer but his country.
Juba. While Cato lives, Cæsar will blush to see
Mankind enslaved, and be ashamed of empire.
Cato. Cæsar ashamed! has he not seen Pharsalia!
Luc. Cato, 'tis time thou save thyself and us.
Cato. Lose not a thought on me; I am out of danger;
Heaven will not leave me in the victor's hand.
Cæsar shall never say he conquered Cato.
But, oh, my friends! your safety fills my heart
With anxious thoughts; a thousand secret terrors
Rise in my soul. How shall I save my friends?
'Tis now, O Cæsar, I begin to fear thee!
Luc. Cæsar has mercy if we ask it of him.
Cato. Then ask it, I conjure you! let him know
Whate'er was done against him, Cato did it.
And, if you please, that I request it of him,
That I myself, with tears, request it of him,
The virtue of my friends may pass unpunished.
Juba, my heart is troubled for thy sake.
Should I advise thee to regain Numidia,
Or seek the conqueror?—
Juba. If I forsake thee
Whilst I have life, may Heaven abandon Juba!
Cato. Thy virtues, prince, if I foresee aright,
Will one day make thee great; at Rome hereafter,
'Twill be no crime to have been Cato's friend.
Portius, draw near: my son, thou oft hast seen
Thy sire engaged in a corrupted state,
Wrestling with vice and faction: now thou see'st me
Spent, overpowered, despairing of success;
Let me advise thee to retreat betimes
To thy paternal seat, the Sabine field,
Where the great Censor toiled with his own hands,
And all our frugal ancestors were blessed
In humble virtues, and a rural life;
There live retired, pray for the peace of Rome;
Content thyself to be obscurely good.
When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
The post of honour is a private station.
Por. I hope my father does not recommend
A life to Portius, that he scorns himself?
Cato. Farewell, my friends! If there be any of you,
Who dare not trust the victor's clemency,
Know there are ships prepared by my command
(Their sails already opening to the winds),
That shall convey you to the wished-for port.
Is there aught else, my friends, I can do for you?
The conqueror draws near. Once more farewell!
If e'er we meet hereafter, we shall meet
In happier climes, and on a safer shore,
Where Cæsar never shall approach us more.
[*Pointing to his dead son.*
There, the brave youth, with love of virtue fired,
Who greatly in his country's cause expired,
Shall know he conquered. The firm patriot there,
Who made the welfare of mankind his care,
Though still by faction, vice, and fortune crost,
Shall find the generous labour was not lost.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

CATO *solus, sitting in a thoughtful posture: in his hand Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul. A drawn sword on the table by him.*

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well.
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a Power above,
(And that there is all Nature cries aloud,
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy.
But when! or where—this world was made for Cæsar.
I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*
Thus I am doubly armed: my death and life,
My bane and antidote, are both before me.
This in a moment brings me to an end;
But this informs me I shall never die.
The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,

But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.
What means this heaviness that hangs upon me?
This lethargy that creeps through all my senses?
Nature oppressed, and harrassed out with care,
Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour her,
That my awakened soul may take her flight,
Renewed in all her strength, and fresh with life,
An offering fit for Heaven. Let guilt or fear
Disturb man's rest; Cato knows neither of them;
Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die.

Enter PORTIUS.

But, ha! who's this? my son! Why this intrusion?
Were not my orders that I would be private?
Why am I disobeyed?

Por. Alas, my father!
What means this sword, this instrument of death?
Let me convey it hence.

Cato. Rash youth, forbear!

Por. Oh, let the prayers, the intreaties of your friends,
Their tears, their common danger, wrest it from you!

Cato. Wouldst thou betray me? Wouldst thou give me up
A slave, a captive into Cæsar's hands?
Retire, and learn obedience to a father,
Or know, young man!—

Por. Look not thus sternly on me;
You know I'd rather die than disobey you.

Cato. 'Tis well! again I'm master of myself.
Now, Cæsar, let thy troops beset our gates,
And bar each avenue; thy gathering fleets
O'erspread the sea, and stop up every port;
Cato shall open to himself a passage,
And mock thy hopes——

Por. Oh, sir! forgive your son,
Whose grief hangs heavy on him. Oh, my father!
How am I sure it is not the last time
I e'er shall call you so! Be not displeased,
Oh, be not angry with me whilst I weep,
And, in the anguish of my heart, beseech you
To quit the dreadful purpose of your soul!

Cato. Thou hast been ever good and dutiful. [*Embracing him.*
Weep not, my son, all will be well again;
The righteous gods, whom I have sought to please,
Will succour Cato, and preserve his children.

Por. Your words give comfort to my drooping heart.

Cato. Portius, thou may'st rely upon my conduct:
Thy father will not act what misbecomes him.
But go, my son, and see if aught be wanting
Among thy father's friends; see them embarked,
And tell me if the winds and seas befriend them.
My soul is quite weighed down with care, and asks
The soft refreshment of a moment's sleep.

Por. My thoughts are more at ease, my heart revives. [*Exit Cato.*

Enter MARCIA.

Oh, Marcia! Oh, my sister, still there is hope!
Our father will not cast away a life,
So needful to us all and to his country.
He is retired to rest, and seems to cherish
Thoughts full of peace. He has dispatched me hence,
With orders that bespeak a mind composed,
And studious for the safety of his friends.
Marcia, take care that none disturb his slumbers. [*Exit.*

Mar. Oh, ye immortal powers! that guard the just,
Watch round his couch, and soften his repose;
Banish his sorrows, and becalm his soul
With easy dreams; remember all his virtues,
And shew mankind that goodness is your care!

Enter LUCIA.

Luc. Where is your father, Marcia, where is Cato?

Mar. Lucia, speak low, he is retired to rest.
Lucia, I feel a gentle dawning hope
Rise in my soul. We shall be happy still.

Luc. Alas! I tremble when I think on Cato!
In every view, in every thought, I tremble!
Cato is stern and awful as a god;
He knows not how to wink at human frailty,
Or pardon weakness that he never felt.

Mar. Though stern and awful to the foes of Rome,
He is all goodness, Lucia, always mild,
Compassionate and gentle to his friends.
Filled with domestic tenderness, the best,
The kindest father I have ever found him,
Easy and good, and bounteous to my wishes.

Luc. 'Tis his consent alone can make us blessed:
Marcia, we both are equally involved
In the same intricate, perplexed distress.
The cruel hand of fate, that has destroyed
Thy brother Marcus, whom we both lament—

Mar. And ever shall lament; unhappy youth!

Luc. Has set my soul at large, and now I stand
Loose of my vow. But who knows Cato's thoughts?
Who knows how yet he may dispose of Portius,
Or how he has determined of thyself?

Mar. Let him but live, commit the rest to Heaven.

Enter LUCIUS.

Lucius. Sweet are the slumbers of the virtuous man!
Oh, Marcia, I have seen thy godlike father!
Some power invisible supports his soul,
And bears it up in all its wonted greatness.
A kind refreshing sleep is fallen upon him:
I saw him stretched at ease, his fancy lost

In pleasing dreams; as I drew near his couch,
He smiled, and cried, Cæsar, thou can's't not hurt me.
Mar. His mind still labours with some dreadful thought.
Lucius. Lucia, why all this grief, these floods of sorrow?
Dry up thy tears, my child; we all are safe
While Cato lives—his presence will protect us.

Enter JUBA.

Juba. Lucius, the horsemen are returned from viewing
The number, strength, and posture of our foes,
Who now encamp within a short hour's march;
On the high point of yon bright western tower
We ken them from afar; the setting sun
Plays on their shining arms and burnished helmets,
And covers all the field with gleams of fire.
Lucius. Marcia, 'tis time we should awake thy father;
Cæsar is still disposed to give us terms,
And waits at distance till he hears from Cato.

Enter PORTIUS.

Portius, thy looks speak somewhat of importance.
What tidings dost thou bring? Methinks I see
Unusual gladness sparkling in thy eyes.
Por. As I was hasting to the port, where now
My father's friends, impatient for a passage,
Accuse the lingering winds, a sail arrived
From Pompey's son, who through the realms of Spain
Calls out for vengeance on his father's death,
And rouses the whole nation up to arms.
Were Cato at their head, once more might Rome
Assert her rights, and claim her liberty.
But, hark! what means that groan! Oh, give me way,
And let me fly into my father's presence. [*Exit.*
Lucius. Cato, amidst his slumbers, thinks on Rome,
And in the wild disorder of his soul
Mourns o'er his country. Ha! a second groan—
Heaven guard us all!—
Mar. Alas! 'tis not the voice
Of one who sleeps; 'tis agonizing pain,
'Tis death is in that sound.

Re-enter PORTIUS.

Por. Oh, sight of woe!
Oh, Marcia, what we feared is come to pass!
Cato is fallen upon his sword.
Lucius. Oh, Portius,
Hide all the horrors of thy mournful tale,
And let us guess the rest.
Por. I've raised him up,
And placed him in his chair, where, pale and faint,
He gasps for breath, and, as his life flows from him,
Demands to see his friends. His servants weeping,
Obsequious to his order, bear him hither.
Mar. Oh, Heaven! assist me in this dreadful hour,
To pay the last sad duties to my father!
Juba. These are thy triumphs, thy exploit, O Cæsar!
Lucius. Now is Rome fallen indeed!

CATO *brought in on a chair.*

Cato. Here set me down—
Portius, come near me—Are my friends embarked?
Can any thing be thought of for their service?
Whilst I yet live, let me not live in vain.
Oh, Lucius, art thou here? Thou art too good—
Let this our friendship live between our children;
Make Portius happy in thy daughter Lucia.
Alas! poor man, he weeps! Marcia, my daughter—
Oh, bend me forward! Juba loves thee, Marcia.
A senator of Rome, while Rome survived,
Would not have matched his daughter with a king,
But Cæsar's arms have thrown down all distinction;
Whoe'er is brave and virtuous is a Roman—
I'm sick to death—Oh, when shall I get loose
From this vain world, the abode of guilt and sorrow!
And yet, methinks, a beam of light breaks in
On my departing soul. Alas, I fear
I've been too hasty. Oh, ye powers, that search
The heart of man, and weigh his inmost thoughts,
If I have done amiss, impute it not!
The best may err, but you are good, and—Oh!
[*Dies.*
Lucius. There fled the greatest soul that ever warmed
A Roman breast; oh, Cato! oh, my friend!
Thy will shall be religiously observed.
But let us bear this awful corpse to Cæsar,
And lay it in his sight, that it may stand
A fence betwixt us and the victor's wrath;
Cato, though dead, shall still protect his friends.
From hence, let fierce contending nations know
What dire effects from civil discord flow:
'Tis this that shakes our country with alarms,
And gives up Rome a prey to Roman arms,
Produces fraud, and cruelty, and strife,
And robs the guilty world of Cato's life.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

DISTREST MOTHER.

BY

PHILIPS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
PYRRHUS, *son of Achilles.*	ANDROMACHE, *Hector's widow.*
PHŒNIX, *counsellor to Pyrrhus.*	CEPHISA, *confidante to Andromache.*
ORESTES, *son of Agamemnon.*	HERMIONE, *daughter to Menelaus.*
PYLADES, *friend to Orestes.*	CLEONE, *confidante to Hermione.*
	Attendants on Pyrrhus and Orestes, &c.

Scene—A great hall in the court of Pyrrhus, at Buthrotos, the capital city of Epirus.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of Pyrrhus.*

Enter ORESTES, PYLADES, *and Attendants.*

Orest. O PYLADES! what's life without a friend?
At sight of thee my gloomy soul cheers up;
My hopes revive, and gladness dawns within me.
After an absence of six tedious moons,
How could I hope to find my Pylades,
My joy, my comfort, on this fatal shore?
Even in the court of Pyrrhus! in these realms,
These hated realms, so cross to all my wishes.
Oh, my brave friend! may no blind stroke of fate
Divide us more, and tear me from myself.

Pyl. O prince! O my Orestes! O my friend!—
Thus let me speak the welcome of my heart.
[*Embracing.*
Since I have gained this unexpected meeting,
Blest be the powers who barred my way to Greece,
And kept me here, e'er since the unhappy day,
When warring winds (Epirus full in view)
Sundered our barks on the loud, stormy main.

Orest. It was, indeed, a morning full of horror!

Pyl. A thousand boding cares have racked my soul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourned
The fatal ills, in which your life's involved,
And grudged you dangers which I could not share.
I feared to what extremities the black despair,
That preyed upon your mind, might have betrayed you,
And lest the gods, in pity to your woes,
Should hear your prayers, and take the life you loathed.
But now with joy I see you!——The retinue,
And numerous followers, that surround you here,
Speak better fortunes, and a mind disposed
To relish life.

Orest. Alas, my friend, who knows
The destiny to which I stand reserved!
I come in search of an inhuman fair,
And live or die, as she decrees my fate.

Pyl. You much surprise me, prince!—I thought you cured
Of your unpitied, unsuccessful passion.
Why, in Epirus, should you hope to find
Hermione less cruel, than at Sparta?
I thought her pride, and the disdainful manner
In which she treated all your constant sufferings,
Had broke your fetters, and assured your freedom:
Ashamed of your repulse, and slighted vows,
You hated her; you talked of her no more:
Prince, you deceived me.

Orest. I deceived myself.
Do not upbraid the unhappy man, that loves thee.
Thou know'st I never hid my passion from thee;
Thou saw'st it in its birth and in its progress;
And when at last the hoary king, her father,
Great Menelaus, gave away his daughter,
His lovely daughter, to the happy Pyrrhus,
The avenger of his wrongs, thou sawest my grief,
My torture, my despair; and how I dragged,
From sea to sea, a heavy chain of woes.
O Pylades! my heart has bled within me,
To see thee, prest with sorrows not thy own,
Still wandering with me like a banished man!
Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
To temper the wild transports of my mind,
And save me from myself.

Pyl. Why thus unkind?
Why will you envy me the pleasing task
Of generous love, and sympathizing friendship?

Orest. Thou miracle of truth—but hear me on.
When in the midst of my disastrous fate,
I thought how the divine Hermione,
Deaf to my vows, regardless of my plaints,
Gave up herself, in all her charms, to Pyrrhus;
Thou mayest remember, I abhorred her name,
Strove to forget her and repay her scorn.
I made my friends, and even myself, believe
My soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,
That all the malice of my heart was love.
Triumphing thus, and yet a captive still,
In Greece I landed: and in Greece I found
The assembled princes all alarmed with fears,
In which their common safety seemed concerned.
I joined them: for I hoped that war and glory
Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts:
And, that my shattered soul, impaired with grief,
Once more would reassume its wonted vigour,
And every idle passion quit my breast.

Pyl. The thought was worthy Agamemnon's son.

Orest. But see the strange perverseness of my stars,
Which throws me on the rock I strove to shun!
The jealous chiefs, and all the states of Greece,
With one united voice complain of Pyrrhus;
That now, forgetful of the promise given,
And mindless of his godlike father's fate,
Astyanax he nurses in his court;
Astyanax, the young, surviving hope
Of ruined Troy; Astyanax, descended
From a long race of kings; great Hector's son.

Pyl. A name still dreadful in the ears of Greece!
But, prince, you'll cease to wonder why the child
Lives thus protected in the court of Pyrrhus,
When you shall hear, the bright Andromache,
His lovely captive, charms him from his purpose:
The mother's beauty guards the helpless son.

Orest. Your tale confirms what I have heard; and hence
Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival wooes
Another partner to his throne and bed,
Hermione may still be mine. Her father,
The injured Menelaus, thinks already
His daughter slighted, and the intended nuptials
Too long delayed. I heard his loud complaints
With secret pleasure; and was glad to find
The ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
And all my wrongs avenged in her disgrace.

Pyl. Oh, may you keep your just resentments warm!

Orest. Resentments! Oh, my friend, too soon I found
They grew not out of hatred! I'm betrayed:
I practice on myself; and fondly plot
My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
I canvassed all the suffrages of Greece:
And here I come their sworn ambassador,
To speak their jealousies, and claim this boy.

Pyl. Pyrrhus will treat your embassy with scorn.
Full of Achilles, his redoubted sire,
Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce;
Made up of passions: Will he then be swayed,
And give to death the son of her he loves?

Orest. Oh, would he render up Hermione,
And keep Astyanax, I should be blest!
He must; he shall. Hermione is my life,
My soul, my rapture!—I'll no longer curb
The strong desire that hurries me to madness:
I'll give a loose to love; I'll bear her hence;
I'll tear her from his arms; I'll—O, ye gods!
Give me Hermione, or let me die!——
But tell me, Pylades; how stand my hopes?
Is Pyrrhus still enamoured with her charms?
Or dost thou think he'll yield me up the prize,
The dear, dear prize, which he has ravished from me?

Pyl. I dare not flatter your fond hopes so far;
The king, indeed, cold to the Spartan princess,
Turns all his passion to Andromache,
Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain,
With interwoven love and rage, he sues
The charming captive, obstinately cruel.
Oft he alarms her for her child confined
Apart; and when her tears begin to flow,
As soon he stops them, and recalls his threats.
Hermione a thousand times has seen
His ill-requited vows return to her;
And takes his indignation all for love.
What can be gathered from a man so various?

He may, in the disorder of his soul,
Wed her he hates, and punish her he loves.
Orest. But tell me how the wronged Hermione
Brooks her slow nuptials, and dishonoured charms?
Pyl. Hermione would fain be thought to scorn
Her wavering lover, and disdain his falsehood;
But, spite of all her pride and conscious beauty,
She mourns in secret her neglected charms,
And oft has made me privy to her tears:
Still threatens to be gone; yet still she stays;
And sometimes sighs, and wishes for Orestes.
Orest. Ah, were those wishes from her heart, my friend!
I would fly in transport—— [*Flourish within.*
Pyl. Hear! the king approaches
To give you audience. Speak your embassy
Without reserve: urge the demands of Greece;
And, in the name of all the kings, require,
That Hector's son be given into your hands.
Pyrrhus, instead of granting what they ask,
To speed his love and win the Trojan dame,
Will make it merit to preserve her son.
But, see; he comes.
Orest. Meanwhile, my Pylades,
Go, and dispose Hermione to see
Her lover, who is come thus far, to throw
Himself, in all his sorrows, at her feet.

Enter PYRRHUS, PHOENIX, *and Attendants.*

Before I speak the message of the Greeks,
Permit me, sir, to glory in the title
Of their ambassador; since I behold
Troy's vanquisher, and great Achilles' son.
Nor does the son rise short of such a father.
If Hector fell by him, Troy fell by you.
But what your father never would have done,
You do. You cherish the remains of Troy;
And by an ill-timed pity keep alive
The dying embers of a ten years war.
Have you so soon forgot the mighty Hector?
The Greeks remember his high brandished sword,
That filled their states with widows and with orphans,
For which they call for vengeance on his son.
Who knows what he may one day prove? Who knows
But he may brave us in our ports; and, filled
With Hector's fury, set our fleets on blaze?
You may, yourself, live to repent your mercy.
Comply, then, with the Grecians' just demands:
Satiate their vengeance, and preserve yourself.
Pyr. The Greeks are for my safety more concerned
Than I desire. I thought your kings were met
On more important counsel. When I heard
The name of their ambassador, I hoped
Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.
Is Agamemnon's son dispatched for this?
And do the Grecian chiefs, renowned in war,
A race of heroes, join in close debate,
To plot an infant's death! What right has Greece
To ask his life? Must I, must I alone,
Of all the scepter'd warriors, be denied
To treat my captive as I please? Know, prince,
When Troy lay smoking on the ground, and each
Proud victor shared the harvest of the war,
Andromache and this her son were mine;
Were mine by lot; and who shall wrest them from me?
Ulysses bore away old Priam's queen;
Cassandra was your own great father's prize;
Did I concern myself in what they won?
Did I send embassies to claim their captives?
Orest. But, sir, we fear for you, and for ourselves.
Troy may again revive, and a new Hector
Rise in Astyanax. Then think betimes—
Pyr. Let dastard souls be timorously wise:
But tell them, Pyrrhus knows not how to form
Far-fancied ills, and dangers out of sight.
Orest. Sir, call to mind the unrivalled strength of Troy;
Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of brass;
Her kings, her heroes, and embattled armies!
Pyr. I call them all to mind; and see them all
Confused in dust; all mixt in one wide ruin;
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a Troy?
If they have sworn to extinguish Hector's race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months deferred?
Why was he not in Priam's bosom slain?
He should have fallen among the slaughtered heaps,
Whelmed under Troy. His death had then been just.
When age and infancy, alike in vain,
Pleaded their weakness; when the heat of conquest,
And horrors of the fight, rouzed all our rage,
And blindly hurried us through scenes of death,
My fury then was without bounds: but now,
My wrath appeased, must I be cruel still?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood;
An infant's blood?—No, prince—go, bid the Greeks
Mark out some other victim; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escaped from Troy
Shall not be saved to perish in Epirus.
Orest. I need not tell you, sir, Astyanax
Was doomed to death in Troy; nor mention how
The crafty mother saved her darling son:
The Greeks do now but urge their former sentence;
Nor is it the boy, but Hector, they pursue;
The father, who so oft in Grecian blood
Has drenched his sword; the father, whom the Greeks
May seek even here.—Prevent them, sir, in time.
Pyr. No! let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal war. Let them now turn their arms
On him, who conquered for them: let them come,
And in Epirus seek another Troy.

Twas thus they recompens'd my godlike sire;
Thus was Achilles thank'd. But, prince, remember,
Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.
Orest. Shall Greece then find a rebel son in Pyrrhus?
Pyr. Have I then conquered to depend on Greece?
Orest. Hermione will sway your soul to peace,
And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself:
Her beauty will enforce my embassy.
Pyr. Hermione may have her charms; and I
May love her still, though not her father's slave.
I may in time give proofs, that I'm a lover;
But never must forget, that I'm a king.
Meanwhile, sir, you may see fair Helen's daughter;
I know how near in blood you stand allied.
That done, you have my answer, prince. The Greeks,
No doubt, expect your quick return.
[*Ex. Orest. &c.*
Phœn. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?
Pyr. I am told, that he has loved her long.
Phœn. If so,
Have you not cause to fear the smothered flame
May kindle at her sight, and blaze a-new?
And she be brought to listen to his passion?
Pyr. Ay, let them, Phœnix, let them love their fill!
Let them go hence; let them depart together:
Together let them sail for Sparta: all my ports
Are open to them both. From what constraint,
What irksome thoughts, should I be then relieved!
Phœn. But, sir,——
Pyr. I shall, another time, good Phœnix,
Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—for, see,
Andromache appears.

Enter ANDROMACHE, *and* CEPHISA.

Pyr. May I, madam,
Flatter my hopes so far as to believe
You come to seek me here?
Andr. This way, sir, leads
To those apartments where you guard my son.
Since you permit me, once a day, to visit
All I have left of Hector and of Troy,
I go to weep a few sad moments with him.
I have not yet, to-day, embraced my child;
I have not held him in my widowed arms.
Pyr. Ah, madam, should the threats of Greece prevail,
You'll have occasion for your tears, indeed!
Andr. Alas, what threats! What can alarm the Greeks?
There are no Trojans left!
Pyr. Their hate to Hector
Can never die: the terror of his name
Still shakes their souls; and makes them dread his son,
Andr. A mighty honour for victorious Greece,
To fear an infant, a poor friendless child!
Who smiles in bondage: nor yet knows himself
The son of Hector, and the slave of Pyrrhus.
Pyr. Weak as he is, the Greeks demand his life;
And send no less than Agamemnon's son,
To fetch him hence.
Andr. And, sir, do you comply
With such demands?—This blow is aimed at me:
How should the child avenge his slaughtered sire?
But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To cheer my heavy heart, and ease my bonds.
I promised to myself in him a son,
In him a friend, a husband, and a father.
But I must suffer sorrow heaped on sorrow;
And still the fatal stroke must come from you.
Pyr. Dry up those tears, I must not see you weep—
And know, I have rejected their demands.
The Greeks already threaten me with war:
But, should they arm, as once they did for Helen,
And hide the Adriatic with their fleets;
Should they prepare a second ten years siege,
And lay my towers and palaces in dust,
I am determined to defend your son,
And rather die myself than give him up.
But, madam, in the midst of all these dangers,
Will you refuse me a propitious smile?
Hated of Greece, and prest on every side,
Let me not, madam, while I fight your cause,
Let me not combat with your cruelties,
And count Andromache amongst my foes!
Andr. Consider, sir, how this will sound in Greece?
How can so great a soul betray such weakness?
Let not men say, so generous a design
Was but the transport of a heart in love.
Pyr. Your charms will justify me to the world.
Andr. How can Andromache, a captive queen,
O'erwhelmed with grief, a burthen to herself,
Harbour a thought of love? Alas! what charms
Have these unhappy eyes, by you condemned
To weep for ever? Talk of it no more.
To reverence the misfortunes of a foe;
To succour the distrest; to give the son
To an afflicted mother; to repel
Confederate nations, leagued against his life;
Unbribed by love, unterrified by threats,
To pity, to protect him: these are cares,
These are exploits worthy Achilles' son.
Pyr. Will your resentments, then, endure for ever?
Must Pyrrhus never be forgiven? 'Tis true,
My sword has often reeked in Phrygian blood,
And carried havoc through your royal kindred:
But you, fair princess, amply have avenged
Old Priam's vanquished house: and all the woes
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.
We both have suffered in our turns: and now
Our common foe should teach us to unite.
Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe?

Pyr. Forget the term of hatred, and behold
A friend in Pyrrhus! Give me but to hope!
I'll free your son; I'll be a father to him:
Myself will teach him to avenge the Trojans.
I'll go in person to chastise the Greeks,
Both for your wrongs and mine. Inspired by you,
What would I not atchieve! Again shall Troy
Rise from its ashes: this right arm shall fix
Her seat of empire; and your son shall reign.
Andr. Such dreams of greatness suit not my condition:
His hopes of empire perished with his father.
No; thou imperial city, ancient Troy,
Thou pride of Asia, founded by the gods!
Never, oh, never must we hope to see
Those bulwarks rise, which Hector could not guard!
Sir, all I wish for, is some quiet exile,
Where, far from Greece removed, and far from you,
I may conceal my son, and mourn my husband.
Your love creates me envy. Oh, return!
Return to your betrothed Hermione.
Pyr. Why do you mock me thus? You know, I cannot.
You know my heart is yours: my soul hangs on you:
You take up every wish: my waking thoughts,
And nightly dreams are all employed on you.
'Tis true, Hermione was sent to share
My throne and bed; and would with transport hear
The vows which you neglect.
Andr. She has no Troy,
No Hector to lament: she has not lost
A husband by your conquests. Such a husband!
(Tormenting thought!) whose death alone has made
Your sire immortal: Pyrrhus and Achilles
Are both grown great by my calamities.
Pyr. Madam, 'tis well! 'Tis very well! I find,
Your will must be obeyed. Imperious captive,
It shall. Henceforth I blot you from my mind:
You teach me to forget your charms; to hate you:
For know, inhuman beauty, I have loved
Too well to treat you with indifference.
Think well upon it: my disordered soul
Wavers between the extremes of love and rage;
I've been too tame; I will awake to vengeance!
The son shall answer for the mother's scorn.
The Greeks demand him: nor will I endanger
My realms, to pleasure an ungrateful woman.
Andr. Then he must die! Alas, my son must die!
He has no friend, no succour left, beside
His mother's tears, and his own innocence.
Pyr. Go, madam; visit this unhappy son.
The sight of him may bend your stubborn heart,
And turn to softness your unjust disdain.
I shall once more expect your answer. Go,
And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think that his life depends on your resolves.
[*Exit Pyrrhus, &c.*
Andr. I'll go: and in the anguish of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—If he must die, my life
Is wrapt in his; I shall not long survive.
'Tis for his sake that I have suffered life,
Groaned in captivity, and out-lived Hector.
Yes, my Astyanax, we'll go together!
Together to the realms of night we'll go!
There to thy ravished eyes thy sire I'll shew,
And point him out among the shades below.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Her. Well, I'll be ruled, Cleone: I will see him;
I have told Pylades that he may bring him;
But trust me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I should forbid him yet.
Cleo. And why forbid him?
Is he not, madam, still the same Orestes?
Orestes, whose return you oft have wished?
The man whose sufferings you so oft lamented,
And often praised his constancy and love?
Her. That love, that constancy, so ill requited,
Upbraids me *to* myself! I blush to think
How I have used him; and would shun his presence.
What will be my confusion when he sees me
Neglected, and forsaken, like himself?
Will he not say, 'Is this the scornful maid,
'The proud Hermione, that tyrannized
'In Sparta's court, and triumphed in her charms?
'Her insolence at last is well repaid.'
I cannot bear the thought!
Cleo. You wrong yourself
With unbecoming fears. He knows too well
Your beauty and your worth. Your lover comes not
To offer insults; but to repeat his vows,
And breathe his ardent passion at your feet.
But, madam, what's your royal father's will?
What orders do your letters bring from Sparta?
Her. His orders are, if Pyrrhus still deny
The nuptials, and refuse to sacrifice
This Trojan boy, I should with speed embark,
And with their embassy return to Greece.
Cleo. What would you more? Orestes comes in time
To save your honour. Pyrrhus cools apace:
Prevent his falsehood, and forsake him first.

I know you hate him: you have told me so.
Her. Hate him! My injured honour bids me hate him.
The ungrateful man, to whom I fondly gave
My virgin heart; the man I loved so dearly;
The man I doated on! Oh, my Cleone!
How is it possible I should not hate him?
Cleo. Then give him over, madam. Quit his court;
And with Orestes——
Her. No! I must have time
To work up all my rage! To meditate
A parting full of horror! My revenge
Will be but too much quickened by the traitor.
Cleo. Do you then wait new insults, new affronts?
To draw you from your father! Then to leave you!
In his own court to leave you—for a captive!
If Pyrrhus can provoke you, he has done it.
Her. Why dost thou heighten my distress?—I fear
To search out my own thoughts, and sound my heart.
Be blind to what thou seest: believe me cured:
Flatter my weakness; tell me I have conquered;
Think that my injured soul is set against him;
And do thy best to make me think so too.
Cleo. Why would you loiter here, then?
Her. Let us fly!
Let us begone! I leave him to his captive:
Let him go kneel, and supplicate his slave.
Let us begone! But what if he repent?
What if the perjured prince again submit,
And sue for pardon? What if he renew
His former vows? But, oh, the faithless man!
He slights me! drives me to extremities!—However,
I'll stay, Cleone, to perplex their loves;
I'll stay, till, by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the Greeks. Already
Their vengeance have I drawn upon the son,
Their second embassy shall claim the mother:
I will redouble all my griefs on her!
Cleo. Ah, madam, whither does your rage transport you?
Andromache, alas! is innocent.
A woman plunged in sorrow; dead to love:
And when she thinks on Pyrrhus, 'tis with horror.
Her. Would I had done so too! He had not then
Betrayed my easy faith. But I, alas!
Discovered all the fondness of my soul!
I made no secret of my passion to him,
Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere:
My eyes, my tongue, my actions spoke my heart.
Cleo. Well might you speak without reserve to one,
Engaged to you by solemn oaths and treaties.
Her. His ardour too was an excuse for mine:
With other eyes he saw me then! Cleone,
Thou mayst remember, every thing conspired
To favour him: my father's wrongs avenged;
The Greeks triumphant; fleets of Trojan spoils;
His mighty sire's, his own immortal fame;
His eager love; all, all conspired against me!
—But I have done: I'll think no more of Pyrrhus.
Orestes wants not merit; and he loves me.
My gratitude, my honour, both plead for him:
And if I have power over my own heart, 'tis his.
Cleo. Madam, he comes——
Her. Alas, I did not think
He was so near! I wish I might not see him.

Enter ORESTES.

How am I to interpret, sir, this visit?
Is it a compliment of form or love?
Orest. Madam, you know my weakness. 'Tis my fate
To love unpitied: to desire to see you;
And still to swear each time shall be the last.
My passion breaks through my repeated oaths,
And every time I visit you I am perjured.
Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afresh:
I blush to own it; but I know no cure.
I call the gods to witness, I have tried
Whatever man could do (but tried in vain),
To wear you from my mind. Through stormy seas,
And savage climes, in a whole year of absence,
I courted dangers, and I longed for death.
Her. Why will you, prince, indulge this mournful tale?
It ill becomes the ambassador of Greece
To talk of dying and of love. Remember
The kings you represent: Shall their revenge
Be disappointed by your ill-timed passion?
Discharge your embassy: 'tis not Orestes
The Greeks desire should die.
Orest. My embassy
Is at an end, for Pyrrhus has refused
To give up Hector's son. Some hidden power
Protects the boy.
Her. Faithless, ungrateful man! [*Aside.*
Orest. I now prepare for Greece. But ere I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounced by you.
What do I say—I do already hear it!
My doom is fixed: I read it in your eyes.
Her. Will you then still despair? be still suspicious?
What have I done? Wherein have I been cruel?
'Tis true, you find me in the court of Pyrrhus:
But 'twas my royal father sent me hither.
And who can tell but I have shared your griefs?
Have I ne'er wept in secret? Never wished
To see Orestes?
Orest. Wished to see Orestes!——
Oh joy! oh ecstacy! My soul's entranced!
Oh, charming princess! Oh, transcendent maid!
My utmost wish!—Thus, thus let me express
My boundless thanks!——I never was unhappy—
Am I Orestes?—

Her. You are Orestes,
The same unaltered, generous, faithful lover:
The prince whom I esteem; whom I lament;
And whom I fain would teach my heart to love!
Orest. Ay, there it is!—I have but your esteem,
While Pyrrhus has your heart!
Her. Believe me, prince,
Were you as Pyrrhus, I should hate you!
Orest. No!
I should be blest! I should be loved as he is!—
Yet all this while I die by your disdain,
While he neglects your charms, and courts another.
Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?
Has Pyrrhus said——(Oh, I shall go distracted!)
Has Pyrrhus told you so?——Or is it you,
Who think thus meanly of me?——Sir, perhaps,
All do not judge like you!——
Orest. Madam, go on!
Insult me still: I'm used to bear your scorn.
Her. Why am I told how Pyrrhus loves or hates?
—Go, prince, and arm the Greeks against the rebel;
Let them lay waste his country! raze his towns;
Destroy his fleets; his palaces;—himself!—
Go, prince, and tell me then how much I love him.
Orest. To hasten his destruction, come yourself;
And work your royal father to his ruin.
Her. Meanwhile he weds Andromache!
Orest. Ah, princess!
What is it I hear!
Her. What infamy for Greece,
If he should wed a Phrygian, and a captive!
Orest. Is this your hatred, madam?—'Tis in vain
To hide your passion; every thing betrays it:
Your looks, your speech, your anger: nay, your silence;
Your love appears in all; your secret flame
Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.
Her. Your jealousy perverts my meaning still,
And wrests each circumstance to your disquiet;
My very hate is construed into fondness.
Orest. Impute my fears, if groundless, to my love.
Her. Then hear me, prince. Obedience to a father
First brought me hither; and the same obedience
Detains me here, till Pyrrhus drive me hence,
Or my offended father shall recall me.
Tell this proud king, that Menelaus scorns
To match his daughter with a foe of Greece;
Bid him resign Astyanax, or me.
If he persists to guard the hostile boy,
Hermione embarks with you for Sparta.
[*Exit Her. and Cleone.*

Orest. Then is Orestes blest! My griefs are fled!
Fled like a dream!—Methinks I tread in air!
Pyrrhus, enamoured of his captive queen,
Will thank me, if I take her rival hence:
He looks not on the princess with my eyes!
Surprising happiness!—Unlooked-for joy!
Never let love despair!—the prize is mine!
Be smooth, ye seas! and ye, propitious winds,
Breathe from Epirus to the Spartan coasts!
I long to view the sails unfurled!—But, see!
Pyrrhus approaches in a happy hour.

Enter PYRRHUS, *and* PHOENIX.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm
Ungoverned temper would not let me weigh
The importance of your embassy, and hear
You argue for my good.—I was to blame.
I since have poised your reasons; and I thank
My good allies: their care deserves my thanks.
You have convinced me, that the weal of Greece,
My father's honour, and my own repose,
Demand that Hector's race should be destroyed.
I shall deliver up Astyanax;
And you, yourself, shall bear the victim hence.
Orest. If you approve it, sir, and are content
To spill the blood of a defenceless child,
The offended Greeks, no doubt, will be appeased.
Pyr. Closer to strain the knot of our alliance,
I have determined to espouse Hermione.
You come in time to grace our nuptial rites:
In you the kings of Greece will all be present;
And you have right to personate her father,
As his ambassador, and brother's son.
Go, prince, renew your visit; tell Hermione,
To-morrow I receive her from your hands.
Orest. [*Aside.*] Oh, change of fortune! Oh, undone Orestes: [*Exit Orestes.*
Pyr. Well, Phœnix, am I still a slave to love?
What think'st thou now? Am I myself again?
Phœn. 'Tis as it should be: this discovers Pyrrhus;
Shews all the hero. Now you are yourself!
The son, the rival of the great Achilles!
Greece will applaud you; and the world confess,
Pyrrhus has conquered Troy a second time.
Pyr. Nay, Phœnix, now I but begin to triumph:
I never was a conqueror 'till now.
Believe me, a whole host, a war of foes,
May sooner be subdued, than love. Oh, Phœnix,
What ruin have I shunned! The Greeks enraged,
Hung o'er me, like a gathering storm, and soon
Had burst in thunder on my head; while I
Abandoned duty, empire, honour, all,
To please a thankless woman!—One kind look
Had quite undone me!
Phœn. Oh, my royal master!
The gods, in favour to you, made her cruel.
Pyr. Thou sawest with how much scorn she treated me!

When I permitted her to see her son,
I hoped it might have worked her to my wishes.
I went to see the mournful interview,
And found her bathed in tears, and lost in passion.
Wild with distress, a thousand times she called
On Hector's name: and when I spoke in comfort,
And promised my protection to her son,
She kissed the boy; and called again on Hector:
Then, strained him in her arms; and cried, 'Tis he!
'Tis he himself! his eyes, his every feature!
His very frown, and his stern look already!
'Tis he: 'Tis my loved lord whom I embrace!'
Does she then think, that I preserve the boy,
To soothe, and keep alive her flame for Hector?
Phæn. No doubt, she does; and thinks you favoured in it;
But let her go, for an ungrateful woman!
Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud stubborn heart:
Vain of her charms, and insolent in beauty,
She mocks my rage; and, when it threatens loudest,
Expects 'twill soon be humbled into love.
But we shall change our parts; and she shall find
I can be deaf, like her; and steel my heart.
She's Hector's widow; I Achilles' son;
Pyrrhus is born to hate Andromache.
Phæn. My royal master, talk of her no more;
I do not like this anger. Your Hermione
Should now engross your thoughts. 'Tis time to see her;
'Tis time you should prepare the nuptial rites,
And not rely upon a rival's care;
It may be dangerous.
Pyr. But tell me, Phœnix,
Dost thou not think, the proud Andromache
Will be enraged, when I shall wed the princess?
Phæn. Why does Andromache still haunt your thoughts?
What is't to you, be she enraged or pleased?
Let her name perish: think of her no more!
Pyr. No, Phœnix!—I have been too gentle with her,
I've checked my wrath, and stiffled my resentment:
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her.
Let us return:——I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free course against her.
Thou shalt see, Phœnix, how I'll break her pride!
Phæn. Oh, go not, sir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your strength: you'll fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her scorn.
Pyr. That were, indeed, a most unmanly weakness;
Thou dost not know me, Phœnix.
Phæn. Ah, my prince!
You are still struggling in the toils of love!
Pyr. Canst thou then think I love this woman still?
One who repays my passion with disdain!
A stranger, captive, friendless, and forlorn;
She and her darling son within my power;
His life a forfeit to the Greeks: Yet I
Preserve her son; would take her to my throne;
Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs;
And all this while she treats me as her foe!
Phæn. You have it in your power to be revenged.
Pyr. Yes:—and I'll shew my power! I'll give her cause
To hate me! her Astyanax shall die!——
What tears will then be shed! How will she then,
In bitterness of heart, reproach my name!
Then, to complete her woes, will I espouse
Hermione:—'Twill stab her to the heart!
Phæn. Alas, you threaten like a lover still!
Pyr. Phœnix, excuse this struggle of my soul:
'Tis the last effort of expiring love.
Phæn. Then hasten, sir, to see the Spartan princess;
And turn the bent of your desires on her.
Pyr. Oh! 'tis a heavy task to conquer love,
And wean the soul from her accustomed fondness.
But, come!—A long farewell to Hector's widow.
'Tis with a secret pleasure I look back,
And see the many dangers I have passed.
The merchant thus, in dreadful tempests tost,
Thrown by the waves on some unlooked-for coast,
Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted eye,
Midst rocks and shelves the broken billows fly;
And, while the outrageous winds the deep deform,
Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the storm.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter PYLADES *and* ORESTES,

Pyl. FOR Heaven's sake, sir, compose your ruffled mind,
And moderate your rage!
Orest. No, Pylades!
This is no time for counsel.——I am deaf.
Talk not of reason! I have been too patient.
Life is not worth my care. My soul grows desperate.
I'll bear her off, or perish in the attempt.
I'll force her from his arms:—By Heaven I will!
Pyl. Well, 'tis agreed, my friend:—We'll force her hence,
But still consider, we are in Epirus.
The court, the guards, Hermione herself,
The very air we breathe, belongs to Pyrrhus.

Good gods! what tempted you to seek her here!
Orest. Lost to myself, I knew not what I did.
My purposes were wild. Perhaps I came
To menace Pyrrhus, and upbraid the woman.
Pyl. This violence of temper may prove fatal.
Orest. It must be more than man to bear these shocks,
These outrages of fate, with temper!
He tells me, that he weds Hermione;
And will to-morrow take her from my hand!—
My hand shall sooner tear the tyrant's heart.—
Pyl. Your passion blinds you, sir; he's not to blame.
Could you but look into the soul of Pyrrhus,
Perhaps you'd find it tortured, like your own.
Orest. No, Pylades! 'Tis all design—His pride,
To triumph over me, has changed his love.
The fair Hermione, before I came,
In all her bloom of beauty, was neglected.
Ah, cruel gods! I thought her all my own!
She was consenting to return to Sparta:
Her heart, divided betwixt rage and love,
Was on the wing to take its leave of Pyrrhus.
She heard my sighs; she pitied my complaints;
She praised my constancy;——The least indifference,
From this proud king, had made Orestes happy.
Pyl. So your fond heart believes.
Orest. Did I not see
Her hate, her rage, her indignation rise
Against the ungrateful man?
Pyl. Believe me, prince,
'Twas then she loved him most. Had Pyrrhus left her,
She would have formed some new pretext to stay.
Take my advice:—Think not to force her hence;
But fly yourself from her destructive charms.
Her soul is linked to Pyrrhus: Were she yours,
She would reproach you still, and still regret
Her disappointed nuptials.——
Orest. Talk no more!
I cannot bear the thought! She must be mine!
Did Pyrrhus carry thunder in his hand,
I'd stand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,
Ere I resigned Hermione.——By force
I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my ships;
Have we forgot her mother Helen's rape?
Pyl. Will then Orestes turn a ravisher,
And blot his embassy?
Orest. Oh, Pylades!
My grief weighs heavy on me:—'Twill distract me!
O leave me to myself!—Let not thy friendship
Involve thee in my woes. Too long already,
Too long hast thou been punished for my crimes.
It is enough, my friend!—It is enough!
Let not thy generous love betray thee farther:
The gods have set me as their mark, to empty
Their quivers on me.—Leave me to myself.
Mine be the danger; mine the enterprize.
All I request of thee is, to return,
And, in my place, convey Astyanax
(As Pyrrhus has consented) into Greece.
Go, Pylades——
Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!
Let us bear off Hermione! No toil,
No danger can deter a friend:—Lead on!
Draw up the Greeks; summon your numerous train:
The ships are ready, and the wind sits fair:
There eastward lies the sea; the rolling waves
Break on those palace-stairs. I know each pass,
Each avenue and outlet of the court.
This very night we'll carry her on board.
Orest. Thou art too good! I trespass on thy friendship,
But, Oh! excuse a wretch, whom no man pities,
Except thyself: one just about to lose
The treasure of his soul: whom all mankind
Conspire to hate, and one who hates himself.
When will my friendship be of use to thee?
Pyl. The question is unkind. But now remember
To keep your counsels close, and hide your thoughts;
Let not Hermione suspect—no more—
I see her coming, sir—
Orest. Away, my friend;
I am advised; my all depends upon it.
[*Exit Pylades.*

Enter HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Orest. Madam, your orders are obeyed; I have seen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gained him for you.
The king resolves to wed you.
Her. So I am told:
And farther, I am informed that you, Orestes,
Are to dispose me for the intended marriage.
Orest. And are you, madam, willing to comply?
Her. Could I imagine Pyrrhus loved me still?
After so long delays, who would have thought
His hidden flames would shew themselves at last,
And kindle in his breast, when mine expired?
I can suppose, with you, he fears the Greeks;
That it is interest, and not love, directs him;
And that my eyes had greater power o'er you.
Orest. No, princess, no! It is too plain he loves you.
Your eyes do what they will, and cannot fail
To gain a conquest, where you wish they should.
Her. What can I do? alas! my faith is promised.
Can I refuse what is not mine to give?
A princess is not at her choice to love;
All we have left us is a blind obedience:
And yet, you see, how far I had complied,
And made my duty yield to your intreaties.
Orest. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—but I have done.
All have a right to please themselves in love:
I blame not you. 'Tis true, I hoped—but you
Are mistress of your heart, and I'm content.

'Tis fortune is my enemy, not you.
But, madam, I shall spare you farther pain
On this uneasy theme, and take my leave.
[*Exit Orestes.*

Her. Cleone, couldst thou think he'd be so calm?

Cleo. Madam, his silent grief sits heavy on him.
He's to be pitied. His too eager love
Has made him busy to his own destruction.
His threats have wrought this change of mind in Pyrrhus.

Her. Dost thou think Pyrrhus capable of fear!
Whom should the intrepid Pyrrhus fear? the Greeks?
Did he not lead their harrassed troops to conquest,
When they despaired, when they retired from Troy,
And sought for shelter in their burning fleets?
Did he not then supply his father's place?
No, my Cleone, he is above constraint;
He acts unforced; and where he weds he loves.

Cleo. Oh, that Orestes had remained in Greece!
I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.

Her. Wilt thou discourse of nothing but Orestes?
Pyrrhus is mine again!—Is mine for ever!
Oh, my Cleone! I am wild with joy!
Pyrrhus, the bold! the brave! the godlike Pyrrhus!
—Oh, I could tell thee numberless exploits,
And tire thee with his battles—Oh, Cleone—

Cleo. Madam, conceal your joy—I see Andromache:
She weeps, and comes to speak her sorrows to you.

Her. I would indulge the gladness of my heart!
Let us retire: her grief is out of season.

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

Andr. Ah, madam, whither, whither do you fly?
Where can your eyes behold a sight more pleasing
Than Hector's widow suppliant and in tears?
I come not an alarmed, a jealous foe,
To envy you the heart your charms have won:
The only man I sought to please, is gone;
Killed in my sight, by an inhuman hand.
Hector first taught me love; which my fond heart
Shall ever cherish, 'till we meet in death.
But, oh, I have a son!—And you, one day,
Will be no stranger to a mother's fondness:
But Heaven forbid that you should ever know
A mother's sorrow for an only son.
Her joy, her bliss, her last surviving comfort!
When every hour she trembles for his life!
Your power o'er Pyrrhus may relieve my fears.
Alas, what danger is there in a child,
Saved from the wreck of a whole ruined empire?
Let me go hide him in some desert isle:
You may rely upon my tender care
To keep him far from perils of ambition:
All he can learn of me, will be to weep.

Her. Madam, 'tis easy to conceive your grief:
But it would ill become me to solicit
In contradiction to my father's will:
'Tis he who urges to destroy your son.
Madam, if Pyrrhus must be wrought to pity,
No woman does it better than yourself;
If you gain him, I shall comply of course.
[*Exeunt Her. and Cleone.*

Andr. Didst thou not mind with what disdain she spoke?
Youth and prosperity have made her vain;
She has not seen the fickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counsel.
I'd speak my own distress: one look from you
Will vanquish Pyrrhus, and confound the Greeks—
See, where he comes—Lay hold on this occasion.

Enter PYRRHUS *and* PHŒNIX.

Pyr. Where is the princess?—Did you not inform me
Hermione was here? [*To Phœnix.*

Phœn. I thought so, sir.

Andr. Thou seest what mighty power my eyes have on him? [*To Cephisa.*

Pyr. What says she, Phœnix?

Andr. I have no hope left!

Phœn. Let us be gone:—Hermione expects you.

Ceph. For Heaven's sake, madam, break this sullen silence.

Andr. My child's already promised——

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No, no! my tears are vain! his doom is fixed!

Pyr. See, if she deigns to cast one look upon us!
Proud woman!

Andr. I provoke him by my presence.
Let us retire.

Pyr. Come, let us satisfy
The Greeks; and give them up this Phrygian boy.

Andr. Ah, sir! recall those words—What have you said!
If you give up my son, oh, give up me!—
You, who so many times have sworn me friendship:
Oh, Heavens!—will you not look with pity on me?
Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. Phœnix will answer you: my word is past.

Andr. You, who would brave so many dangers for me!

Pyr. I was your lover then: I now am free.
To favour you I might have spared his life:
But you would ne'er vouchsafe to ask it of me.
Now, 'tis too late.

Andr. Ah, sir, you understood
My tears, my wishes, which I durst not utter,
Afraid of a repulse. Oh, sir, excuse

The pride of royal blood, that checks my soul.
You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,
To sue for pity, and to own a master.
Pyr. No! in your heart you curse me! you disdain
My generous flame, and scorn to be obliged!
This very son, this darling of your soul,
Would be less dear, did I preserve him for you.
Your anger, your aversion fall on me!
You hate me more than the whole league of Greece:
But I shall leave you to your great resentments.
Let us go, Phœnix, and appease the Greeks.
Andr. Then, let me die! and let me go to Hector!
Ceph. But, madam——
Andr. What can I do more? The tyrant
Sees my distraction, and insults my tears.
[*To Ceph.*
——Behold how low you have reduced a queen!
These eyes have seen my country laid in ashes;
My kindred fall in war; my father slain;
My husband dragged in his own blood; my son
Condemned to bondage, and myself a slave;
Yet, in the midst of these unheard-of woes,
'Twas some relief to find myself your captive;
And that my son, derived from ancient kings,
Since he must serve, had Pyrrhus for his master.
When Priam kneeled, the great Achilles wept:
I hoped I should not find his son less noble.
I thought the brave were still the most compassionate.
Oh, do not, sir, divide me from my child!
If he must die———
Pyr. Phœnix, withdraw a while. [*Exit Phœnix.*
Rise, madam—Yet you may preserve your son.
I find whenever I provoke your tears,
I furnish you with arms against myself.
I thought my hatred fixed before I saw you.
Oh, turn your eyes upon me, while I speak,
And see, if you discover in my looks
An angry judge, or an obdurate foe!
Why will you force me to desert your cause?
In your son's name I beg we may be friends;
Let me intreat you to secure his life!
Must I turn suppliant for him? Think, oh think,
'Tis the last time, you both may yet be happy!
I know the ties I break; the foes I arm:
I wrong Hermione; I send her hence;
And with her diadem I bind your brows.
Consider well; for 'tis of moment to you!
Chuse to be wretched, madam, or a queen.
My soul, consumed with a whole year's despair,
Can bear no longer these perplexing doubts;
I know, if I'm deprived of you, I die:
But oh, I die, if I wait longer for you!
I leave you to your thoughts. When I return,
We'll to the temple; there you'll find your son;
And there be crowned, or give him up for ever.
[*Exit Pyrrhus.*
Ceph. I told you, madam, that in spite of Greece,
You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.
Andr. Alas! Cephisa, what have I obtained!
Only a poor short respite for my son.
Ceph. You have enough approved your faith to Hector;
To be reluctant still would be a crime.
He would himself persuade you to comply.
Andr. How——wouldst thou give me Pyrrhus for a husband?
Ceph. Think you, 'twill please the ghost of your dead husband,
That you should sacrifice his son? Consider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne;
Turns all his power against the foes of Troy;
Remembers not Achilles was his father;
Retracts his conquests, and forgets his hatred.
Andr. But how can I forget it! How can I
Forget my Hector, treated with dishonour;
Deprived of funeral rites; and vilely dragged,
A bloody corse, about the walls of Troy?
Can I forget the good old king his father,
Slain in my presence; at the altar slain!
Which vainly, for protection, he embraced?
Hast thou forgot that dreadful night, Cephisa,
When a whole people fell? Methinks I see
Pyrrhus, enraged, and breathing vengeance, enter
Amidst the glare of burning palaces:
I see him hew his passage through my brothers;
And, bathed in blood, lay all my kindred waste.
Think, in this scene of horror, what I suffered!
This is the courtship I received from Pyrrhus;
And this the husband thou wouldst give me! No,
We both will perish first! I'll ne'er consent.
Ceph. Since you resolve Astyanax shall die,
Haste to the temple, bid your son farewell.
Why do you tremble, madam?
Andr. O Cephisa!
Thou hast awakened all the mother in me.
How can I bid farewell to the dear child,
The pledge, the image of my much-loved lord!
Alas, I call to mind the fatal day,
When his too-forward courage led him forth
To seek Achilles.
Ceph. Oh, the unhappy hour!
'Twas then Troy fell, and all her gods forsook her.
Andr. That morn, Cephisa, that ill-fated morn,
My husband bid thee bring Astyanax;
He took him in his arms; and, as I wept,
My wife, my dear Andromache, said he,
(Heaving with stifled sighs to see me weep)
What fortune may attend my arms, the gods
Alone can tell. To thee I give the boy;
Preserve him as the token of our loves;
If I should fall, let him not miss his sire
While thou survivest; but, by thy tender care,
Let the son see that thou didst love his father.
Ceph. And will you throw away a life so precious?
At once extirpate all the Trojan line?
Andr. Inhuman king! What has he done to suffer?

If I neglect your vows, is he to blame?
Has he reproached you with his slaughtered kindred?
Can he resent those ills he does not know?
But, oh! while I deliberate he dies.
No, no, thou must not die, while I can save thee;
Oh! let me find out Pyrrhus—Oh, Cephisa!
Do thou go find him.
Ceph. What must I say to him?
Andr. Tell him I love my son to such excess—
But dost thou think he means the child shall die?
Can love rejected turn to so much rage?
Ceph. Madam, he'll soon be here——Resolve on something.
Andr. Well then, assure him—
Ceph. Madam, of your love?
Andr. Alas, thou knowest it is not in my power.
Oh, my dead lord! Oh, Priam's royal house!
Oh, my Astyanax! At what a price
Thy mother buys thee!——Let us go.
Ceph. But whither?
And what does your unsettled heart resolve?
Andr. Come, my Cephisa, let us go together,
To the sad monument which I have raised
To Hector's shade; where in their sacred urn
The ashes of my hero lie inclosed;
The dear remains, which I have saved from Troy.
There let me weep, there summon to my aid,
With pious rites, my Hector's awful shade;
Let him be witness to my doubts, my fears,
My agonizing heart, my flowing tears;
Oh! may he rise in pity from his tomb,
And fix his wretched son's uncertain doom!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. IV.

SCENE I.—ANDROMACHE, CEPHISA.

Ceph. BLEST be the tomb of Hector, that inspires
These pious thoughts: or is it Hector's self,
That prompts you to preserve your son! 'Tis he
Who still presides o'er ruined Troy; 'tis he
Who urges Pyrrhus to restore Astyanax.
Andr. Pyrrhus has said he will; and thou hast heard him
Just now renew the oft-repeated promise.
Ceph. Already in the transports of his heart,
He gives you up his kingdom, his allies,
And thinks himself o'er-paid for all in you.
Andr. I think I may rely upon his promise:
And yet my heart is over-charged with grief.
Ceph. Why should you grieve! You see he bids defiance
To all the Greeks; and to protect your son
Against their rage, has placed his guards about him;
Leaving himself defenceless for his sake:
But, madam, think, the coronation pomp
Will soon demand your presence in the temple:
'Tis time you lay aside these mourning weeds.
Andr. I will be there; but first would see my son.
Ceph. Madam, you need not now be anxious for him;
He will be always with you, all your own,
To lavish the whole mother's fondness on him.
What a delight to train beneath your eye,
A son, who grows no longer up in bondage,
A son, in whom a race of kings revive!
But, madam, you are sad, and wrapt in thought,
As if you relished not your happiness.
Andr. Oh, I must see my son once more, Cephisa!
Ceph. Madam, he now will be no more a captive;
Your visits may be frequent as you please.
To-morrow you may pass the live-long day——
Andr. To-morrow! Oh, Cephisa!—But, no more!
Cephisa, I have always found thee faithful:
A load of care weighs down my drooping heart.
Ceph. Oh! that 'twere possible for me to ease you!
Andr. I soon shall exercise thy long-tried faith.—
Mean while I do conjure thee, my Cephisa,
Thou take no notice of my present trouble:
And when I shall disclose my secret purpose,
That thou be punctual to perform my will.
Ceph. Madam, I have no will but yours. My life
Is nothing, balanced with my love to you.
Andr. I thank thee, good Cephisa; my Astyanax
Will recompense thy friendship to his mother.
But, come; my heart's at ease: assist me now
To change this sable habit.—Yonder comes
Hermione; I would not meet her rage. [*Exeunt.*

Enter HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Cleo. This unexpected silence, this reserve,
This outward calm, this settled frame of mind,
After such wrongs and insults, much surprise me!
You, who before could not command your rage,
When Pyrrhus looked but kindly on his captive;
How can you bear unmoved, that he should wed her,
And seat her on a throne which you should fill?
I fear this dreadful stillness in your soul!
'Twere better, madam—
Her. Have you called Orestes?
Cleo. Madam, I have; his love is too impatient
Not to obey with speed the welcome summons.
His love-sick heart o'erlooks his unkind usage:
His ardour's still the same—Madam, he's here.

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. Ah, madam, is it true? Does, then, Orestes

At length attend you by your own commands?
What can I do——
Her. Orestes, do you love me?
Orest. What means that question, princess? Do I love you?
My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,
My farewell, my return, all speak my love.
Her. Avenge my wrongs, and I'll believe them all.
Orest. It shall be done—my soul has catched the alarm.
We'll spirit up the Greeks—I'll lead them on—
Your cause shall animate our fleets and armies.
Let us return! let us not lose a moment,
But urge the fate of this devoted land!
Let us depart.
Her. No, prince, let us stay here!
I will have vengeance here—I will not carry
This load of infamy to Greece, nor trust
The chance of war to vindicate my wrongs.
Ere I depart, I'll make Epirus mourn.
If you avenge me, let it be this instant;
My rage brooks no delay—Haste to the temple,
Haste, prince, and sacrifice him!
Orest. Whom!
Her. Why, Pyrrhus.
Orest. Pyrrhus! Did you say, Pyrrhus?
Her. You demur!
Oh, fly, begone! give me no time to think!
Talk not of laws—he tramples on all laws—
Let me not hear him justified—away!
Orest. You cannot think I'll justify my rival.
Madam, your love has made him criminal.
You shall have vengeance; I'll have vengeance too:
But let our hatred be profest and open:
Let us alarm all Greece, denounce a war;
Let us attack him in his strength, and hunt him down
By conquest: should I turn base assassin,
'Twould sully all the kings I represent.
Her. Have I not been dishonoured! set at nought!
Exposed to public scorn!—and will you suffer
The tyrant, who dares use me thus, to live?
Know, prince, I hate him more than once I loved him;
The gods alone can tell how once I loved him;
Yes, the false perjured man, I once did love him;
And spite of all his crimes and broken vows,
If he should live, I may relapse—who knows,
But I to-morrow may forgive his wrongs?
Orest. First let me tear him piece-meal—he shall die.
But, madam, give me leisure to contrive
The place, the time, the manner of his death:
Yet I'm a stranger in the court of Pyrrhus;
Scarce have I set my foot within Epirus,
When you enjoin me to destroy the prince,
It shall be done this very night.
Her. But now,
This very hour, he weds Andromache;
The temple shines with pomp; the golden throne
Is now prepared; the joyful rites begin;
My shame is public—Oh, be speedy, prince!
My wrath's impatient—Pyrrhus lives too long!
Intent on love, and heedless of his person,
He covers with his guards the Trojan boy.
Now is the time! assemble all your Greeks;
Mine shall assist them; let their fury loose:
Already they regard him as a foe.
Begone, Orestes—kill the faithless tyrant:
My love shall recompense the glorious deed.
Orest. Consider, madam——
Her. You but mock my rage!
I was contriving how to make you happy.
Think you to merit by your idle sighs,
And not attest your love by one brave action?
Go, with your boasted constancy! and leave
Hermione to execute her own revenge!
I blush to think how my too easy faith
Has twice been baffled in one shameful hour!
Orest. Hear me but speak!——you know I'll die to serve you!
Her. I'll go myself: I'll stab him at the altar;
Then drive the poniard, reeking with his blood,
Through my own heart. In death we shall unite:
Better to die with him, than live with you!
Orest. That were to make him blest, and me more wretched:
Madam, he dies by me:—Have you a foe,
And shall I let him live? My rival, too?
Ere yon meridian sun declines, he dies:
And you shall say, that I deserve your love.
Her. Go, prince; strike home! and leave the rest to me.
Let all your ships be ready for our flight.
[*Exit Orestes.*
Cleo. Madam, you'll perish in this bold attempt.
Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to perish.
I was to blame to trust it with another:
In my own hands it had been more secure.
Orestes hates not Pyrrhus as I hate him:
I should have thrust the dagger home; have seen
The tyrant curse me with his panting breath,
And roll about his dying eyes, in vain,
To find Andromache, whom I would hide.
Oh, would Orestes, when he gives the blow,
Tell him he dies my victim!—Haste, Cleone;
Charge him to say, Hermione's resentments,
Not those of Greece, have sentenced him to death.
Haste, my Cleone! My revenge is lost,
If Pyrrhus knows not that he dies by me!
Cleo. I shall obey your orders—But see
The king approach!—Who could expect him here?
Her. O fly! Cleone, fly! and bid Orestes
Not proceed a step before I see him.
[*Exit Cleone.*

Enter PYRRHUS.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to shun an injured princess:
Your distant looks reproach me: and I come,
Not to defend, but to avow my guilt.
Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injustice;
Nor form excuses, while his heart condemns him.
I might perhaps alledge, our warlike sires,
Unknown to us, engaged us to each other,
And joined our hearts by contract, not by love:
But I detest such cobweb arts; I own
My father's treaty, and allow its force.
I sent ambassadors to call you hither;
Received you as my queen; and hoped my oaths,
So oft renewed, might ripen into love.
The gods can witness, madam, how I fought
Against Andromache's too fatal charms!
And still I wish I had the power to leave
This Trojan beauty, and be just to you.
Discharge your anger on this perjured man!
For I abhor my crime! and should be pleased
To hear you speak your wrongs aloud: no terms,
No bitterness of wrath, nor keen reproach,
Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.

Her. I find, sir, you can be sincere: you scorn
To act your crimes with fear, like other men.
A hero should be bold; above all laws;
Be bravely false; and laugh at solemn ties.
To be perfidious shews a daring mind!
And you have nobly triumphed o'er a maid!
To court me; to reject me; to return;
Then to forsake me for a Phrygian slave:
To lay proud Troy in ashes; then to raise
The son of Hector, and renounce the Greeks,
Are actions worthy the great soul of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, go on: give your resentments birth;
And pour forth all your indignation on me.

Her. 'Twould please your queen, should I upbraid your falsehood;
Call you perfidious, traitor, all the names
That injured virgins lavish on your sex;
I should o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furnish out a tale to soothe her pride.
But, sir, I would not over-charge her joys:
If you would charm Andromache, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, your slaughters,
Your great achievements, in her father's palace.
She needs must love the man, who fought so bravely,
And in her sight slew half her royal kindred.

Pyr. With horror I look back on my past deeds!
I punished Helen's wrongs too far; I shed
Too much of blood: but, madam, Helen's daughter
Should not object those ills the mother caused.
However I am pleased to find you hate me:
I was too forward to accuse myself:
The man, who ne'er was loved, can ne'er be false.
Obedience to a father brought you hither;
And I stood bound by promise to receive you:
But our desires were different ways inclined;
And you, I own, were not obliged to love me.

Her. Have I not loved you, then! perfidious man!
For you I slighted all the Grecian princes;
Forsook my father's house; concealed my wrongs,
When most provoked: would not return to Sparta,
In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart.
I loved you when inconstant: and even now,
Inhuman king, that you pronounce my death,
My heart still doubts, if I should love or hate you:
But, oh, since you resolve to wed another,
Defer your cruel purpose till to-morrow!
This is the last request I e'er shall make you—
See if the barbarous prince vouchsafes an answer!
Go, then, to the loved Phrygian! Hence! begone!
And bear to her those vows, that once were mine:
Go, in defiance of the avenging gods!
Begone! the priest expects you at the altar——
But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither.
[*Exit Her.*

Enter PHOENIX.

Phe. Sir, did you mind her threats? Your life is in danger!
There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
The Greeks, that swarm about the court, all hate you;
Will treat you as their country's enemy,
And join in her revenge: besides, Orestes
Still loves her to distraction: sir, I beg——

Pyr. How, Phœnix! should I fear a woman's threats?
A nobler passion takes up all my thought:
I must prepare to meet Andromache.
Do thou place all my guards about her son:
If he be safe, Pyrrhus is free from fear.
[*Exit Pyr.*

PHŒNIX, *alone.*

Oh, Pyrrhus! oh, what pity 'tis, the gods,
Who filled thy soul with every kindly virtue,
Formed thee for empire and consummate greatness,
Should leave thee so exposed to wild desires,
That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reason!
[*A flourish of trumpets.*
Such was Achilles; generous, fierce, and brave,
Open and undesigning: but impatient,
Undisciplined, and not to be controuled:
I fear the whirl of passion, this career,
That overbears reflection and cool thought;
I tremble for the event! But see, the queen,

Magnificent in royal pride, appears.
I must obey, and guard her son from danger.
[*Exit Phœnix.*

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

Ceph. Madam, once more you look and move a queen!
Your sorrows are dispersed, your charms revive,
And every faded beauty blooms anew.
Andr. Yet all is not as I could wish, Cephisa.
Ceph. You see the king is watchful o'er your son;
Decks him with princely robes, with guards surrounds him.
Astaynax begins to reign already.
Andr. Pyrrhus is nobly minded: and I fain
Would live to thank him for Astyanax:
'Tis a vain thought——However, since my child
Has such a friend, I ought not to repine.
Ceph. These dark unfoldings of your soul perplex me.
What meant those floods of tears, those warm embraces,
As if you bid your son adieu for ever?
For Heaven's sake, madam, let me know your griefs!
If you mistrust my faith——
Andr. That were to wrong thee.
Oh, my Cephisa! this gay, borrowed air,
This blaze of jewels, and this bridal dress,
Are but mock trappings to conceal my woe:
My heart still mourns; I still am Hector's widow.
Ceph. Will you then break the promise given to Pyrrhus,
Blow up his rage afresh, and blast your hopes?
Andr. I thought, Cephisa, thou hadst known thy mistress.
Couldst thou believe I would be false to Hector?
Fall off from such a husband! break his rest,
And call him to this hated light again,
To see Andromache in Pyrrhus' arms?
Would Hector, were he living, and I dead,
Forget Andromache, and wed her foe!
Ceph. I cannot guess what drift your thoughts pursue;
But, oh, I fear there's something dreadful in it!
Must then Astyanax be doomed to die;
And you to linger out a life in bondage?
Andr. Nor this, nor that, Cephisa, will I bear;
My word is past to Pyrrhus, his to me;
And I rely upon his promised faith.
Unequal as he is, I know him well:
Pyrrhus is violent, but he's sincere,
And will perform beyond what he has sworn.
The Greeks will but incense him more; their rage
Will make him cherish Hector's son.
Ceph. Ah, madam,
Explain these riddles to my boding heart!
Andr. Thou may'st remember, for thou oft hast heard me
Relate the dreadful vision, which I saw,
When first I landed captive in Epirus.
That every night, as in a dream I lay,
A ghastly figure, full of gaping wounds,
His eyes aglare, his hair all stiff with blood,
Full in my sight thrice shook his head, and groaned.
I soon discerned my slaughtered Hector's shade;
But, oh, how changed! Ye, gods, how much unlike
The living Hector! Loud he bid me fly!
Fly from Achilles' son! then sternly frowned,
And disappeared. Struck with the dreadful sound,
I started and awaked.
Ceph. But did he bid you
Destroy Astyanax?
Andr. Cephisa, I'll preserve him;
With my own life, Cephisa, I'll preserve him.
Ceph. What may these words, so full of horror, mean?
Andr. Know, then, the secret purpose of my soul:
Andromache will not be false to Pyrrhus,
Nor violate her sacred love to Hector.
This hour I'll meet the king; the holy priest
Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows:
This will secure a father to my child:
That done, I have no farther use for life:
This pointed dagger, this determined hand,
Shall save my virtue, and conclude my woes.
Ceph. Ah, madam! recollect your scattered reason;
This fell despair ill suits your present fortunes.
Andr. No other stratagem can serve my purpose:
This is the sole expedient to be just
To Hector, to Astyanax, to Pyrrhus.
I shall soon visit Hector, and the shades
Of my great ancestors: Cephisa, thou
Wilt lend a hand to close thy mistress' eyes?
Ceph. Oh, never think that I will stay behind you!
Andr. No, my Cephisa; I must have thee live.
Remember, thou didst promise to obey,
And to be secret: wilt thou now betray me?
After thy long, thy faithful service, wilt thou
Refuse my last commands, my dying wish?
Once more I do conjure thee, live for me.
Ceph. Life is not worth my care when you are gone.
Andr. I must commit into thy faithful hands
All that is dear and precious to my soul:
Live, and supply my absence to my child;
All that remains of Troy; a future progeny
Of heroes, and a distant line of kings,
In him, is all entrusted to thy care.
Ceph. But, madam, what will be the rage of Pyrrhus,
Defrauded of his promised happiness?
Andr. That will require thy utmost skill: Observe

The first impetuous onsets of his grief;
Use every artifice to keep him stedfast.
Sometimes with tears thou mayst discourse of me;
Speak of our marriage; let him think I loved him;
Tell him my soul reposed itself on him,
When I resigned my son to his protection.
Ceph. Oh, for a spirit to support my grief!
Is there ought more before you go for ever?
Andr. Oh, my Cephisa! my swoln heart is full!
I have a thousand farewells to my son:
But tears break in! Grief interrupts my speech—
—My soul overflows in fondness—let him know
I died to save him: And would die again.
Season his mind with early hints of glory;
Make him acquainted with his ancestors;
Trace out their shining story in his thoughts;
Dwell on the exploits of his immortal father,
And sometimes let him hear his mother's name.
Let him reflect upon his royal birth
With modest pride; Pyrrhus will prove a friend:
But let him know he has a conqueror's right.
He must be taught to stifle his resentments,
And sacrifice his vengeance to his safety.
Should he prove headstrong, rash, or unadvised,
He then will frustrate all his mother's virtue,
Provoke his fate, and I shall die in vain.
Ceph. Alas! I fear I never shall outlive you.
Andr. No more: thy tears, Cephisa, will betray me;
Assume a chearful look, but still remember—
[*Flourish within.*
Hark how the trumpet, with its sprightly notes,
Proclaims the appointed hour, and calls us hence.
Hector, I come, once more a queen, to join thee!
Thus the gay victim, with fresh garlands crowned,
Pleased with the sacred fife's enlivening sound,
Through gazing crowds in solemn state proceeds,
And, drest in fatal pomp, magnificently bleeds.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

HERMIONE *alone.*

What have I done? Where am I? Where is Pyrrhus?
Ye gods! What mean these horrors? I am undone!
My soul is on the rack! I cannot bear it:
Why do I wander like some guilty ghost?
What brought me to this place? What keeps me here?
The court of Pyrrhus has no room for me!
Do I still doubt if I should love or hate him?
Hard-hearted man! How unconcerned he left me!
Did he once sigh? Bestow one pitying look?
Once shed a tear? Or speak one soft, kind word?
Did he so much as feign one moment's sorrow,
To calm my griefs, and mitigate his falsehood?
Why am I still thus anxious for his life?
Why do I start at his impending fate?
Shall he then live? Shall the base traitor live,
To laugh at my distress? No, let him perish!
Be quick, Orestes! Execute my orders!
Alas! My orders! Oh, preposterous guilt!
Can I decree the death of him I love?
Was it for this my soul delighted in him?
Was it for this I left my father's court?
Have I then crossed so many realms and seas,
To murder Pyrrhus?

Enter CLEONE.

Her. Oh, Cleone, help me!
What have I done? Is Pyrrhus yet alive?
What sayst thou? Answer me: Where is the king?
Cleo. Madam, I saw the cruel prince set forward,
Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
Still as he walked his ravished eyes were fixt
On the fair captive; while through shouting crowds
She passed along with a dejected air,
And seemed to mourn her Hector to the last.
Her. Insulting tyrant! I shall burst with rage!
But say, Cleone, didst thou mark him well!
Was his brow smooth? Say, did there not appear
Some shade of grief, some little cloud of sorrow?
Did he not stop? Did he not look once back?
Didst thou approach him? Was he not confounded?
Did he not——Oh, be quick and tell me all!
Cleo. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love. Unguarded he marched on,
'Midst a promiscuous throng of friends and foes.
His cares all turn upon Astyanax,
Whom he has lodged within the citadel,
Defended by the strength of all his guards.
Her. Enough! he dies!—the traitor!——
Where's Orestes?
Cleo. He's in the temple with his whole retinue.
Her. Is he still resolute? Is he still determined?
Cleo. Madam, I fear——
Her. How! Is Orestes false?
Does he betray me too?
Cleo. A thousand doubts
Perplex his soul, and wound him with remorse:
His virtue and his love prevail by turns.
He told me Pyrrhus should not fall ignobly:
Pyrrhus, the warlike son of great Achilles.
He dreads the censure of the Grecian states;
Of all mankind; and fears to stain his honour.
Her. Poor timorous wretch! 'tis false! he basely fears
To cope with dangers, and encounter death;
'Tis that he fears:—Am I bright Helen's daughter?
To vindicate her wrongs all Greece conspired:
For her confederate nations fought, and kings were slain;
Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell.

My eyes want force to raise a lover's arm,
Against a tyrant that has dared to wrong me!
Cleo. Madam, like Helen, trust your cause to Greece.
Her. No; I'll avenge myself! I'll to the temple!
I'll overturn the altar, stab the priest!
I'll hurl destruction, like a whirlwind, round me!
They must not wed! they must not live! they shall not!
Let me be gone! I have no time to lose!
Stand off! hold me not! I am all distraction!
Oh, Pyrrhus! Tyrant! Traitor! Thou shalt bleed!

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. Madam, 'tis done; your orders are obeyed:
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.
Her. Is Pyrrhus slain?
Orest. Even now he gasps in death:
Our Greeks, all undistinguished in the crowd,
Flocked to the temple, and dispersed themselves
On every side the altar. I was there;
Pyrrhus observed me with a haughty eye,
And, proud to triumph over Greece in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem,
And bound it on the temples of his captive;
Receive, said he, my crown; receive my faith;
Mine and my people's sovereign reign for ever,
From this blest hour, a father to your son,
I'll scourge his foes: henceforward be he styled
The Trojan king; I swear it at the altar,
And call the gods to ratify my vows.
His subjects, with loud acclamations, shook
The spacious dome. Our Greeks, enraged, cried out,
Revenge! revenge! broke through the thronging press,
And rushed, tumultuous, on the unguarded king;
Their eager fury left no work for me.
Pyrrhus awhile opposed their clashing swords,
And dealt his fatal blows, on every side,
With manly firmness; till, opprest by numbers,
Streaming with blood, all over gashed with wounds,
He reeled, he groaned, and at the altar fell.
—Haste, madam; let us fly! Haste to our ships!
They lie unmoored: our friends attend us there.
Her. What have they done!
Orest. Madam, forgive their rage.
I own your vengeance had been more complete,
Had Pyrrhus fallen by me, and had he known
Hermione chastised him by my arm.
Her. Peace, monster! peace! Go tell thy horrid tale
To savages, and howl it in the desert.
Wouldst thou impute to me thy barbarous guilt?
Me wouldst thou make the accomplice of thy crimes? —
Hence to thy Greeks, and boast thy foul exploits!
My soul abhors them! I disclaim the deed!
Begone! I know thee not! Thou fell barbarian!
What had he done? What could provoke thy madness,
To assassinate so great, so brave a man?
Who set thee on?
Orest. Oh, grant me patience, Heaven!
With your own lips did you not curse the tyrant,
Pronounce his death, and urge me to destroy him?
Her. What if, transported by my boundless passion,
I could not bear to see him wed another,
Were you to obey a jealous woman's frenzy?
You should have dived into my inmost thoughts:
My heart, though full of rage, was free from malice;
And all my anger was excess of love.
Why did you take me at my word! You saw
The struggles of my soul; you heard me rave;
You should have questioned me a thousand times,
Yet still have doubted, and still questioned on,
Before you ventured on a life so precious.
Orest. Hear me but speak: Heaven knows, against my will——
Her. Why did you not return? Why not consult me
A second time? And, undetermined still,
Again return, and still find new delays?
What had your rash officious Greeks, dire bloodhounds!
To do with my revenge? What drew you hither?
To bring on me the vengeful woes that haunt you?
Are these the fruits of your detested love?
Your fatal embassy, your hateful presence,
Drove Pyrrhus to my rival; and destroys
Both him and me. He might have loved me still,
Had you ne'er interposed—Avaunt! Begone!
And leave me in Epirus. I renounce
My friends, my country, Greece, and all mankind:
But chiefly I renounce thee! monster, thee!
[*Exit.*
Orest. Am I awake? Where am I? Soft my soul;
Be not too rash.——Was that Hermione?
Why should her anger thunder against me?
Was not this blood shed all by her command?—
I am, indeed, a most outrageous monster!
A ruffian, murderer, a base assassin!
And all to please a false, ungrateful woman.
Henceforward let the laws of nations cease;
And let the pale, that severs right and wrong,
Things sacred and profane, be broken down;
Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
Are not in safety, while Orestes lives!
Oh! never more shall my torn mind be healed,
Nor taste the gentle comfort of repose!
A dreadful band of gloomy cares surround me,
And lay strong siege to my distracted soul!

Enter PYLADES, *attended by Greeks.*

Pyl. Haste, prince; let us be gone: 'tis death to stay.

Andromache reigns queen: she gives the alarm,
And vows revenge upon the foes of Pyrrhus.
The people arm and muster in the streets:
Our Greeks will not be able long to guard
The palace gates, and to secure our flight.
We must be speedy, sir.
Orest. You may depart,
My friends——Hermione and I remain——
Her cruelty has quite undone me!——Go,
And leave me to myself——I'll find her out.
Pyl. Alas, unhappy princess! she's no more;
Forget her, sir, and save yourself with us.
Orest. Hermione no more!—Oh, all ye powers!
Pyl. Full of disorder, wildness in her looks,
With hands expanded, and dishevelled hair,
Breathless and pale, with shrieks she sought the temple;
In the mid-way she met the corpse of Pyrrhus;
She started at the sight; then, stiff with horror,
Gazed frightful: waked from the dire amaze,
She raised her eyes to heaven with such a look,
As spoke her sorrows, and reproached the gods:
Then plunged a poniard deep within her breast,
And fell on Pyrrhus, grasping him in death.
Orest. I thank you, gods—I never could expect
To be so wretched—You have been industrious
To finish your decrees; to make Orestes
A dreadful instance of your power to punish.
I'm singled out to bear the wrath of Heaven.
Pyl. You hazard your retreat by these delays.
The guards will soon beset us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal.
Orest. True, my friend:
And therefore 'twas I thanked the bounteous gods.
My fate's accomplished—I shall die content.
Oh, bear me hence—blow winds!——
Pyl. Let us be gone.
Orest. The murdered lovers wait me—Hark, they call!
Nay, if your blood still reeks, I'll mingle mine!
One tomb will hold us all.
Pyl. Alas! I fear
His ravings will return with his misfortunes.
Orest. I am dizzy!—Clouds!—Quite lost in utter darkness.
Guide me, some friendly pilot, through the storm.
I shiver! Oh, I freeze!—So;—Light returns;
'Tis the grey dawn!—See, Pylades!—Behold!—
I am encompassed with a sea of blood!——
The crimson billows!—Oh, my brain's on fire!
Pyl. How is it, sir?—Repose yourself on me.
Orest. Pyrrhus, stand off!——What wouldst thou?—How he glares!
What envious hand has closed thy wounds?—Have at thee.
It is Hermione that strikes——Confusion!
She catches Pyrrhus in her arms.—Oh, save me!
How terrible she looks! She knits her brow!
She frowns me dead! She frights me into madness!
Where am I?——Who are you?
Pyl. Alas, poor prince!
Help to support him.—How he pants for breath!
Orest. This is most kind, my Pylades——Oh, why,
Why was I born to give thee endless trouble?
Pyl. All will go well; he settles into reason.
Orest. Who talks of reason? Better to have none,
Than not enough.——Run, some one, tell my Greeks,
I will not have them touch the king. Now—now
I blaze again! See there! Look where they come;
A shoal of furies—How they swarm about me!
My terror! Hide me! Oh, their snakey locks!
Hark, how they hiss! See, see their flaming brands!
Now they let drive full at me! How they grin,
And shake their iron whips! My ears! What yelling!
And see, Hermione! She sets them on——
Thrust not your scorpions thus into my bosom!
Oh! I am stung to death! Dispatch me soon!
There—take my heart, Hermione! Tear it out!
Disjoint me! kill me! Oh, my tortured soul!
Pyl. Kind Heaven restore him to his wonted calm!
Oft have I seen him rave, but never thus:
Quite spent! Assist me, friends, to bear him off;
Our time is short: should his strong rage return,
'Twould be beyond our power to force him hence.
Away, my friends! I hear the portal open.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter PHŒNIX, *attended by Guards.*

Phœn. All, all are fled! Orestes is not here!
Triumphant villains!—The base, giddy rabble,
Whose hands should all have been employed with fire,
To waste the fleet, flocked round the dying princess;
And, while they stand agaze, the Greeks embark.
Oh, 'tis too plain!—this sacrilegious murder
Was authorised.——The ambassador's escape
Declares his guilt.——Most bloody embassy!
Most unexampled deed!—Where, where, ye gods,
Is majesty secure, if in your temples
You give it no protection!—See, the queen.
[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman Greeks! the time will come
When you shall dearly pay your bloody deeds!
How should the Trojans hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on Pyrrhus;
Pyrrhus, the bravest man in all your league;
The man whose single valour made you triumph?
[*A dead march behind.*
Is my child there?——

Ceph. It is the corpse of Pyrrhus.
The weeping soldiers bear him on their shields.
Andr. Ill-fated prince! too negligent of life,
And too unwary of the faithless Greeks!
Cut off in the fresh ripening prime of manhood,
Even in the pride of life: thy triumphs new,
And all thy glories in full blossom round thee!
The very Trojans would bewail thy fate.
Ceph. Alas, then, will your sorrows never end!
Andr. Oh, never, never!——While I live, my tears
Will never cease; for I was born to grieve.——
Give present orders for the funeral pomp:
[*To Phœnix.*
Let him be robed in all his regal state;
Place round him every shining mark of honour:
And let the pile, that consecrates his ashes,
Rise like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.
[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Ceph. That sound proclaims the arrival of the prince;
The guards conduct him from the citadel.
Andr. With open arms I'll meet him!—Oh, Cephisa!
A springing joy, mixt with a soft concern,
A pleasure which no language can express,
An extacy that mothers only feel,
Plays round my heart, and brightens up my sorrow,
Like gleams of sunshine in a lowering sky.
Though plunged in ills, and exercised in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair:
When prest by dangers, and beset with foes,
The gods their timely succour interpose;
And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelmed with grief,
By unforeseen expedients bring relief.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

JANE SHORE.

BY

ROWE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.
LORD HASTINGS.
CATESBY.
SIR RICHARD RATCLIFFE.
BELMOUR,
DUMONT.
Servant.

WOMEN.

ALICIA.
JANE SHORE.

Several Lords of the Council, Guards, and Attendants.

Scene,—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Tower.*

Enter the Duke of GLOSTER, SIR RICHARD RATCLIFFE, *and* CATESBY.

Glost. THUS far success attends upon our councils,
And each event has answered to my wish;
The queen and all her upstart race are quelled;
Dorset is banished, and her brother Rivers,
Ere this, lies shorter by the head at Pomfret.
The nobles have, with joint concurrence, named me
Protector of the realm. My brother's children,
Young Edward, and the little York, are lodged
Here, safe within the Tower. How say you, sirs,
Does not this business wear a lucky face?
The sceptre and the golden wreath of royalty
Seem hung within my reach.

Rat. Then take them to you,
And wear them long and worthily. You are
The last remaining male of princely York,
(For Edward's boys, the state esteems not of them,)
And therefore on your sovereignty and rule,
The common weal does her dependance make,
And leans upon your highness' able hand.

Cat. And yet to-morrow does the council meet,
To fix a day for Edward's coronation.
Who can expound this riddle?

Glost. That can I.
These lords are each one my approved good friends,
Of special trust and nearness to my bosom;
And howsoever busy they may seem,
And diligent to bustle in the state,
Their zeal goes on no farther than we lead,
And at our bidding stays.

Cat. Yet there is one,
And he amongst the foremost in his power,
Of whom I wish your highness were assured.
For me, perhaps it is my nature's fault,
I own, I doubt of his inclining, much.

Glost. I guess the man at whom your words would point:
Hastings——
Cat. The same.
Glost. He bears me great good-will.
Cat. 'Tis true, to you, as to the lord protector,
And Gloster's duke, he bows with lowly service:
But were he bid to cry, *God save king Richard*,
Then tell me in what terms he would reply?
Believe me, I have proved the man, and found him:
I know he bears a most religious reverence
To his dead master Edward's royal memory,
And whither that may lead him is most plain.
Yet more—One of that stubborn sort he is,
Who, if they once grow fond of an opinion,
They call it honour, honesty, and faith,
And sooner part with life than let it go.
Glost. And yet this tough impracticable heart
Is governed by a dainty-fingered girl.
Such flaws are found in the most worthy natures;
A laughing, toying, wheedling, whimpering she
Shall make him amble on a gossip's message,
And take the distaff with a hand as patient
As e'er did Hercules.
Rat. The fair Alicia,
Of noble birth and exquisite of feature,
Has held him long a vassal to her beauty.
Cat. I fear, he fails in his allegiance there;
Or my intelligence is false, or else
The dame has been too lavish of her feast,
And fed him till he loathes.
Glost. No more, he comes.

Enter LORD HASTINGS.

Hast. Health, and the happiness of many days,
Attend upon your grace.
Glost. My good lord chamberlain,
We're much beholden to your gentle friendship.
Hast. My lord, I come an humble suitor to you.
Glost. In right good time. Speak out your pleasure freely.
Hast. I am to move your highness in behalf
Of Shore's unhappy wife.
Glost. Say you, of Shore?
Hast. Once a bright star, that held her place on high:
The first and fairest of our English dames,
While royal Edward held the sovereign rule.
Now sunk in grief, and pining with despair,
Her waning form no longer shall incite
Envy in woman, or desire in man.
She never sees the sun, but through her tears,
And wakes to sigh the live-long night away.
Glost. Marry! the times are badly changed with her,
From Edward's days to these. Then all was jollity,
Feasting and mirth, light wantonness and laughter,
Piping and playing, minstrelsy and masquing;
Till life fled from us like an idle dream,
A shew of mummery without a meaning.
My brother, rest and pardon to his soul!
Is gone to his account; for this his minion,
The revel rout is done—But you were speaking
Concerning her—I have been told, that you
Are frequent in your visitation to her.
Hast. No farther, my good lord, than friendly pity,
And tender-hearted charity allow.
Glost. Go to; I did not mean to chide you for it.
For, sooth to say, I hold it noble in you
To cherish the distressed——On with your tale.
Hast. Thus it is, gracious sir, that certain officers,
Using the warrant of your mighty name,
With insolent, unjust, and lawless power,
Have seized upon the lands which late she held
By grant, from her great master Edward's bounty.
Glost. Somewhat of this, but slightly, have I heard;
And though some counsellors of forward zeal,
Some of most ceremonious sanctity,
And bearded wisdom, often have provoked
The hand of justice to fall heavy on her;
Yet still, in kind compassion of her weakness,
And tender memory of Edward's love,
I have withheld the merciless stern law
From doing outrage on her helpless beauty.
Hast. Good Heaven, who renders mercy back for mercy,
With open-handed bounty shall repay you:
This gentle deed shall fairly be set foremost,
To screen the wild escapes of lawless passion,
And the long train of frailties flesh is heir to.
Glost. Thus far, the voice of pity pleaded only:
Our farther and more full extent of grace
Is given to your request. Let her attend,
And to ourself deliver up her griefs.
She shall be heard with patience, and each wrong
At full redressed. But I have other news,
Which much import us both; for still my fortunes
Go hand in hand with yours: our common foes,
The queen's relations, our new-fangled gentry,
Have fallen their haughty crests—That for your privacy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An apartment in Jane Shore's house.*

Enter BELMOUR *and* DUMONT.

Bel. How she has lived, you have heard my tale already;
The rest your own attendance in her family,
Where I have found the means this day to place you,
And nearer observation, best will tell you.
See, with what sad and sober cheer she comes.

Enter JANE SHORE.

Sure, or I read her visage much amiss,
Or grief besets her hard. Save you, fair lady!

The blessings of the cheerful morn be on you,
And greet your beauty with its opening sweets!
J. Sh. My gentle neighbour, your good wishes still
Pursue my hapless fortunes! Ah, good Belmour!
How few, like thee, inquire the wretched out,
And court the offices of soft humanity!
Like thee reserve their raiment for the naked,
Reach out their bread to feed the crying orphan,
Or mix their pitying tears with those that weep!
Thy praise deserves a better tongue than mine,
To speak and bless thy name. Is this the gentleman,
Whose friendly service you commended to me?
Bel. Madam, it is.
J. Sh. A venerable aspect. [*Aside.*
Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silver locks;
He wears the marks of many years well spent,
Of virtue, truth well tried, and wise experience;
A friend like this would suit my sorrows well.
Fortune, I fear me, sir, has meant you ill, [*To Dum.*
Who pays your merit with that scanty pittance,
Which my poor hand and humble roof can give.
But to supply these golden vantages,
Which elsewhere you might find, expect to meet
A just regard and value for your worth,
The welcome of a friend, and the free partnership
Of all that little good the world allows me.
Dum. You over-rate me much; and all my answer
Must be my future truth; let them speak for me,
And make up my deserving.
J. Sh. Are you of England?
Dum. No, gracious lady, Flanders claims my birth;
At Antwerp has my constant biding been,
Where sometimes I have known more plenteous days
Than these which now my failing age affords.
J. Sh. Alas! at Antwerp!—Oh, forgive my tears! [*Weeping.*
They fall for my offences—and must fall
Long, long ere they shall wash my stains away.
You knew perhaps—Oh grief! oh shame! my husband.
Dum. I knew him well—but stay this flood of anguish!
The senseless grave feels not your pious sorrows:
Three years and more are past, since I was bid,
With many of our common friends, to wait him
To his last peaceful mansion. I attended,
Sprinkled his clay-cold corse with holy drops,
According to our church's rev'rend rite,
And saw him laid in hallow'd ground, to rest.
J. Sh. Oh, that my soul had known no joy but him!
That I had lived within his guiltless arms,
And, dying, slept in innocence beside him!
But now his dust abhors the fellowship,
And scorns to mix with mine.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The lady Alicia
Attends your leisure.
J. Sh. Say I wish to see her. [*Exit Servant.*
Please, gentle sir, one moment to retire:
I'll wait you on the instant, and inform you
Of each unhappy circumstance, in which
Your friendly aid and counsel much may stead me. [*Exeunt Belmour and Dumont.*

Enter Alicia.

Alic. Still, my fair friend, still shall I find you thus?
Still shall these sighs heave after one another,
These trickling drops chase one another still,
As if the posting messengers of grief
Could overtake the hours fled far away,
And make old Time come back?
J. Sh. No, my Alicia,
Heaven and his saints be witness to my thoughts,
There is no hour of all my life o'er past,
That I could wish to take its turn again.
Alic. And yet some of those days my friend has known,
Some of those years might pass for golden ones,
At least if womankind can judge of happiness.
What could we wish, we, who delight in empire,
Whose beauty is our sovereign good, and gives us
Our reasons to rebel, and power to reign,
What could we more than to behold a monarch,
Lovely, renowned, a conqueror, and young,
Bound in our chains, and sighing at our feet?
J. Sh. 'Tis true, the royal Edward was a wonder,
The goodly pride of all our English youth;
He was the very joy of all that saw him;
Formed to delight, to love, and to persuade.
Impassive spirits and angelic natures
Might have been charmed, like yielding human weakness,
Stooped from their heaven, and listened to his talking.
But what had I to do with kings and courts?
My humble lot had cast me far beneath him;
And that he was the first of all mankind,
The bravest, and most lovely, was my curse.
Alic. Sure, something more than fortune joined your loves:
Nor could his greatness, and his gracious form,
Be elsewhere matched so well, as to the sweetness
And beauty of my friend.
J. Sh. Name him no more!
He was the bane and ruin of my peace.
This anguish and these tears, these are the legacies
His fatal love has left me. Thou wilt see me,
Believe me, my Alicia, thou wilt see me,
E'er yet a few short days pass o'er my head,
Abandoned to the very utmost wretchedness.

The hand of power has seized almost the whole
Of what was left for needy life's support;
Shortly thou wilt behold me poor, and kneeling
Before thy charitable door for bread.
Alic. Joy of my life, my dearest Shore, forbear
To wound my heart with thy foreboding sorrows;
Raise thy sad soul to better hopes than these;
Lift up thy eyes, and let them shine once more,
Bright as the morning sun above the mist,
Exert thy charms, seek out the stern protector,
And soothe his savage temper with thy beauty:
Spite of his deadly, unrelenting nature,
He shall be moved to pity, and redress thee.
J. Sh. My form, alas! has long forgot to please;
The scene of beauty and delight is changed;
No roses bloom upon my fading cheek,
Nor laughing graces wanton in my eyes;
But haggard grief, lean-looking sallow care,
And pining discontent, a rueful train,
Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn.
One only shadow of a hope is left me;
The noble-minded Hastings, of his goodness,
Has kindly undertaken to be my advocate,
And move my humble suit to angry Gloster.
Alic. Does Hastings undertake to plead your cause?
But wherefore should he not? Hastings has eyes;
The gentle lord has a right tender heart,
Melting and easy, yielding to impression,
And catching the soft flame from each new beauty;
But yours shall charm him long.
J. Sh. Away, you flatterer!
Nor charge his generous meaning with a weakness,
Which his great soul and virtue must disdain.
Too much of love thy hapless friend has proved,
Too many giddy foolish hours are gone,
And in fantastic measures danced away:
May the remaining few know only friendship!
So thou, my dearest, truest, best Alicia,
Vouchsafe to lodge me in thy gentle heart,
A partner there; I will give up mankind,
Forget the transports of increasing passion,
And all the pangs we feel for its decay.
Alic. Live! live and reign for ever in my bosom! [*Embracing.*
Safe and unrivalled there possess thy own;—
And you, the brightest of the stars above,
Ye saints, that once were women here below,
Be witness of the truth, the holy friendship,
Which here to this my other self I vow!
If I not hold her nearer to my soul,
Than every other joy the world can give;
Let poverty, deformity, and shame,
Distraction and despair seize me on earth!
Let not my faithless ghost have peace hereafter,
Nor taste the bliss of your celestial fellowship!
J. Sh. Yes, thou art true, and only thou art true;
Therefore these jewels, once the lavish bounty
Of royal Edward's love, I trust to thee;
[*Giving a casket.*
Receive this, all that I can call my own,
And let it rest unknown, and safe with thee:
That if the state's injustice should oppress me,
Strip me of all, and turn me out a wanderer,
My wretchedness may find relief from thee,
And shelter from the storm.
Alic. My all is thine;
One common hazard shall attend us both,
And both be fortunate, or both be wretched.
But let thy fearful doubting heart be still;
The saints and angels have thee in their charge,
And all things shall be well. Think not, the good,
The gentle deeds of mercy thou hast done,
Shall die forgotten all; the poor, the prisoner,
The fatherless, the friendless, and the widow,
Who daily own the bounty of thy hand,
Shall cry to Heaven, and pull a blessing on thee;
Even man, the merciless insulter man,
Man, who rejoices in our sex's weakness,
Shall pity thee, and with unwonted goodness
Forget thy failings, and record thy praise.
J. Sh. Why should I think that man will do for me,
What yet he never did for wretches like me?
Mark by what partial justice we are judged:
Such is the fate unhappy women find,
And such the curse entailed upon our kind,
That man, the lawless libertine, may rove,
Free and unquestioned through the wilds of love;
While woman, sense and nature's easy fool,
If poor weak woman swerve from virtue's rule,
If, strongly charmed, she leave the thorny way,
And in the softer paths of pleasure stray,
Ruin ensues, reproach and endless shame,
And one false step entirely damns her fame:
In vain with tears her loss she may deplore,
In vain look back on what she was before;
She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter Alicia, *speaking to* Jane Shore *as entering.*

Alic. No farther, gentle friend; good angels guard you,
And spread their glorious wings about your slumbers.
The drowsy night grows on the world, and now
The busy craftsmen and o'er laboured hind
Forget the travail of the day in sleep:
Care only wakes, and moping pensiveness;
With meagre discontented looks they sit,
And watch the wasting of the midnight taper.
Such vigils must I keep, so wakes my soul,
Restless and self-tormented! Oh, false Hastings!
Thou hast destroyed my peace.
[*Knocking within.*
What noise is that?
What visitor is this, who, with bold freedom,
Breaks in upon the peaceful night and rest,
With such a rude approach?

Enter a Servant.

Ser. One from the court,
Lord Hastings (as I think) demands my lady.
Alic. Hastings! Be still, my heart, and try to meet him
With his own arts: with falsehood—But he comes.

Enter Lord Hastings, *speaks to a Servant as entering.*

Hast. Dismiss my train, and wait alone without.
Alicia here! Unfortunate encounter!
But be it as it may.
Alic. When humbly, thus,
The great descend to visit the afflicted,
When thus, unmindful of their rest, they come
To soothe the sorrows of the midnight mourner,
Comfort comes with them; like the golden sun,
Dispels the sullen shades with her sweet influence,
And cheers the melancholy house of care.
Hast. 'Tis true, I would not over-rate a courtesy,
Nor let the coldness of delay hang on it,
To nip and blast its favour, like a frost;
But rather chose, at this late hour to come,
That your fair friend may know I have prevailed;
The lord protector has received her suit,
And means to shew her grace.
Alic. My friend! my lord.
Hast. Yes, lady, yours: none has a right more ample
To task my power than you.
Alic. I want the words,
To pay you back a compliment so courtly;
But my heart guesses at the friendly meaning,
And will not die your debtor.
Hast. 'Tis well, madam.
But I would see your friend.
Alic. Oh, thou false lord!
I would be mistress of my heaving heart,
Stifle this rising rage, and learn from thee
To dress my face in easy dull indifference:
But it will not be; my wrongs will tear their way,
And rush at once upon thee.
Hast. Are you wise?
Have you the use of reason? Do you wake?
What means this raving, this transporting passion?
Alic. Oh, thou cool traitor! thou insulting tyrant!
Dost thou behold my poor distracted heart,
Thus rent with agonizing love and rage,
And ask me what it means? Art thou not false?
Am I not scorned, forsaken, and abandoned,
Left, like a common wretch, to shame and infamy,
Given up to be the sport of villains' tongues,
Of laughing parasites, and lewd buffoons?
And all because my soul has doated on thee
With love, with truth, and tenderness unutterable!
Hast. Are these the proofs of tenderness and love?
These endless quarrels, discontents, and jealousies,
These never-ceasing wailings and complainings,
These furious starts, these whirlwinds of the soul,
Which every other moment rise to madness?
Alic. What proof, alas! have I not given of love?
What have I not abandoned to thy arms?
Have I not set at nought my noble birth,
A spotless fame, and an unblemished race,
The peace of innocence, and pride of virtue?
My prodigality has given thee all;
And now, I've nothing left me to bestow,
You hate the wretched bankrupt you have made.
Hast. Why am I thus pursued from place to place,
Kept in the view, and crossed at every turn?
In vain I fly, and, like a hunted deer,
Scud o'er the lawns, and hasten to the covert;
E'er I can reach my safety, you o'ertake me
With the swift malice of some keen reproach,
And drive the winged shaft deep in my heart.
Alic. Hither you fly, and here you seek repose;
Spite of the poor deceit, your arts are known,
Your pious, charitable, midnight visits!
Hast. If you are wise, and prize your peace of mind,
Yet take the friendly counsel of my love;
Believe me true, nor listen to your jealousy.
Let not that devil, which undoes your sex,
That cursed curiosity seduce you,
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,

Shall never hurt your quiet; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to—be yet advised—
Alic. Dost thou, in scorn,
Preach patience to my rage, and bid me tamely
Sit like a poor contented idiot down,
Nor dare to think thou'st wronged me? Ruin seize thee,
And swift perdition overtake thy treachery!
Have I the least remaining cause to doubt?
Hast thou endeavoured once to hide thy falsehood?
To hide it might have spoke some little tenderness,
And shewn thee half unwilling to undo me:
But thou disdainest the weakness of humanity;
Thy words, and all thy actions, have confessed it;
Even now thy eyes avow it, now they speak,
And insolently own the glorious villany.
Hast. Well, then! I own my heart has broke your chains.
Patient I bore the painful bondage long;
At length my generous love disdains your tyranny;
The bitterness and stings of taunting jealousy,
Vexatious days, and jarring, joyless nights,
Have driven him forth to seek some safer shelter,
Where he may rest his weary wings in peace.
Alic. You triumph! do! and, with gigantic pride,
Defy impending vengeance. Heaven shall wink;
No more his arm shall roll the dreadful thunder;
Nor send his lightnings forth: no more his justice
Shall visit the presuming sons of men,
But perjury, like thine, shall dwell in safety.
Hast. Whate'er my fate decrees for me hereafter,
Be present to me now, my better angel!
Preserve me from the storm that threatens now,
And if I have beyond atonement sinned,
Let any other kind of plague o'ertake me,
So I escape the fury of that tongue.
Alic. Thy prayer is heard—I go—but know, proud lord,
Howe'er thou scorn'st the weakness of my sex,
This feeble hand may find the means to reach thee,
Howe'er sublime in power and greatness placed,
With royal favour guarded round and graced;
On eagle's wings my rage shall urge her flight,
And hurl thee headlong from thy topmost height;
Then, like thy fate, superior will I sit,
And view thee fallen, and grovelling at my feet;
See thy last breath with indignation go,
And tread thee sinking to the shades below.
[*Exit.*
Hast. How fierce a fiend is passion! with what wildness,
What tyranny untamed it reigns in woman!
Unhappy sex! whose easy yielding temper
Gives way to every appetite alike:
Each gust of inclination, uncontrouled,
Sweeps through their souls, and sets them in an uproar;
Each motion of the heart rises to fury,
And love, in their weak bosoms, is a rage
As terrible as hate, and as destructive.
So the wind roars o'er the wide fenceless ocean,
And heaves the billows of the boiling deep,
Alike from north, from south, from east, from west;
With equal force the tempest blows, by turns,
From every corner of the seaman's compass.
But soft ye now—for here comes one, disclaims
Strife and her wrangling train; of equal elements,
Without one jarring atom, was she formed,
And gentleness and joy make up her being.

Enter JANE SHORE.

Forgive me, fair one, if officious friendship
Intrudes on your repose, and comes thus late
To greet you with the tidings of success.
The princely Gloster has vouchsafed you hearing;
To-morrow he expects you at the court;
There plead your cause, with never-failing beauty,
Speak all your griefs, and find a full redress.
J. Sh. Thus humbly let your lowly servant bend,
[*Kneeling.*
Thus let me bow my grateful knee to earth,
And bless your noble nature for this goodness.
Hast. Rise, gentle dame; you wrong my meaning much;
Think me not guilty of a thought so vain,
To sell my courtesy for thanks like these!
J. Sh. 'Tis true, your bounty is beyond my speaking:
But though my mouth be dumb, my heart shall thank you;
And when it melts before the throne of mercy,
Mourning and bleeding for my past offences,
My fervent soul shall breathe one prayer for you,
If prayers of such a wretch are heard on high,
That Heaven will pay you back, when most you need,
The grace and goodness you have shewn to me.
Hast. If there be ought of merit in my service,
Impute it there, where most 'tis due, to love;
Be kind, my gentle mistress, to my wishes,
And satisfy my panting heart with beauty.
J. Sh. Alas! my lord——
Hast. Why bend thy eyes to earth?
Wherefore these looks of heaviness and sorrow?
Why breathes that sigh, my love? And wherefore falls
This trickling shower of tears, to stain thy sweetness?
J. Sh. If pity dwells within your noble breast,
(As sure it does) Oh, speak not to me thus!
Hast. Can I behold thee, and not speak of love?
Even now, thus sadly as thou stand'st before me,

Thus desolate, dejected, and forlorn,
Thy softness steals upon my yielding senses,
Till my soul faints, and sickens with desire;
How canst thou give this motion to my heart,
And bid my tongue be still?

J. Sh. Cast round your eyes
Upon the high-born beauties of the court;
Behold, like opening roses, where they bloom,
Sweet to the sense, unsullied all, and spotless;
There chuse some worthy partner of your heart,
To fill your arms, and bless your virtuous bed;
Nor turn your eyes this way, where sin and misery,
Like loathsome weeds, have over-run the soil,
And the destroyer, Shame, has laid all waste.

Hast. What means this peevish, this fantastic change?
Where is thy wonted pleasantness of face,
Thy wonted graces, and thy dimpled smiles?
Where hast thou lost thy wit, and sportive mirth?
That chearful heart, which used to dance for ever,
And cast a day of gladness all around thee?

J. Sh. Yes, I will own I merit the reproach;
And for those foolish days of wanton pride,
My soul is justly humbled to the dust:
All tongues, like yours, are licensed to upbraid me,
Still to repeat my guilt, to urge my infamy,
And treat me like that abject thing I have been.
Yet let the saints be witness to this truth,
That now, though late, I look with horror back,
That I detest my wretched self, and curse
My past polluted life. All-judging Heaven,
Who knows my crimes, has seen my sorrow for them.

Hast. No more of this dull stuff. 'Tis time enough
To whine and mortify thyself with penance,
When the decaying sense is palled with pleasure,
And weary nature tires in her last stage;
Then weep and tell thy beads, when altering rheums
Have stained the lustre of thy starry eyes,
And failing palsies shake thy withered hand.
The present moment claims more generous use;
Thy beauty, night, and solitude, reproach me,
For having talked thus long—come let me press thee, [*Laying hold of her.*
Pant on thy bosom, sink into thy arms,
And lose myself in the luxurious flood!

J. Sh. Never! by those chaste lights above, I swear,
My soul shall never know pollution more;
Forbear, my lord!—here let me rather die:
[*Kneeling.*
Let quick destruction overtake me here,
And end my sorrows and my shame for ever.

Hast. Away with this perverseness!—'tis too much.
Nay, if you strive—'tis monstrous affectation!
[*Struggling.*

J. Sh. Retire! I beg you leave me—

Hast. Thus to coy it!——
With one who knows you too——

J. Sh. For mercy's sake——

Hast. Ungrateful woman! Is it thus you pay
My services?——

J. Sh. Abandon me to ruin——
Rather than urge me——

Hast. This way to your chamber;
[*Pulling her.*
There if you struggle——

J. Sh. Help, oh, gracious Heaven!
Help! Save me! Help!

Enter Dumont, *he interposes.*

Dum. My lord! for honour's sake——

Hast. Ha! What art thou?—Begone!

Dum. My duty calls me
To my attendance on my mistress here.

J. Sh. For pity, let me go——

Hast. Avaunt! base groom——
At distance wait, and know thy office better.

Dum. Forego your hold, my lord! 'tis most unmanly
This violence——

Hast. Avoid the room this moment,
Or I will tread thy soul out.

Dum. No, my lord——
The common ties of mankind call me now,
And bid me thus stand up in the defence
Of an oppressed, unhappy, helpless woman.

Hast. And dost thou know me, slave?

Dum. Yes, thou proud lord!
I know thee well; know thee with each advantage
Which wealth, or power, or noble birth can give thee.
I know thee, too, for one who stains those honours,
And blots a long illustrious line of ancestry,
By poorly daring thus to wrong a woman.

Hast. 'Tis wonderous well! I see, my saint-like dame,
You stand provided of your braves and ruffians
To man your cause, and bluster in your brothel.

Dum. Take back the foul reproach, unmannered railer!
Nor urge my rage too far, lest thou should'st find
I have as daring spirits in my blood
As thou or any of thy race e'er boasted;
And though no gaudy titles graced my birth,
Titles, the servile courtier's lean reward,
Sometimes the pay of virtue, but more oft
The hire which greatness gives to slaves and sycophants,
Yet Heaven, that made me honest, made me more
Than ever king did, when he made a lord.

Hast. Insolent villain! henceforth let it teach thee [*Draws and strikes him.*
The distance 'twixt a peasant and a prince!

Dum. Nay, then, my lord, [*drawing*] learn you by this, how well

An arm resolved can guard its master's life.
[*They fight.*
J. Sh. Oh my distracting fears! hold, for sweet Heaven. [*Runs off distractedly.*
[*They fight, Dumont disarms Lord Hastings.*
Hast. Confusion! baffled by a base-born hind!
Dum. Now, haughty sir, where is our difference now?
Your life is in my hand, and did not honour,
The gentleness of blood, and inborn virtue,
(Howe'er unworthy I may seem to you)
Plead in my bosom, I should take the forfeit.
But wear your sword again; and know, a lord
Opposed against a man, is but a man.
Hast. Curse on my failing arm! Your better fortune
Has given you vantage o'er me; but perhaps
Your triumph may be bought with dear repentance. [*Exit Hastings.*

Enter JANE SHORE.

J. Sh. Alas! what have ye done? Know ye the power,
The mightiness, that waits upon this lord?
Dum. Fear not, my worthiest mistress; 'tis a cause
In which Heaven's guards shall wait you. O pursue,
Pursue the sacred counsels of your soul,
Which urge you on to virtue; let not danger,
Nor the incumbering world, make faint your purpose.
Assisting angels shall conduct your steps,
Bring you to bliss, and crown your days with peace.
J. Sh. Oh, that my head were laid, my sad eyes closed,
And my cold corse wound in my shroud to rest!
My painful heart will never cease to beat,
Will never know a moment's peace till then.
Dum. Would you be happy, leave this fatal place;
Fly from the court's pernicious neighbourhood;
Where innocence is shamed, and blushing modesty
Is made the scorner's jest; where hate, deceit,
And deadly ruin, wear the masques of beauty,
And draw deluded fools with shews of pleasure.
J. Sh. Where should I fly, thus helpless and forlorn,
Of friends, and all the means of life bereft?
Dum. Belmour, whose friendly care still wakes to serve you,
Has found you out a little peaceful refuge,
Far from the court and the tumultuous city.
Within an ancient forest's ample verge,
There stands a lonely but a healthful dwelling,
Built for convenience and the use of life:
Around it fallows, meads, and pastures fair,
A little garden, and a limpid brook,
By nature's own contrivance seems disposed;
No neighbours, but a few poor simple clowns,
Honest and true, with a well meaning priest:
No faction, or domestic fury's rage,
Did e'er disturb the quiet of that place,
When the contending nobles shook the land
With York and Lancaster's disputed sway.
Your virtue there may find a safe retreat
From the insulting powers of wicked greatness.
J. Sh. Can there be so much happiness in store!
A cell like that is all my hopes aspire to.
Haste, then, and thither let us take our flight,
Ere the clouds gather, and the wintery sky
Descends in storms to intercept our passage.
Dum. Will you then go! You glad my very soul.
Banish your fears, cast all your cares on me;
Plenty and ease, and peace of mind shall wait you,
And make your latter days of life most happy.
Oh, lady! but I must not, cannot tell you,
How anxious I have been for all your dangers,
And how my heart rejoices at your safety.
So when the spring renews the flowery field,
And warns the pregnant nightingale to build,
She seeks the safest shelter of the wood,
Where she may trust her little tuneful brood;
Where no rude swains her shady cell may know,
No serpents climb, nor blasting winds may blow;
Fond of the chosen place, she views it o'er,
Sits there, and wanders through the grove no more;
Warbling she charms it each returning night,
And loves it with a mother's dear delight.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The court.*

Enter ALICIA, *with a paper.*

Alic. THIS paper to the great protector's hand,
With care and secrecy, must be conveyed;
His bold ambition now avows its aim,
To pluck the crown from Edward's infant brow,
And fix it on his own. I know he holds
My faithless Hastings adverse to his hopes,
And much devoted to the orphan king;
On that I build: this paper meets his doubts,
And marks my hated rival as the cause
Of Hastings' zeal for his dead master's sons.
Oh, jealousy! thou bane of pleasing friendship,
Thou worst invader of our tender bosoms,
How does thy rancour poison all our softness,
And turn our gentle natures into bitterness?

See where she comes! once my heart's dearest blessing;
Now my changed eyes are blasted with her beauty,
Loathe that known face, and sicken to behold her.

Enter Jane Shore.

J. Sh. Now whither shall I fly to find relief?
What charitable hand will aid me now?
Will stay my falling steps, support my ruins,
And heal my wounded mind with balmy comfort?
Oh, my Alicia!

Alic. What new grief is this?
What unforeseen misfortune has surprised thee,
That racks thy tender heart thus?

J. Sh. Oh, Dumont!

Alic. Say what of him?

J. Sh. That friendly, honest man,
Whom Belmour brought of late to my assistance,
On whose kind care, whose diligence and faith,
My surest trust was built, this very morn
Was seized on by the cruel hand of power,
Forced from my house, and borne away to prison.

Alic. To prison, said you! Can you guess the cause?

J. Sh. Too well, I fear. His bold defence of me
Has drawn the vengeance of Lord Hastings on him.

Alic. Lord Hastings! Ha!

J. Sh. Some fitter time must tell thee
The tale of my hard hap. Upon the present
Hang all my poor, my last remaining hopes.
Within this paper is my suit contained;
Here, as the princely Gloster passes forth,
I wait to give it on my humble knees,
And move him for redress.

[*She gives the paper to Alicia, who opens and seems to read it.*

Alic. [*Aside.*] Now for a wile,
To sting my thoughtless rival to the heart;
To blast her fatal beauties, and divide her
For ever from my perjured Hastings' eyes!
The wanderer may then look back to me,
And turn to his forsaken home again.
Their fashions are the same, it cannot fail.

[*Pulling out the other paper.*

J. Sh. But see, the great protector comes this way,
Attended by a train of waiting courtiers.
Give me the paper, friend.

Alic. [*Aside.*] For love and vengeance!

[*She gives her the other paper.*

Enter the Duke of Gloster, *Sir* Richard Ratcliffe, Catesby, *Courtiers, and other Attendants.*

J. Sh. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, noble Gloster, turn thy gracious eye,
Incline thy pitying ear to my complaint!
A poor, undone, forsaken, helpless woman,
Intreats a little bread for charity,
To feed her wants, and save her life from perishing.

Glost. Arise, fair dame, and dry your watery eyes.

[*Receiving the paper, and raising her.*

Beshrew me, but 'twere pity of his heart
That could refuse a boon to such a suitress.
You have got a noble friend to be your advocate;
A worthy and right gentle lord he is,
And to his trust most true. This present now,
Some matters of the state detain our leisure;
Those once dispatched, we'll call for you anon,
And give your griefs redress. Go to! be comforted.

J. Sh. Good Heavens repay your highness for this pity,
And shower down blessings on your princely head.
Come, my Alicia, reach thy friendly arm,
And help me to support this feeble frame,
That nodding totters with oppressive woe,
And sinks beneath its load.

[*Exeunt J. Sh. and Alic.*

Glost. Now, by my holidame!
Heavy of heart she seems, and sore afflicted.
But thus it is when rude calamity
Lays its strong gripe upon these mincing minions
The dainty gew-gaw forms dissolve at once,
And shiver at the shock. What says her paper? [*Seeming to read.*
Ha! what is this? Come nearer, Ratcliffe! Catesby!
Mark the contents, and then divine the meaning.

[*He reads.*

'Wonder not, princely Gloster, at the notice
'This paper brings you from a friend unknown;
'Lord Hastings is inclined to call you master,
'And kneel to Richard, as to England's king;
'But Shore's bewitching wife misleads his heart,
'And draws his service to king Edward's sons:
'Drive her away, you break the charm that holds him,
'And he, and all his powers, attend you.'

Rat. 'Tis wonderful!

Cat. The means by which it came
Yet stranger too!

Glost. You saw it given, but now.

Rat. She could not know the purport.

Glost. No, 'tis plain——
She knows it not, it levels at her life;
Should she presume to prate of such high matters,
The meddling harlot! dear she should abide it.

Cat. What hand soe'er it comes from, be assured,
It means your highness well——

Glost. Upon the instant,
Lord Hastings will be here; this morn I mean
To prove him to the quick; then if he flinch,
No more but this—away with him at once!
He must be mine or nothing——But he comes!
Draw nearer this way, and observe me well.

[*They whisper.*

Enter LORD HASTINGS.

Hast. This foolish woman hangs about my heart,
Lingers and wanders in my fancy still;
This coyness is put on; 'tis art and cunning;
And worn to urge desire——I must possess her.
The groom, who lift his saucy hand against me,
Ere this, is humbled, and repents his daring.
Perhaps, even she may profit by the example,
And teach her beauty not to scorn my power.

Glost. This do, and wait me e'er the council sits. [*Exeunt Rat. and Cat.*
My lord, you are well encountered; here has been
A fair petitioner this morning with us;
Believe me, she has won me much to pity her:
Alas! her gentle nature was not made
To buffet with adversity. I told her
How worthily her cause you had befriended;
How much for your good sake we mean to do,
That you had spoke, and all things should be well.

Hast. Your highness binds me ever to your service.

Glost. You know your friendship is most potent with us,
And shares our power. But of this enough,
For we have other matters for your ear.
The state is out of tune: distracting fears,
And jealous doubts, jar in our public counsels;
Amidst the wealthy city, murmurs rise,
Lewd railings, and reproach on those that rule,
With open scorn of government; hence credit,
And public trust 'twixt man and man, are broke.
The golden streams of commerce are withheld,
Which fed the wants of needy hinds and artizans,
Who therefore curse the great, and threat rebellion.

Hast. The resty knaves are over-run with ease,
As plenty ever is the nurse of faction;
If, in good days, like these, the headstrong herd
Grow madly wanton and repine; it is
Because the reins of power are held too slack,
And reverend authority, of late,
Has worn a face of mercy more than justice.

Glost. Beshrew my heart! but you have well divined
The source of these disorders. Who can wonder,
If riot and misrule o'erturn the realm,
When the crown sits upon a baby brow?
Plainly to speak; hence comes the general cry,
And sum of all complaint; 'twill ne'er be well
With England (thus they talk) while children govern.

Hast. 'Tis true, the king is young; but what of that?
We feel no want of Edward's riper years,
While Gloster's valour, and most princely wisdom,
So well supply our infant sovereign's place,
His youth's support, and guardian to his throne.

Glost. The council (much I'm bound to thank them for't!)
Have placed a pageant sceptre in my hand,
Barren of power, and subject to controul;
Scorned by my foes, and useless to my friends.
Oh, worthy lord! were mine the rule indeed,
I think I should not suffer rank offence,
At large, to lord it in the common-weal;
Nor would the realm be rent by discord thus,
Thus fear and doubt, betwixt disputed titles.

Hast. Of this I am to learn; as not supposing
A doubt like this———

Glost. Ay marry, but there is——
And that of much concern. Have you not heard
How, on a late occasion, doctor Shaw
Has moved the people much about the lawfulness
Of Edward's issue? By right grave authority,
Of learning and religion, plainly proving,
A bastard scion never should be grafted
Upon a royal stock; from thence, at full
Discoursing on my brother's former contract
To lady Elizabeth Lucy, long before
His jolly match with this same buxom widow,
The queen he left behind him———

Hast. Ill befal
Such meddling priests, who kindle up confusion,
And vex the quiet world with their vain scruples!
By Heaven 'tis done in perfect spite to peace.
Did not the king,
Our royal master, Edward, in concurrence
With his estates assembled, well determine
What course the sovereign rule should take henceforward?
When shall the deadly hate of faction cease,
When shall our long-divided land have rest,
If every peevish, moody malecontent
Shall set the senseless rabble in an uproar,
Fright them with dangers, and perplex their brain,
Each day with some fantastic giddy change?

Glost. What if some patriot, for the public good,
Should vary from your scheme, new-mould the state?

Hast. Curse on the innovating hand attempts it!
Remember him, the villain, righteous Heaven,
In thy great day of vengeance! Blast the traitor
And his pernicious counsels, who, for wealth,
For power, the pride of greatness, or revenge,
Would plunge his native land in civil wars!

Glost. You go too far, my lord.

Hast. Your highness' pardon———
Have we so soon forgot those days of ruin,
When York and Lancaster drew forth the battles;
When, like a matron butchered by her sons,
And cast beside some common way, a spectacle
Of horror and affright to passers by,
Our groaning country bled at every vein;
When murders, rapes, and massacres prevailed
When churches, palaces, and cities blazed;

When insolence and barbarism triumphed,
And swept away distinctions; peasants trod
Upon the necks of nobles: low were laid
The reverend crosier, and the holy mitre,
And desolation covered all the land;
Who can remember this, and not, like me,
Here vow to sheath a dagger in his heart,
Whose damned ambition would renew those horrors,
And set once more that scene of blood before us!
Glost. How now! so hot!
Hast. So brave, and so resolved.
Glost. Is then our friendship of so little moment,
That you could arm your hand against my life?
Hast. I hope your highness does not think I mean it;
No; Heaven forefend that e'er your princely person
Should come within the scope of my resentment.
Glost. Oh, noble Hastings! Nay, I must embrace you; [*Embraces him.*
By holy Paul, y'are a right honest man!
The time is full of danger and distrust,
And warns us to be wary. Hold me not
Too apt for jealousy and light surmise,
If, when I meant to lodge you near my heart,
I put your truth to trial. Keep your loyalty,
And live your king and country's best support:
For me, I ask no more than honour gives,
To think me yours, and rank me with your friends.
Hast. Accept what thanks a grateful heart should pay.
Oh, princely Gloster! judge me not ungentle,
Of manners rude, and insolent of speech,
If, when the public safety is in question,
My zeal flows warm and eager from my tongue.
Glost. Enough of this: to deal in wordy compliment
Is much against the plainness of my nature:
I judge you by myself, a clear true spirit,
And, as such, once more join you to my bosom.
Farewell, and be my friend. [*Exit Glost.*
Hast. I am not read,
Nor skilled and practised in the arts of greatness,
To kindle thus, and give a scope to passion.
The duke is surely noble; but he touched me
Even on the tenderest point; the master-string,
That makes most harmony or discord to me.
I own the glorious subject fires my breast,
And my soul's darling passion stands confessed.
Beyond or love's or friendship's sacred band,
Beyond myself, I prize my native land:
On this foundation would I build my fame,
And emulate the Greek and Roman name;
Think England's peace bought cheaply with my blood,
And die with pleasure for my country's good.
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter Duke of Gloster, Ratcliffe, *and* Catesby.

Glost. This was the sum of all: that he would brook
No alteration in the present state.
Marry, at last, the testy gentleman
Was almost moved to bid us bold defiance;
But there I dropt the argument, and changing
The first design and purport of my speech,
I praised his good affection to young Edward,
And left him to believe my thoughts like his.
Proceed we then in this forementioned matter,
As nothing bound, or trusting to his friendship.
Rat. Ill does it thus befall. I could have wished
This lord had stood with us. His friends are wealthy;
Thereto, his own possessions large and mighty;
The vassals and dependants on his power
Firm in adherence, ready, bold, and many;
His name had been of vantage to your highness,
And stood our present purpose much in stead.
Glost. This wayward and perverse declining from us,
Has warranted at full the friendly notice,
Which we this morn received. I hold it certain,
This puling, whining harlot rules his reason,
And prompts his zeal for Edward's bastard brood.
Cat. If she have such dominion o'er his heart,
And turn it at her will, you rule her fate;
And should, by inference and apt deduction,
Be arbiter of his. Is not her bread,
The very means immediate to her being,
The bounty of your hand? Why does she live,
If not to yield obedience to your pleasure,
To speak, to act, to think as you command?
Rat. Let her instruct her tongue to bear your message;
Teach every grace to smile in your behalf,
And her deluding eyes to gloat for you;
His ductile reason will be wound about,
Be led and turned again, say and unsay,
Receive the yoke, and yield exact obedience.
Glost. Your counsel likes me well, it shall be followed.
She waits without, attending on her suit.
Go, call her in, and leave us here alone.
[*Exeunt Ratcliffe and Catesby.*
How poor a thing is he, how worthy scorn,
Who leaves the guidance of imperial manhood
To such a paltry piece of stuff as this is!
A moppet made of prettiness and pride;
That oftener does her giddy fancies change,
Than glittering dew-drops in the sun do colours—

Now, shame upon it! was our reason given
For such a use! To be thus puffed about
Like a dry leaf, an idle straw, a feather,
The sport of every whiffling blast that blows?
Beshrew my heart, but it is wondrous strange;
Sure there is something more than witchcraft in them,
That masters even the wisest of us all.

Enter JANE SHORE.

Oh! you are come most fitly. We have pondered
On this your grievance: and though some there are,
Nay, and those great ones too, who would enforce
The rigour of our power to afflict you,
And bear a heavy hand; yet fear not you:
We've ta'en you to our favour; our protection
Shall stand between, and shield you from mishap.
J. Sh. The blessings of a heart with anguish broken,
And rescued from despair, attend your highness.
Alas! my gracious lord, what have I done
To kindle such relentless wrath against me?
If in the days of all my past offences,
When most my heart was lifted with delight,
If I withheld my morsel from the hungry,
Forgot the widow's want, and orphan's cry;
If I have known a good I have not shared,
Nor called the poor to take his portion with me,
Let my worst enemies stand forth, and now
Deny the succour, which I gave not then.
Glost. Marry there are, though I believe them not,
Who say you meddle in affairs of state:
That you presume to prattle, like a busy body,
Give your advice, and teach the lords o' th' council
What fits the order of the common-weal.
J. Sh. Oh, that the busy world, at least in this,
Would take example from a wretch like me!
None then would waste their hours in foreign thoughts,
Forget themselves, and what concerns their peace,
To tread the mazes of fantastic falsehood,
To haunt their idle sounds and flying tales,
Through all the giddy, noisy courts of rumour;
Malicious slander never would have leisure
To search, with prying eyes, for faults abroad,
If all, like me, considered their own hearts,
And wept the sorrows which they found at home.
Glost. Go to! I know your power; and though I trust not
To every breath of fame, I am not to learn
That Hastings is professed your loving vassal.
But fair befal your beauty: use it wisely,
And it may stand your fortunes much in stead,
Give back your forfeit land with large increase,
And place you high in safety and in honour.
Nay, I could point a way, the which pursuing,
You shall not only bring yourself advantage,
But give the realm much worthy cause to thank you.
J. Sh. Oh! where or how—Can my unworthy hand
Become an instrument of good to any?
Instruct your lowly slave, and let me fly
To yield obedience to your dread command.
Glost. Why, that's well said—Thus then—Observe me well;
The state, for many high and potent reasons,
Deeming my brother Edward's sons unfit
For the imperial weight of England's crown—
J. Sh. Alas! for pity.
Glost. Therefore have resolved
To set aside their unavailing infancy,
And vest the sovereign rule in abler hands.
This, though of great importance to the public,
Hastings, for very peevishness and spleen,
Does stubbornly oppose.
J. Sh. Does he? Does Hastings?
Glost. Ay, Hastings.
J. Sh. Reward him for the noble deed, just Heavens!
For this one action, guard him, and distinguish him
With signal mercies, and with great deliverance!
Save him from wrong, adversity, and shame!
Let never-fading honours flourish round him,
And consecrate his name, even to time's end!
Let him know nothing else but good on earth,
And everlasting blessedness hereafter!
Glost. How now!
J. Sh. The poor, forsaken, royal little ones!
Shall they be left a prey to savage power?
Can they lift up their harmless hands in vain,
Or cry to Heaven for help, and not be heard?
Impossible! Oh, gallant, generous Hastings,
Go on, pursue! assert the sacred cause:
Stand forth, thou proxy of all-ruling Providence,
And save the friendless infants from oppression!
Saints shall assist thee with prevailing prayers,
And warring angels combat on thy side.
Glost. You are passing rich in this same heavenly speech,
And spend it at your pleasure. Nay, but mark me!
My favour is not bought with words like these.
Go to—you'll teach your tongue another tale.
J. Sh. No, though the royal Edward has undone me,
He was my king, my gracious master still;
He loved me too, though 'twas a guilty flame,
And fatal to my peace, yet still he loved me;
With fondness, and with tenderness he doated,
Dwelt in my eyes, and lived but in my smiles:
And can I—O my heart abhors the thought!
Stand by, and see his children robbed of right?
Glost. Dare not, even for thy soul, to thwart me further!
None of your arts, your feigning and your fookery;
Your dainty squeamish coying it to me;

Go—to your lord, your paramour, begone!
Lisp in his ear, hang wanton on his neck,
And play your monkey gambols over to him.
You know my purpose, look that you pursue it,
And make him yield obedience to my will.
Do it—or woe upon thy harlot's head!

J. Sh. Oh, that my tongue had every grace of speech,
Great and commanding as the breath of kings,
Sweet as the poet's numbers, and prevailing
As soft persuasion to a love-sick maid;
That I had art and eloquence divine,
To pay my duty to my master's ashes,
And plead, till death, the cause of injured innocence!

Glost. Ha! Dost thou brave me, minion! Dost thou know
How vile, how very a wretch, my power can make thee?
That I can let loose fear, distress, and famine,
To hunt thy heels, like hell-hounds, through the world;
That I can place thee in such abject state,
As help shall never find thee; where, repining,
Thou shalt sit down and gnaw the earth for anguish;
Groan to the pitiless winds without return;
Howl like the midnight wolf amidst the desert,
And curse thy life, in bitterness and misery!

J. Sh. Let me be branded for the public scorn,
Turned forth and driven to wander like a vagabond,
Be friendless and forsaken, seek my bread
Upon the barren wild, and desolate waste,
Feed on my sighs, and drink my falling tears,
E'er I consent to teach my lips injustice,
Or wrong the orphan who has none to save him!

Glost. 'Tis well—we'll try the temper of your heart.
What hoa! who waits without?

Enter Ratcliffe, Catesby, *and Attendants.*

Rat. Your highness' pleasure——

Glost. Go, some of you, and turn this strumpet forth!
Spurn her into the street; there, let her perish,
And rot upon a dung-hill. Through the city
See it proclaimed, that none, on pain of death,
Presume to give her comfort, food, or harbour;
Who ministers the smallest comfort, dies.
Her house, her costly furniture and wealth,
The purchase of her loose luxurious life,
We seize on, for the profit of the state.
Away! Begone!

J. Sh. Oh, thou most righteous judge—
Humbly behold, I bow myself to thee,
And own thy justice in this hard decree:
No longer, then, my ripe offences spare,
But what I merit, let me learn to bear.
Yet, since 'tis all my wretchedness can give,
For my past crimes my forfeit life receive;
No pity for my sufferings here I crave,
And only hope forgiveness in the grave.

[Exit Shore, guarded by Catesby and others.

Glost. So much for this. Your project's at an end. *[To Ratcliffe.*
This idle toy, this hilding scorns my power,
And sets us all at naught. See that a guard
Be ready at my call.

Rat. The council waits
Upon your highness' leisure.

Glost. Bid them enter.

Enter the Duke of Buckingham, *Earl of* Derby, *Bishop of* Ely, *Lord* Hastings, *and others, as to the council. The Duke of* Gloster *takes his place at the upper end, then the rest sit.*

Derb. In happy times we are assembled here,
To point the day, and fix the solemn pomp
For placing England's crown, with all due rites,
Upon our sovereign Edward's youthful brow.

Hast. Some busy meddling knaves, 'tis said, there are,
As such will still be prating, who presume
To carp and cavil at his royal right;
Therefore, I hold it fitting, with the soonest,
To appoint the order of the coronation.
So to approve our duty to the king,
And stay the babbling of such vain gainsayers.

Derb. We all attend to know your highness' pleasure. *[To Gloster.*

Glost. My lords, a set of worthy men you are,
Prudent and just, and careful for the state;
Therefore, to your most grave determination,
I yield myself in all things; and demand
What punishment your wisdom shall think meet
To inflict upon those damnable contrivers,
Who shall, with potions, charms, and witching drugs,
Practise against our person and our life?

Hast. So much I hold the king your highness' debtor,
So precious are you to the common weal,
That I presume, not only for myself,
But in behalf of these my noble brothers,
To say, whoe'er they be, they merit death.

Glost. Then judge yourselves, convince your eyes of truth:
Behold my arm, thus blasted, dry, and, withered,
[Pulling up his sleeve.
Shrunk like a foul abortion, and decayed,
Like some untimely product of the seasons,
Robbed of its properties of strength and office.
This is the sorcery of Edward's wife,
Who, in conjunction with that harlot Shore,
And other like confederate midnight hags,
By force of potent spells, of bloody characters,
And conjurations horrible to hear,
Call fiends and spectres from the yawning deep,
And set the ministers of hell at work,
To torture and despoil me of my life.

Hast. If they have done this deed—

Glost. If they have done it!
Talk'st thou to me of If's, audacious traitor!

Thou art that strumpet witch's chief abettor,
The patron and complotter of her mischiefs,
And joined in this contrivance for my death.
Nay start not, lords—What ho! a guard there!

Enter Guards.

Lord Hastings, I arrest thee of high treason.
Seize him, and bear him instantly away.
He shall not live an hour. By holy Paul,
I will not dine before his head be brought me.
Ratcliffe, stay you, and see that it be done:
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

[*Exeunt Gloster and the lords following.*

Manent Lord HASTINGS, RATCLIFFE, *and Guards.*

Hast. What! and no more but this—How! to the scaffold?
Oh, gentle Ratcliffe! tell me, do I hold thee?
Or if I dream, what shall I do to wake,
To break, to struggle through this dread confusion?
For surely death itself is not so painful
As is this sudden horror and surprise.

Rat. You heard, the duke's commands to me were absolute.
Therefore, my lord, address you to your shrift,
With all good speed you may. Summon your courage,
And be yourself; for you must die this instant.

Hast. Yes, Ratcliffe, I will take thy friendly counsel,
And die as a man should; 'tis somewhat hard
To call my scattered spirits home at once:
But since what must be, must be—let necessity
Supply the place of time and preparation,
And arm me for the blow. 'Tis but to die,
'Tis but to venture on that common hazard,
Which many a time in battle I have run;
'Tis but to do, what at that very moment,
In many nations of the peopled earth,
A thousand and a thousand shall do with me;
'Tis but to close my eyes and shut out day-light,
To view no more the wicked ways of men,
No longer to behold the tyrant Gloster,
And be a weeping witness of the woes,
The desolation, slaughter, and calamities,
Which he shall bring on this unhappy land.

Enter ALICIA.

Alic. Stand off, and let me pass—I will, I must
Catch him once more in these despairing arms,
And hold him to my heart—O Hastings! Hastings!

Hast. Alas! why comest thou at this dreadful moment,
To fill me with new terrors, new distractions;
To turn me wild with thy distempered rage,
And shock the peace of my departing soul?
Away! I prithee leave me!

Alic. Stop a minute——
Till my full griefs find passage—Oh, the tyrant!
Perdition fall on Gloster's head and mine!

Hast. What means thy frantic grief?

Alic. I cannot speak——
But I have murdered thee—Oh, I could tell thee!

Hast. Speak and give ease to thy conflicting passion;
Be quick, nor keep me longer in suspense;
Time presses, and a thousand crowding thoughts
Break in at once! this way and that they snatch,
They tear my hurried soul: All claim attention,
And yet not one is heard. Oh! speak, and leave me;
For I have business would employ an age,
And but a minute's time to get it done in.

Alic. That, that's my grief—'tis I that urge thee on,
That haunt thee to the toil, sweep thee from earth,
And drive thee down this precipice of fate.

Hast. Thy reason is grown wild. Could thy weak hand
Bring on this mighty ruin? If it could,
What have I done so grievous to thy soul,
So deadly, so beyond the reach of pardon,
That nothing but my life can make atonement?

Alic. Thy cruel scorn hath stung me to the heart,
And set my burning bosom all in flames:
Raving and mad I flew to my revenge,
And writ I know not what—told the protector,
That Shore's detested wife, by wiles, had won thee
To plot against his greatness—He believed it,
(Oh, dire event of my pernicious counsel!)
And, while I meant destruction on her head,
He has turned it all on thine.

Hast. Accursed jealousy!
Oh, merciless, wild, and unforgiving fiend!
Blindfold it runs to undistinguished mischief,
And murders all it meets. Cursed be its rage,
For there is none so deadly; doubly cursed
Be all those easy fools who give it harbour;
Who turn a monster loose among mankind,
Fiercer than famine, war, or spotted pestilence;
Baneful as death, and horrible as hell!

Alic. If thou wilt curse, curse rather thine own falsehood;
Curse the lewd maxims of thy perjured sex,
Which taught thee first to laugh at faith and justice,
To scorn the solemn sanctity of oaths,
And make a jest of a poor woman's ruin:
Curse thy proud heart, and thy insulting tongue,
That raised this fatal fury in my soul,
And urged my vengeance to undo us both.

Hast. Oh, thou inhuman! Turn thy eyes away,
And blast me not with their destructive beams:
Why should I curse thee with my dying breath?
Begone! and let me die in peace.

Alic. Can'st thou, Oh, cruel Hastings, leave me thus!

Hear me, I beg thee—I conjure thee, hear me!
While with an agonizing heart, I swear,
By all the pangs I feel, by all the sorrows,
The terrors and despair thy loss shall give me,
My hate was on my rival bent alone.
Oh! had I once divined, false as thou art,
A danger to thy life, I would have died,
I would have met it for thee, and made bare
My ready faithful breast, to save thee from it.

Hast. Now mark! and tremble at Heaven's just award:
While thy insatiate wrath, and fell revenge,
Pursued the innocence which never wronged thee,
Behold the mischief falls on thee and me:
Remorse and heaviness of heart shall wait on thee,
And everlasting anguish be thy portion:
For me, the snares of death are wound about me,
And now, in one poor moment, I am gone.
Oh! if thou hast one tender thought remaining,
Fly to thy closet, fall upon thy knees,
And recommend my parting soul to mercy.

Alic. Oh! yet before I go for ever from thee,
Turn thee, in gentleness and pity, to me,
[*Kneeling.*
And, in compassion of my strong affliction,
Say, is it possible you can forgive
The fatal rashness of ungoverned love?
For, oh! 'tis certain, if I had not loved thee
Beyond my peace, my reason, fame, and life,
Desired to death, and doated to destraction,
This day of horror never should have known us.

Hast. Oh, rise, and let me hush thy stormy sorrows! [*Raising her.*
Assuage thy tears, for I will chide no more,
No more upbraid thee, thou unhappy fair one.
I see the hand of Heaven is armed against me;
And, in mysterious Providence, decrees
To punish me by thy mistaken hand.
Most righteous doom! for, oh, while I behold thee,
Thy wrongs rise up in terrible array,
And charge thy ruin on me; thy fair fame,
Thy spotless beauty, innocence, and youth,
Dishonoured, blasted, and betrayed by me.

Alic. And does thy heart relent for my undoing?
Oh, that inhuman Gloster could be moved,
But half so easily as I can pardon!

Hast. Here, then, exchange we mutually forgiveness:
So may the guilt of all my broken vows,
My perjuries to thee, be all forgotten,
As here my soul acquits thee of my death,
As here I leave thee with the softest tenderness,
Mourning the chance of our disastrous loves,
And begging Heaven to bless and to support thee.

Rat. My lord, dispatch; the duke has sent to chide me,
For loitering in my duty.

Hast. I obey.

Alic. Insatiate, savage monster! Is a moment
So tedious to thy malice? Oh, repay him,
Thou great avenger! Give him blood for blood:
Guilt haunt him! fiends pursue him! lightnings blast him!
Some horrid, cursed kind of death o'ertake him,
Sudden, and in the fulness of his sins!
That he may know how terrible it is,
To want that moment he denies thee now.

Hast. This rage is all in vain, that tears thy bosom;
Like a poor bird, that flutters in its cage,
Thou beatest thyself to death. Retire, I beg thee;
To see thee thus, thou knowest not how it wounds me;
Thy agonies are added to my own,
And make the burthen more than I can bear.
Farewell—Good angels visit thy afflictions,
And bring thee peace and comfort from above!

Alic. Oh! stab me to the heart, some pitying hand!
Now strike me dead!———

Hast. One thing I had forgot——
I charge thee, by our present common miseries;
By our past loves, if yet they have a name;
By all thy hopes of peace here and hereafter,
Let not the rancour of thy hate pursue
The innocence of thy unhappy friend;
Thou knowest who 'tis I mean; Oh! should'st thou wrong her,
Just Heaven shall double all thy woes upon thee,
And make them know no end—Remember this,
As the last warning of a dying man.
Farewell, for ever!
[*The guards carry Hastings off.*

Alic. For ever! Oh, for ever!
Oh, who can bear to be a wretch for ever!
My rival, too! His last thoughts hung on her,
And, as he parted, left a blessing for her:
Shall she be blest, and I be curst, for ever?
No: since her fatal beauty was the cause
Of all my sufferings, let her share my pains;
Let her, like me, of every joy forlorn,
Devote the hour when such a wretch was born;
Like me, to deserts and to darkness run,
Abhor the day, and curse the golden sun;
Cast every good, and every hope behind;
Detest the works of nature, loath mankind:
Like me, with cries distracted, fill the air,
Tear her poor bosom, rend her frantic hair;
And prove the torments of the last despair!
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter Belmour *and* Dumont.

Dum. You saw her, then?
Bel. I met her, as returning,
In solemn penance, from the public cross.
Before her, certain rascal officers,
Slaves in authority, the knaves of justice,
Proclaimed the tyrant Gloster's cruel orders.
On either side her marched an ill-looked priest,
Who, with severe, with horrid haggard eyes,
Did, ever and anon, by turns, upbraid her,
And thunder, in her trembling ear, damnation.
Around her, numberless, the rabble flowed,
Shouldering each other, crowding for a view,
Gaping and gazing, taunting and reviling.
Some pitying—But those, alas! how few!
The most—such iron hearts we are, and such
The base barbarity of human kind——
With insolence, and lewd reproach, pursued her,
Hooting and railing, and, with villanous hands
Gathering the filth from out the common ways,
To hurl upon her head.
Dum. Inhuman dogs!
How did she bear it?
Bel. With the gentlest patience;
Submissive, sad, and lowly, was her look;
A burning taper in her hand she bore,
And on her shoulders, carelessly confused,
With loose neglect, her lovely tresses hung;
Upon her cheek a faintish flush was spread;
Feeble she seemed, and sorely smit with pain,
While barefoot as she trod the flinty pavement,
Her footsteps all along were marked with blood.
Yet, silent still she passed, and unrepining;
Her streaming eyes bent ever on the earth,
Except, when in some bitter pang of sorrow,
To Heaven she seemed, in fervent zeal, to raise,
And beg that mercy man denied her here.
Dum. When was this piteous sight?
Bel. These last two days.
You know my care was wholly bent on you,
To find the happy means of your deliverance.
Which, but for Hastings' death, I had not gained.
During that time, although I have not seen her,
Yet divers trusty messengers I have sent,
To wait about, and watch a fit convenience
To give her some relief; but all in vain;
A churlish guard attend upon her steps,
Who menace those with death that bring her comfort,
And drive all succour from her.
Dum. Let them threaten;
Let proud oppression prove its fiercest malice;
So Heaven befriend my soul, as here I vow
To give her help, and share one fortune with her.
Bel. Mean you to see her, thus, in your own form?
Dum. I do.
Bel. And have you thought upon the consequence?
Dum. What is there I should fear?
Bel. Have you examined
Into your inmost heart, and tried at leisure
The several secret springs that move the passions?
Has mercy fixed her empire there so sure,
That wrath and vengeance never may return?
Can you resume a husband's name, and bid
That wakeful dragon, fierce resentment, sleep?
Dum. Why dost thou search so deep, and urge my memory
To conjure up my wrongs to life again?
I have long laboured to forget myself,
To think on all time backward, like a space
Idle and void, where nothing e'er had being;
But thou hast peopled it again: Revenge
And jealousy renew their horrid forms,
Shoot all their fires, and drive me to distraction.
Bel. Far be the thought from me! My care was only
To arm you for the meeting: better were it
Never to see her, than to let that name
Recall forgotten rage, and make the husband
Destroy the generous pity of Dumont.
Dum. O thou hast set my busy brain at work,
And now she musters up a train of images,
Which, to preserve my peace, I had cast aside,
And sunk in deep oblivion—Oh, that form!
That angel face on which my dotage hung!
How have I gazed upon her, till my soul
With very eagerness went forth towards her,
And issued at my eyes—Was there a gem
Which the sun ripens in the Indian mine,
Or the rich bosom of the ocean yields;
What was there art could make, or wealth could buy,
Which I have left unsought to deck her beauty?
What could her king do more?—And yet she fled.
Bel. Away with that sad fancy——
Dum. Oh, that day!
The thought of it must live for ever with me.
I met her, Belmour, when the royal spoiler
Bore her in triumph from my widowed home!
Within his chariot, by his side she sat,
And listened to his talk with downward looks,
Till sudden, as she chanced aside to glance,
Her eyes encountered mine—Oh! then, my friend!
Oh! who can paint my grief and her amazement!
As at the stroke of death, twice turned she pale,
And twice a burning crimson blushed all o'er her;
Then, with a shriek, heart-wounding, loud she cried,
While down her cheeks two gushing torrents ran,
Fast falling on her hands, which thus she wrung—
Moved at her grief, the tyrant ravisher,
With courteous action, wooed her oft to turn;
Earnest he seemed to plead, but all in vain;

Even to the last she bent her sight towards me,
And followed me—till I had lost myself.
Bel. Alas! for pity! Oh! those speaking tears!
Could they be false? Did she not suffer with you?
For though the king by force possessed her person,
Her unconsenting heart dwelt still with you;
If all her former woes were not enough,
Look on her now; behold her where she wanders,
Hunted to death, distressed on every side,
With no one hand to help; and tell me then,
If ever misery were known like hers?
Dum. And can she bear it? Can that delicate frame
Endure the beating of a storm so rude?
Can she, for whom the various seasons changed,
To court her appetite and crown her board,
For whom the foreign vintages were pressed,
For whom the merchant spread his silken stores,
Can she——
Entreat for bread, and want the needful raiment,
To wrap her shivering bosom from the weather?
When she was mine, no care came ever nigh her;
I thought the gentlest breeze, that wakes the spring,
Too rough to breathe upon her; chearfulness
Danced all the day before her, and at night
Soft slumbers waited on her downy pillow—
Now sad and shelterless, perhaps, she lies,
Where piercing winds blow sharp, and the chill rain
Drops from some pent-house on her wretched head,
Drenches her locks, and kills her with the cold.
It is too much—Hence with her past offences!
They are atoned at full—Why stay we, then?
Oh! let us haste, my friend, and find her out.
Bel. Somewhere about this quarter of the town,
I hear the poor abandoned creature lingers:
Her guard, though set with strictest watch to keep
All food and friendship from her, yet permit her
To wander in the streets, there choose her bed,
And rest her head on what cold stone she pleases.
Dum. Here let us then divide; each in his round
To search her sorrows out; whose hap it is
First to behold her, this way let him lead
Her fainting steps, and meet we here together.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter Jane Shore, *her hair hanging loose on her shoulders, and bare-footed.*

J. Sh. Yet, yet endure, nor murmur, oh, my soul!
Do they not cover thee like rising floods,
And press thee like a weight of waters down?
Does not the hand of righteousness afflict thee?
And who shall plead against it? Who shall say
To power almighty, 'thou hast done enough;'
Or bid his dreadful rod of vengeance stay?
Wait then with patience, till the circling hours
Shall bring the time of thy appointed rest,
And lay thee down in death. The hireling, thus,
With labour drudges out the painful day,
And often looks with long expecting eyes
To see the shadows rise, and be dismissed.
And hark, methinks the roar, that late pursued me,
Sinks like the murmurs of a falling wind,
And softens into silence. Does revenge
And malice then grow weary, and forsake me?
My guard, too, that observed me still so close,
Tire in the task of their inhuman office,
And loiter far behind. Alas! I faint,
My spirits fail at once—This is the door
Of my Alicia—Blessed opportunity!
I'll steal a little succour from her goodness,
Now while no eye observes me.
[*She knocks at the door.*

Enter a Servant.

Is your lady,
My gentle friend, at home? Oh! bring me to her!
[*Going in.*
Ser. Hold, mistress, whither would you?
[*Pushing her back.*
J. Sh. Do you not know me?
Ser. I know you well, and know my orders, too:
You must not enter here——
J. Sh. Tell my Alicia,
'Tis I would see her.
Ser. She is ill at ease,
And will admit no visitor.
J. Sh. But tell her
'Tis I, her friend, the partner of her heart,
Wait at the door and beg——
Ser. 'Tis all in vain—
Go hence, and howl to those that will regard you.
[*Shuts the door, and exit.*
J. Sh. It was not always thus; the time has been,
When this unfriendly door, that bars my passage,
Flew wide, and almost leaped from off its hinges,
To give me entrance here; when this good house
Has poured forth all its dwellers to receive me:
When my approaches made a little holiday,
And every face was dressed in smiles to meet me:
But now 'tis otherwise; and those, who blessed me,
Now curse me to my face. Why should I wander,
Stray further on, for I can die even here!
[*She sits down at the door.*

Enter Alicia *in disorder, two Servants following.*

Alic. What wretch art thou, whose misery and baseness
Hang on my door; whose hateful whine of woe
Breaks in upon my sorrows, and distracts
My jarring senses with thy beggar's cry?

J. Sh. A very beggar, and a wretch, indeed;
One driven by strong calamity to seek
For succours here; one perishing for want,
Whose hunger has not tasted food these three days;
And humbly asks, for charity's dear sake,
A draught of water and a little bread.
Alic. And dost thou come to me, to me for bread?
I know thee not—Go—hunt for it abroad,
Where wanton hands upon the earth have scattered it,
Or cast it on the waters—Mark the eagle,
And hungry vulture, when they wind the prey;
Watch where the ravens of the valley feed,
And seek thy food with them—I know thee not.
J. Sh. And yet there was a time, when my Alicia
Has thought unhappy Shore her dearest blessing,
And mourned the live-long day she passed without me;
When, paired like turtles, we were still together;
When often, as we prattled arm in arm,
Inclining fondly to me she has sworn,
She loved me more than all the world besides.
Alic. Ha! say'st thou! Let me look upon thee well—
'Tis true—I know thee now—A mischief on thee!
Thou art that fatal fair, that cursed she,
That set my brain a madding. Thou hast robbed me;
Thou hast undone me——Murder! Oh, my Hastings!
See his pale bloody head shoots glaring by me!
Give me him back again, thou soft deluder,
Thou beauteous witch!
J. Sh. Alas! I never wronged you——
Oh! then be good to me; have pity on me;
Thou never knewest the bitterness of want,
And may'st thou never know it. Oh! bestow
Some poor remain, the voiding of thy table,
A morsel to support my famished soul.
Alic. Avaunt! and come not near me—
J. Sh. To thy hand
I trusted all; gave my whole store to thee,
Nor do I ask it back; allow me but
The smallest pittance! give me but to eat,
Lest I fall down, and perish here before thee.
Alic. Nay! tell not me! Where is thy king, thy Edward,
And all the smiling cringing train of courtiers,
That bent the knee before thee?
J. Sh. Oh! for mercy!
Alic. Mercy! I know it not—for I am miserable.
I'll give thee misery, for here she dwells;
This is her house, where the sun never dawns;
The bird of night sits screaming o'er the roof,
Grim spectres sweep along the horrid gloom,
And nought is heard but wailings and lamentings.
Hark! something cracks above! it shakes, it totters!
And see, the nodding ruin falls to crush me!
'Tis fallen, 'tis here! I felt it on my brain!
1 *Ser.* This sight disorders her—
2 *Ser.* Retire, dear lady—
And leave this woman—
Alic. Let her take my counsel:
Why shouldst thou be a wretch! Stab, tear thy heart,
And rid thyself of this detested being!
I will not linger long behind thee here.
A waving flood of bluish fire swells o'er me—
And now 'tis out, and I am drowned in blood.
Ha! what art thou? thou horrid headless trunk—
It is my Hastings! see, he wafts me on!
Away! I go, I fly! I follow thee!
But come not thou, with mischief-making beauty,
To interpose between us! look not on him!
Give thy fond arts and thy delusions o'er,
For thou shalt never, never part us more.
[*She runs off, her servants following.*
J. Sh. Alas! she raves; her brain, I fear, is turned.
In mercy look upon her, gracious Heaven,
Nor visit her for any wrong to me.
Sure I am near upon my journey's end;
My head runs round, my eyes begin to fail,
And dancing shadows swim before my sight.
I can no more. [*Lies down*] Receive me, thou cold earth,
Thou common parent, take me to thy bosom,
And let me rest with thee.

Enter BELMOUR.

Bel. Upon the ground!
Thy miseries can never lay thee lower.
Look up, thou poor afflicted one! thou mourner,
Whom none has comforted! Where are thy friends,
The dear companions of thy joyful days,
Whose hearts thy warm prosperity made glad,
Whose arms were taught to grow like ivy round thee,
And bind thee to their bosoms? Thus with thee,
Thus let us live, and let us die, they said,
For sure thou art the sister of our loves,
And nothing shall divide us. Now where are they?
J. Sh. Ah, Belmour! where indeed? They stand aloof,
And view my desolation from afar!
When they pass by, they shake their heads in scorn,
And cry, behold the harlot and her end!
And yet thy goodness turns aside to pity me.
Alas! there may be danger; get thee gone!
Let me not pull a ruin on thy head.
Leave me to die alone, for I am fallen
Never to rise, and all relief is vain.
Bel. Yet raise thy drooping head; for I am come
To chase away despair. Behold! where yonder
That honest man, that faithful, brave Dumont,

Is hasting to thy aid——
J. Sh. Dumont! ha! where!
[*Raising herself, and looking aghast.*
Then Heaven has heard my prayer; his very name
Renews the springs of life, and cheers my soul.
Has he then escaped the snare?
Bel. He has; but see——
He comes unlike to that Dumont you knew;
For now he wears your better angel's form,
And comes to visit you with peace and pardon.

Enter SHORE.

J. Sh. Speak, tell me! Which is he? And ha! what would
This dreadful vision! see it comes upon me—
It is my husband——Ah! [*She swoons.*
Sh. She faints! support her!
Sustain her head, while I infuse this cordial
Into her dying lips—from spicy drugs,
Rich herbs and flowers, the potent juice is drawn;
With wondrous force it strikes the lazy spirits,
Drives them around, and wakens life anew.
Bel. Her weakness could not bear the strong surprize.
But see, she stirs! And the returning blood
Faintly begins to blush again, and kindle
Upon her ashy cheek——
Sh. So—gently raise her— [*Raising her up.*
J. Sh. Ha! What art thou? Belmour!
Bel. How fare you, lady?
J. Sh. My heart is thrilled with horror—
Bel. Be of courage——
Your husband lives! 'tis he, my worthiest friend—
J. Sh. Still art thou there! Still dost thou hover round me!
Oh, save me, Belmour, from his angry shade!
Bel. 'Tis he himself! he lives! look up—
J. Sh. I dare not!
Oh! that my eyes could shut him out for ever—
Sh. Am I so hateful, then, so deadly to thee,
To blast thy eyes with horror? Since I'm grown
A burthen to the world, myself, and thee,
Would I had ne'er survived to see thee more!
J. Sh. Oh! thou most injured—dost thou live, indeed!
Fall then, ye mountains, on my guilty head;
Hide me, ye rocks, within your secret caverns;
Cast thy black veil upon my shame, O night!
And shield me with thy sable wings for ever.
Sh. Why dost thou turn away? Why tremble thus?
Why thus indulge thy fears? and in despair,
Abandon thy distracted soul to horror?
Cast every black and guilty thought behind thee,
And let them never vex thy quiet more.
My arms, my heart, are open to receive thee,
To bring thee back to thy forsaken home,
With tender joy, with fond forgiving love,
And all the longings of my first desires.
J. Sh. No, arm thy brow with vengeance, and appear
The minister of Heaven's inquiring justice.
Array thyself all terrible for judgment,
Wrath in thy eyes, and thunder in thy voice;
Pronounce my sentence, and if yet there be
A woe I have not felt, inflict it on me.
Sh. The measure of thy sorrows is compleat!
And I am come to snatch thee from injustice.
The hand of power no more shall crush thy weakness,
Nor proud oppression grind thy humble soul.
J. Sh. Art thou not risen by miracle from death?
Thy shroud is fallen from off thee, and the grave
Was bid to give thee up, that thou mightst come
The messenger of grace and goodness to me,
To seal my peace, and bless me e'er I go.
Oh! let me then fall down beneath thy feet,
And weep my gratitude for ever there;
Give me your drops, ye soft descending rains,
Give me your streams, ye never ceasing springs,
That my sad eyes may still supply my duty,
And feed an everlasting flood of sorrow.
Sh. Waste not thy feeble spirits—I have long
Beheld, unknown, thy mourning and repentance;
Therefore my heart has set aside the past,
And holds thee white, as unoffending innocence:
Therefore in spite of cruel Gloster's rage,
Soon as my friend had broke my prison doors,
I flew to thy assistance. Let us haste,
Now while occasion seems to smile upon us,
Forsake this place of shame, and find a shelter.
J. Sh. What shall I say to you? But I obey—
Sh. Lean on my arm—
J. Sh. Alas! I'm wondrous faint:
But that's not strange; I have not eat these three days.
Sh. Oh, merciless! Look here, my love, I've brought thee
Some rich conserves——
J. Sh. How can you be so good?
But you were ever thus. I well remember
With what fond care, what diligence of love,
You lavished out your wealth to buy me pleasures,
Preventing every wish; have you forgot
The costly string of pearl you brought me home,
And tied about my neck?——How could I leave you?
Sh. Taste some of this, or this——
J. Sh. You are strangely altered——
Say, gentle Belmour, is he not? How pale
Your visage is become? Your eyes are hollow;
Nay, you are wrinkled too——Alas, the day!
My wretchedness has cost you many a tear,
And many a bitter pang, since last we parted.
Sh. No more of that——Thou talkest, but dost not eat.
J. Sh. My feeble jaws forget their common office,
My tasteless tongue cleaves to the clammy roof,
And now a general loathing grows upon me.
Oh! I am sick at heart!——

Sh. Thou murderous sorrow!
Wilt thou still drink her blood, pursue her still!
Must she then die! Oh, my poor penitent!
Speak peace to thy sad heart: she hears me not;
Grief masters every sense—help me to hold her!

Enter CATESBY, *with a guard.*

Cat. Seize on them both, as traitors to the state!
Bel. What means this violence?——
[*Guards lay hold on Shore and Belmour.*
Cat. Have we not found you,
In scorn of the protector's strict command,
Assisting this base woman, and abetting
Her infamy?
Sh. Infamy on thy head!
Thou tool of power, thou pandar to authority!
I tell thee, knave, thou knowest of none so virtuous,
And she that bore thee was an Æthiop to her.
Cat. You'll answer this at full—Away with them.
Sh. Is charity grown treason to your court?
What honest man would live beneath such rulers!
I am content that we should die together——
Cat. Convey the men to prison; but for her,
Leave her to hunt her fortune as she may.
J. Sh. I will not part with him—for me!—for me!
Oh! must he die for me!
[*Following him as he is carried off—She falls.*
Sh. Inhuman villains!
[*Breaking from the guards.*
Stand off! The agonies of death are on her——
She pulls, she gripes me hard with her cold hand.
J. Sh. Was this blow wanting to compleat my ruin?
Oh! let him go, ye ministers of terror,
He shall offend no more, for I will die,
And yield obedience to your cruel master.
Tarry a little, but a little longer,
And take my last breath with you.
Sh. Oh, my love!
Why have I lived to see this bitter moment,
This grief, by far surpassing all my former?
Why dost thou fix thy dying eyes upon me,
With such an earnest, such a piteous look,
As if thy heart were full of some sad meaning,
Thou could'st not speak?——
J. Sh. Forgive me!——but forgive me!
Sh. Be witness for me, ye celestial host,
Such mercy and such pardon as my soul
Accords to thee, and begs of Heaven to shew thee,
May such befall me at my latest hour,
And make my portion blest or cursed for ever!
J. Sh. Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace—
'Tis very dark, and I have lost you now——
Was there not something I would have bequeathed you?
But I have nothing left me to bestow,
Nothing but one sad sigh. Oh! mercy, Heaven!
[*Dies.*
Bel. There fled the soul,
And left her load of misery behind.
Sh. Oh, my heart's treasure! Is this pale sad visage
All that remains of thee? Are these dead eyes
The light that cheered my soul? Oh, heavy hour!
But I will fix my trembling lips to thine,
'Till I am cold and senseless quite, as thou art.
What, must we part, then?——will you——
[*To the guards taking him away.*
Fare thee well—— [*Kissing her.*
Now execute your tyrant's will, and lead me
To bonds, or death, 'tis equally indifferent.
Bel. Let those, who view this sad example, know,
What fate attends the broken marriage vow;
And teach their children, in succeeding times,
No common vengeance waits upon these crimes,
When such severe repentance could not save
From want, from shame, and an untimely grave.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

LADY JANE GRAY.

BY

ROWE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.
DUKE OF SUFFOLK.
LORD GUILFORD DUDLEY.
EARL OF PEMBROKE.
EARL OF SUSSEX.
GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester.*
SIR JOHN GATES.
Lieutenant of the Tower.

WOMEN.

DUTCHESS OF SUFFOLK.
LADY JANE GRAY.

Lords of the Council, Gentlemen, Guards, Women, and Attendants.

Scene,—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Court.*

Enter the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, *Duke of* SUFFOLK, *and Sir* JOHN GATES.

North. 'Tis all in vain; Heaven has required its pledge,
And he must die.
Suff. Is there an honest heart,
That loves our England, does not mourn for Edward?
The genius of our isle is shook with sorrow;
He bows his venerable head with pain,
And labours with the sickness of his lord.
Religion melts in every holy eye;
All comfortless, afflicted, and forlorn,
She sits on earth, and weeps upon her cross,
Weary of man, and his detested ways:
Even now she seems to meditate her flight,
And waft her angels to the thrones above.
North. Ay, there, my lord, you touch our heaviest loss.
With him our holy faith is doomed to suffer;
With him our church shall veil her sacred front,
That late from heaps of Gothic ruins rose,
In her first native simple majesty;
The toil of saints, and price of martyrs' blood,
Shall fail with Edward, and again old Rome
Shall spread her banners; and her monkish host,
Pride, ignorance, and rapine, shall return;
Blind bloody zeal, and cruel priestly power,
Shall scourge the land for ten dark ages more.
Gates. Is there no help in all the healing art,
No potent juice or drug to save a life
So precious, and prevent a nation's fate?
North. What has been left untried, that art could do?
The hoary wrinkled leech has watched and toiled,
Tried every health-restoring herb and gum,
And wearied out his painful skill in vain.
Close, like a dragon folded in his den,
Some secret venom preys upon his heart;
A stubborn and unconquerable flame
Creeps in his veins, and drinks the streams of life;
His youthful sinews are unstrung; cold sweats
And deadly paleness sit upon his visage;
And every gasp we look shall be his last.
Gates. Doubt not, your graces, but the Popish faction

Will at this juncture urge their utmost force.
All on the princess Mary turn their eyes,
Well hoping she shall build again their altars,
And bring their idol-worship back in triumph.
North. Good Heaven, ordain some better fate for England!
Suff. What better can we hope, if she should reign?
I know her well; a blinded zealot is she;
A gloomy nature, sullen and severe;
Nurtured by proud presuming Romish priests,
Taught to believe they only cannot err,
Because they cannot err; bred up in scorn
Of reason, and the whole lay world; instructed
To hate whoe'er dissent from what they teach;
To purge the world from heresy by blood;
To massacre a nation, and believe it
An act well pleasing to the Lord of Mercy:
These are thy gods, oh, Rome, and this thy faith!
North. And shall we tamely yield ourselves to bondage?
Bow down before these holy purple tyrants,
And bid them tread upon our slavish necks?
No; let this faithful free-born English hand
First dig my grave in liberty and honour;
And though I found but one more thus resolved,
That honest man and I would die together.
Suff. Doubt not, there are ten thousand and ten thousand,
To own a cause so just.
Gates. The list I gave
Into your grace's hand last night, declares
My power and friends at full. [*To North.*
North. Be it your care,
Good Sir John Gates, to see your friends appointed,
And ready for the occasion. Haste this instant;
Lose not a moment's time.
Gates. I go, my lord. [*Exit Gates.*
North. Your grace's princely daughter, lady Jane,
Is she yet come to court?
Suff. Not yet arrived,
But with the soonest I expect her here.
I know her duty to the dying king,
Joined with my strict commands to hasten hither,
Will bring her on the wing.
North. Beseech your grace,
To speed another messenger to press her;
For on her happy presence all our counsels
Depend, and take their fate.
Suff. Upon the instant
Your grace shall be obeyed. I go to summon her.
[*Exit Suffolk.*
North. What trivial influences hold dominion
O'er wise men's counsels, and the fate of empire!
The greatest schemes that human wit can forge,
Or bold ambition dares to put in practice,
Depend upon our husbanding a moment,
And the light lasting of a woman's will;
As if the lord of nature should delight
To hang this ponderous globe upon a hair,
And bid it dance before a breath of wind.
She must be here, and lodged in Guilford's arms,
Ere Edward dies, or all we have done is marred.
Ha! Pembroke! that's a bar which thwarts my way!
His fiery temper brooks not opposition,
And must be met with soft and supple arts,
With crouching courtesy, and honeyed words,
Such as assuage the fierce, and bend the strong.

Enter the Earl of Pembroke.

Good morrow, noble Pembroke: we have staid
The meeting of the council for your presence.
Pem. For mine, my lord! you mock your servant sure,
To say that I am wanted, where yourself,
The great Alcides of our state, is present.
Whatever dangers menace prince or people,
Our great Northumberland is armed to meet them:
The ablest hand, and firmest heart you bear,
Nor need a second in the glorious task;
Equal yourself to all the toils of empire.
North. No; as I honour virtue, I have tried,
And know my strength too well; nor can the voice
Of friendly flattery, like yours, deceive me.
I know my temper liable to passions,
And all the frailties common to our nature;
Blind to events, too easy of persuasion,
And often, too, too often, have I erred:
Much therefore have I need of some good man,
Some wise and honest heart, whose friendly aid
Might guide my treading through our present dangers;
And, by the honour of my name I swear,
I know not one of all our English peers,
Whom I would chuse for that best friend, like Pembroke.
Pem. What shall I answer to a trust so noble,
This prodigality of praise and honour?
Were not your grace too generous of soul,
To speak a language differing from your heart,
How might I think you could not mean this goodness
To one, whom his ill-fortune has ordained
The rival of your son.
North. No more; I scorn a thought
So much below the dignity of virtue.
'Tis true, I look on Guilford like a father,
Lean to his side, and see but half his failings:
But, on a point like this, when equal merit
Stands forth to make its bold appeal to honour,
And calls to have the balance held in justice;
Away with all the fondnesses of nature!
I judge of Pembroke and my son alike.
Pem. I ask no more to bind me to your service.
North. The realm is now at hazard, and bold factions
Threaten change, tumult, and disastrous days.

These fears drive out the gentler thoughts of joy,
Of courtship, and of love. Grant, Heaven, the state
To fix in peace and safety once again;
Then speak your passion to the princely maid,
And fair success attend you. For myself,
My voice shall go as far for you, my lord,
As for my son; and beauty be the umpire.
But now a heavier matter calls upon us;
The king, with life just labouring; and I fear,
The council grow impatient at our stay.
Pem. One moment's pause, and I attend your grace. [*Exit North.*
Old Winchester cries to me oft, Beware
Of proud Northumberland. The testy prelate,
Froward with age, with disappointed hopes,
And zealous for old Rome, rails on the duke,
Suspecting him to favour the new teachers:
Yet even in that, if I judge right, he errs.
But were it so, what are these monkish quarrels,
These wordy wars of proud ill-mannered schoolmen,
To us and our lay interest? Let them rail
And worry one another at their pleasure.
This duke, of late, by many worthy offices,
Has sought my friendship. And yet more, his son,
The noblest youth our England has to boast of,
Has made me long the partner of his breast.
Nay, when he found, in spite of the resistance
My struggling heart had made, to do him justice,
That I was grown his rival, he strove hard,
And would not turn me forth from out his bosom,
But called me still his friend. And see! He comes.

Enter Lord Guilford.

Oh, Guilford! just as thou wert entering here,
My thought was running all thy virtues over,
And wondering how thy soul could choose a partner,
So much unlike itself.
Guil. How could my tongue
Take pleasure and be lavish in thy praise!
How could I speak thy nobleness of nature,
Thy open manly heart, thy courage, constancy,
And inborn truth, unknowing to dissemble!
Thou art the man in whom my soul delights;
In whom, next heaven, I trust.
Pem. Oh, generous youth!
What can a heart, stubborn and fierce, like mine,
Return to all thy sweetness?—Yet I would,
I would be grateful.—Oh, my cruel fortune!
Would I had never seen her, never cast
Mine eyes on Suffolk's daughter!
Guil. So would I!
Since 'twas my fate to see and love her first.
Pem. Oh! Why should she, that universal goodness,
Like light, a common blessing to the world,
Rise, like a comet, fatal to our friendship,
And threaten it with ruin?
Guil. Heaven forbid!
But tell me, Pembroke, is it not in virtue
To arm against this proud imperious passion?
Does holy friendship dwell so near to envy,
She could not bear to see another happy?
If blind mistaken chance, and partial beauty,
Should join to favour Guilford——
Pem. Name it not!
My fiery spirits kindle at the thought,
And hurry me to rage.
Guil. And yet I think
I should not murmur, were thy lot to prosper,
And mine to be refused. Though sure, the loss
Would wound me to the heart.
Pem. Ha! Couldst thou bear it?
And yet perhaps thou mightst; thy gentle temper
Is formed with passions mixed with due proportion,
Where no one overbears, nor plays the tyrant,
But join in nature's business, and thy happiness:
While mine, disdaining reason and her laws,
Like all thou canst imagine wild and furious,
Now drive me headlong on, now whirl me back,
And hurl my unstable flitting soul
To every mad extreme. Then pity me,
And let my weakness stand——

Enter Sir John Gates.

Gates. The lords of council
Wait with impatience.
Pem. I attend their pleasure.
This only, and no more, then. Whatsoever
Fortune decrees, still let us call to mind
Our friendship and our honour. And since love
Condemns us to be rivals for one prize,
Let us contend, as friends and brave men ought,
With openness and justice to each other;
That he, who wins the fair one to his arms,
May take her as the crown of great desert;
And if the wretched loser does repine,
His own heart and the world may all condemn him. [*Exit Pem.*
Guil. How cross the ways of life lie! While we think
We travel on direct in one high road,
And have our journey's end opposed in view,
A thousand thwarting paths break in upon us,
To puzzle and perplex our wandering steps;
Love, friendship, hatred, in their turns, mislead us,
And every passion has its separate interest:
Where is that piercing foresight can unfold
Where all this mazy error will have end,
And tell the doom reserved for me and Pembroke?
There is but one end certain, that is—Death:
Yet even that certainty is still uncertain.
For of these several tracks, which lie before us,
We know that one leads certainly to death,
But know not which that one is. 'Tis in vain,
This blind divining; let me think no more on it
And see the mistress of our fate appear!

Enter Lady JANE GRAY. *Attendants.*

Hail, princely maid! who, with auspicious beauty,
Chearest every drooping heart in this sad place;
Who, like the silver regent of the night,
Lift'st up thy sacred beams upon the land,
To bid the gloom look gay, dispel our horrors,
And make us less lament the setting sun.

L. J. Gray. Yes, Guilford; well dost thou compare my presence
To the faint comfort of the waning moon:
Like her cold orb, a cheerless gleam I bring:
Silence and heaviness of heart, with dews
To dress the face of nature all in tears.
But say, how fares the king?

Guil. He lives as yet,
But every moment cuts away a hope,
Adds to our fears, and gives the infant saint
Great prospect of his opening Heaven.

L. J. Gray. Descend, ye choirs of angels, to receive him!
Tune your melodious harps to some high strain,
And waft him upwards with a song of triumph;
A purer soul, and one more like yourselves,
Ne'er entered at the golden gates of bliss.
Oh, Guilford! What remains for wretched England,
When he, our guardian angel, shall forsake us?
For whose dear sake Heaven spared a guilty land,
And scattered not its plagues while Edward reigned!

Guil. I own my heart bleeds inward at the thought,
And rising horrors crowd the opening scene.
And yet, forgive me, thou, my native country,
Thou land of liberty, thou nurse of heroes,
Forgive me, if, in spite of all thy dangers,
New springs of pleasure flow within my bosom,
When thus 'tis given me to behold those eyes,
Thus gaze, and wonder, how excelling nature
Can give each day new patterns of her skill,
And yet at once surpass them.

L. J. Gray. Oh, vain flattery!
Harsh and ill-sounding ever to my ear;
But on a day like this, the raven's note
Strikes on my sense more sweetly. But, no more;
I charge thee touch the ungrateful theme no more;
Lead me to pay my duty to the king,
To wet his pale cold hand with these last tears,
And share the blessings of his parting breath.

Guil. Were I like dying Edward, sure a touch
Of this dear hand would kindle life anew.
But I obey, I dread that gathering frown;
And, oh! whene'er my bosom swells with passion,
And my full heart is pained with ardent love,
Allow me but to look on you, and sigh;
'Tis all the humble joy that Guilford asks.

L. J. Gray. Still wilt thou frame thy speech to this vain purpose,
When the wan king of terrors stalks before us,
When universal ruin gathers round,
And no escape is left us? Are we not
Like wretches in a storm, whom every moment
The greedy deep is gaping to devour?
Around us see the pale despairing crew
Wring their sad hands, and give their labour o'er;
The hope of life has every heart forsook,
And horror sits on each distracted look;
One solemn thought of death does all employ,
And cancels, like a dream, delight and joy;
One sorrow streams from all their weeping eyes,
And one consenting voice for mercy cries;
Trembling, they dread just Heaven's avenging power,
Mourn their past lives, and wait the fatal hour.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter the Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, *and the Duke of* SUFFOLK.

Nor. YET then be cheered, my heart, amidst thy mourning.
Though fate hang heavy o'er us, though pale fear
And wild distraction sit on every face;
Though never day of grief was known like this,
Let me rejoice, and bless the hallowed light,
Whose beams auspicious shine upon our union,
And bid me call the noble Suffolk brother.

Suff. I know not what my secret soul presages,
But something seems to whisper me within,
That we have been too hasty. For myself,
I wish this matter had been yet delayed;
That we had waited some more blessed time,
Some better day, with happier omens hallowed,
For love to kindle up his holy flame.
But you, my noble brother, would prevail,
And I have yielded to you.

North. Doubt not any thing;
Nor hold the hour unlucky, that good Heaven,
Who softens the corrections of his hand,
And mixes still a comfort with afflictions,
Has given to-day a blessing in our children,
To wipe away our tears for dying Edward.

Suff. In that I trust. Good angels be our guard,
And make my fears prove vain! But see! My wife!
With her, your son, the generous Guilford, comes;
She has informed him of our present purpose.

Enter the Duchess of SUFFOLK, *and Lord* GUILFORD.

Guil. How shall I speak the fulness of my heart?

What shall I say to bless you for this goodness?
Oh, gracious princess! But my life is yours,
And all the business of my years to come,
Is, to attend with humblest duty on you,
And pay my vowed obedience at your feet.
Duch. Suff. Yes, noble youth, I share in all thy joys,
In all the joys which this sad day can give.
The dear delight I have to call thee son,
Comes like a cordial to my drooping spirits;
It broods with gentle warmth upon my bosom,
And melts that frost of death which hung about me.
But haste! Inform my daughter of our pleasure:
Let thy tongue put on all its pleasing eloquence,
Instruct thy love to speak of comfort to her,
To soothe her griefs, and cheer the mourning maid.
North. All desolate and drowned in flowing tears,
By Edward's bed the pious princess sits;
Fast from her lifted eyes the pearly drops
Fall trickling o'er her cheek, while holy ardour
And fervent zeal pour forth her labouring soul;
And every sigh is winged with prayers so potent,
As strive with Heaven to save her dying lord.
Duch. Suff. From the first early days of infant life,
A gentle band of friendship grew betwixt them;
And while our royal uncle Henry reigned,
As brother and as sister bred together,
Beneath one common parent's care they lived.
North. A wondrous sympathy of souls conspired
To form the sacred union. Lady Jane
Of all his royal blood was still the dearest;
In every innocent delight they shared;
They sung, and danced, and sat, and walked together;
Nay, in the graver business of his youth,
When books and learning called him from his sports,
Even there the princely maid was his companion.
She left the shining court to share his toil,
To turn with him the grave historian's page,
And taste the rapture of the poet's song;
To search the Latin and the Grecian stores,
And wonder at the mighty minds of old.

Enter Lady Jane Gray, *weeping.*

L. J. Gray. Wilt thou not break, my heart!
Suff. Alas! What meanest thou?
Guil. Oh! speak!
Duch. Suff. How fares the king?
North. Say, is he dead?
L. J. Gray. The saints and angels have him.
Duch. Suff. When I left him,
He seemed a little cheered, just as you entered.
L. J. Gray. As I approached to kneel and pay my duty,
He raised his feeble eyes, and faintly smiling,
Are you then come? he cried: I only lived,
To bid farewell to thee, my gentle cousin;
To speak a few short words to thee, and die.
With that he prest my hand, and, oh!—he said,
When I am gone, do thou be good to England,
Keep to that faith in which we both were bred,
And to the end be constant. More I would,
But cannot——There his faltering spirits failed,
And turning every thought from earth at once,
To that blest place where all his hopes were fixed,
Earnest he prayed;——Merciful, great defender!
Preserve thy holy altars undefiled,
Protect this land from bloody men and idols,
Save my poor people from the yoke of Rome,
And take thy painful servant to thy mercy!
Then, sinking on his pillow, with a sigh,
He breathed his innocent and faithful soul
Into his hands who gave it.
Guil. Crowns of glory,
Such as the brightest angels wear, be on him!
Peace guard his ashes here, and paradise,
With all its endless bliss, be open to him!
North. Our grief be on his grave. Our present duty
Enjoins to see his last commands obeyed.
I hold it fit his death be not made known
To any but our friends. To-morrow, early,
The council shall assemble at the Tower.
Mean while, I beg your grace would strait inform [*To the Duchess of Suffolk.*
Your princely daughter of our resolution;
Our common interest in that happy tie
Demands our swiftest care to see it finished.
Duch. Suff. My lord, you have determined well.
Lord Guildford,
Be it your task to speak at large our purpose.
Daughter, receive this lord as one whom I,
Your father, and his own, ordain your husband:
What more concerns our will and your obedience,
We leave you to receive from him at leisure.
[*Exeunt Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, and Duke of Northumberland.*
Guil. Wilt thou not spare a moment from thy sorrows,
And bid these bubbling streams forbear to flow?
Wilt thou not give one interval to joy,
One little pause, while humbly I unfold
The happiest tale my tongue was ever blest with?
L. J. Gray. My heart is dead within me; every sense
Is dead to joy: but I will hear thee, Guilford;
Nay, I must hear thee, such is her command,
Whom early duty taught me still to obey.
Yet, oh! forgive me, if to all the story,
Though eloquence divine attend thy speaking,
Though every muse, and every grace, do crown thee;
Forgive me, if I cannot better answer,
Than weeping——thus, and thus——
Guil. If I offend thee,
Let me be dumb for ever: Let not life
Inform these breathing organs of my voice,

If any sound from me disturb thy quiet.
What is my peace or happiness to thine?
No; though our noble parents had decreed,
And urged high reasons, which import the state,
This night to give thee to my faithful arms,
My fairest bride, my only earthly bliss——
L. J. Gray. How! Guilford! on this night?
Guil. This happy night;
Yet, if thou art resolved to cross my fate,
If this, my utmost wish, shall give thee pain,
Now rather let the stroke of death fall on me,
And stretch me out a lifeless corpse before thee!
Let me be swept away, with things forgotten,
Be huddled up in some obscure blind grave,
Ere thou shouldst say my love has made thee wretched,
Or drop one single tear for Guilford's sake.
L. J. Gray. Alas! I have too much of death already,
And want not thine to furnish out new horror.
Oh! dreadful thought, if thou wert dead indeed!
What hope were left me then? Yes, I will own,
Spite of the blush that burns my maiden cheek,
My heart has fondly leaned towards thee long:
Thy sweetness, virtue, and unblemished youth,
Have won a place for thee within my bosom:
And if my eyes look coldly on thee now,
And shun thy love on this disastrous day,
It is because I would not deal so hardly,
To give thee sighs for all thy faithful vows,
And pay thy tenderness with nought but tears.
As yet, 'tis all I have.
Guil. I ask no more;
Let me but call thee mine, confirm that hope,
To charm the doubts which vex my anxious soul;
For all the rest, do thou allot it for me,
And, at thy pleasure, portion out my blessings.
My eyes shall learn to smile or weep from thine,
Nor will I think of joy while thou art sad.
Nay, couldst thou be so cruel to command it,
I will forego a bridegroom's sacred right,
And sleep far from thee, on the unwholesome earth,
Where damps arise, and whistling winds blow loud;
Then, when the day returns, come drooping to thee,
My locks still drizzling with the dews of night,
And cheer my heart with thee, as with the morning.
L. J. Gray. Say, wilt thou consecrate this night to sorrow,
And give up every sense to solemn sadness?
Wilt thou, in watching, waste the tedious hours,
Sit silently, and careful, by my side,
List to the tolling clocks, the cricket's cry,
And every melancholy midnight noise?
Say, wilt thou banish pleasure and delight?
Wilt thou forget that ever we have loved,
And only now and then let fall a tear,
To mourn for Edward's loss, and England's fate?
Guil. Unwearied still, I will attend thy woes,
And be a very faithful partner to thee.
Near thee I will complain in sighs, as numberless
As murmurs breathing in the leafy grove:
My eyes shall mix their falling drops with thine,
Constant, as never-ceasing waters roll,
That purl and gurgle o'er their sands for ever.
The sun shall see my grief through all his course;
And, when night comes, sad Philomel, who 'plains
From starry vesper to the rosy dawn,
Shall cease to tune her lamentable song,
Ere I give o'er to weep and mourn with thee.
L. J. Gray. Here, then, I take thee to my heart for ever, [*Giving her hand.*
The dear companion of my future days:
Whatever Providence allots for each,
Be that the common portion of us both:
Share all the griefs of thy unhappy Jane;
But if good Heaven has any joys in store,
Let them be all thy own.
Guil. Thou wondrous goodness!
Heaven gives too much at once in giving thee;
And, by the common course of things below,
Where each delight is tempered with affliction,
Some evil, terrible and unforeseen,
Must sure ensue, and poise the scale against
This vast profusion of exceeding pleasure.
But be it so! let it be death and ruin!
On any terms I take thee.
L. J. Gray. Trust our fate
To him, whose gracious wisdom guides our ways,
And makes what we think evil turn to good.
Permit me now to leave thee and retire;
I'll summon all my reason and my duty,
To soothe this storm within, and frame my heart
To yield obedience to my noble parents.
Guil. Good angels minister their comforts to thee!
And, oh! if, as my fond belief would hope,
If any word of mine be gracious to thee,
I beg thee, I conjure thee, drive away
Those murderous thoughts of grief, that kill thy quiet!
Restore thy gentle bosom's native peace,
Lift up the light of gladness in thy eyes,
And cheer thy heaviness with one dear smile!
L. J. Gray. Yes, Guilford, I will study to forget
All that the royal Edward has been to me;
How we have loved, even from our very cradles,
My private loss no longer will I mourn,
But every tender thought to thee shall turn:
With patience I'll submit to Heaven's decree,
And what I lost in Edward find in thee.
But, oh! when I revolve what ruins wait
Our sinking altars and the falling state;
When I consider what my native land
Expected from her pious sovereign's hand;
How formed he was to save her from distress,
A king to govern, and a saint to bless:
New sorrow to my labouring breast succeeds,
And my whole heart for wretched England bleeds. [*Exit Lady Jane Gray.*

Guil. My heart sinks in me, at her soft complaining;
And every moving accent, that she breathes,
Resolves my courage, slackens my tough nerves,
And melts me down to infancy and tears.
My fancy palls, and takes distaste at pleasure:
My soul grows out of tune, it loathes the world,
Sickens at all the noise and folly of it;
And I could sit me down in some dull shade,
Where lonely Contemplation keeps her cave,
And dwells with hoary hermits; there forget myself,
There fix my stupid eyes upon the earth,
And muse away an age in deepest melancholy.

Enter Pembroke.

Pem. Edward is dead; so said the great Northumberland,
As now he shot along by me in haste.
He pressed my hand, and, in a whisper, begged me
To guard the secret carefully as life,
Till some few hours should pass; for much hung on it.
Much may indeed hang on it. See my Guilford!
My friend! [*Speaking to him.*
Guil. Ha! Pembroke! [*Starting.*
Pem. Wherefore dost thou start?
Why sits that wild disorder on thy visage,
Somewhat, that looks like passions strange to thee,
The paleness of surprize and ghastly fear?
Since I have known thee first, and called thee friend,
I never saw thee so unlike thyself,
So changed upon a sudden.
Guil. How! so changed!
Pem. So to my eye thou seemest.
Guil. The king is dead.
Pem. I learned it from thy father,
Just as I entered here. But say, could that,
A fate which every moment we expected,
Distract thy thought, or shock thy temper, thus?
Guil. Oh, Pembroke! 'tis in vain to hide from thee!
For thou hast looked into my artless bosom,
And seen at once the hurry of my soul.
'Tis true, thy coming struck me with surprize.
I have a thought—but wherefore said I one?
I have a thousand thoughts all up in arms,
Like populous towns disturbed at dead of night,
That, mixed in darkness, bustle to and fro,
As if their business were to make confusion.
Pem. Then sure our better angels called me hither;
For this is friendship's hour, and friendship's office,
To come, when counsel and when help is wanting,
To share the pain of every gnawing care,
To speak of comfort in the time of trouble,
To reach a hand, and save thee from adversity.
Guil. And wilt thou be a friend to me indeed?
And, while I lay my bosom bare before thee,
Wilt thou deal tenderly, and let thy hand
Pass gently over every painful part?
Wilt thou with patience hear, and judge with temper?
And if, perchance, thou meet with something harsh,
Somewhat to rouse thy rage, and grate thy soul,
Wilt thou be master of thyself and bear it?
Pem. Away with all this needless preparation!
Thou knowest thou art so dear, so sacred to me,
That I can never think thee an offender.
If it were so, that I indeed must judge thee,
I should take part with thee against myself,
And call thy fault a virtue.
Guil. But suppose
The thought were somewhat that concerned our love?
Pem. No more; thou knowest we spoke of that to-day,
And on what terms we left it. 'Tis a subject,
Of which, if possible, I would not think;
I beg that we may mention it no more.
Guil. Can we not speak of it with temper?
Pem. No.
Thou knowest I cannot. Therefore, prithee spare it.
Guil. Oh! could the secret I would tell thee sleep,
And the world never know it, my fond tongue
Should cease from speaking, ere I would unfold it,
Or vex thy peace with an officious tale!
But since, howe'er ungrateful to thy ear,
It must be told thee once, hear it from me.
Pem. Speak, then, and ease the doubts that shock my soul!
Guil. Suppose thy Guilford's better stars prevail,
And crown his love———
Pem. Say not, suppose: 'tis done.
Seek not for vain excuse, or softening words:
Thou hast prevaricated with thy friend,
By under-hand contrivances undone me:
And, while my open nature trusted in thee,
Thou hast stepped in between me and my hopes,
And ravished from me all my soul held dear.
Thou hast betrayed me———
Guil. How! betrayed thee, Pembroke?
Pem. Yes, falsely, like a traitor.
Guil. Have a care!
Pem. But think not I will bear the foul play from thee;
There was but this which I could ne'er forgive.
My soul is up in arms, my injured honour,
Impatient of the wrong, calls for revenge;
And though I love thee——fondly——
Guil. Hear me yet,
And Pembroke shall acquit me to himself;
Hear, while I tell how fortune dealt between us.

And gave the yielding beauty to my arms—
Pem. What, hear it! Stand and listen to thy triumph!
Thou thinkest me tame indeed. No, hold, I charge thee,
Lest I forget that ever we were friends!
Lest, in the rage of disappointed love,
I rush at once and tear thee for thy falsehood!
Guil. Thou warnest me well; and I were rash, as thou art,
To trust the secret sum of all my happiness
With one not master of himself. Farewell.
[*Going.*
Pem. Ha! art thou going? Think not thus to part,
Nor leave me on the rack of this uncertainty.
Guil. What wouldst thou further?
Pem. Tell it to me all;
Say thou art married, say thou hast possessed her,
And rioted in vast excess of bliss,
That I may curse myself, and thee, and her!
Come, tell me how thou didst supplant thy friend!
How didst thou look with that betraying face,
And, smiling, plot my ruin?
Guil. Give me way.
When thou art better tempered, I may tell thee,
And vindicate at full my love and friendship.
Pem. And dost thou hope to shun me then, thou traitor?
No, I will have it now, this moment from thee,
Or drag the secret out from thy false heart.
Guil. Away, thou madman! I would talk to winds,
And reason with the rude tempestuous surge,
Sooner than hold discourse with rage like thine.
Pem. Tell it, or, by my injured love, I swear,
[*Laying his hand upon his sword.*
I'll stab the lurking treason in thy heart.
Guil. Ha! stay thee there; nor let thy frantic hand
[*Stopping him.*
Unsheath thy weapon. If the sword be drawn,
If once we meet on terms like those, farewell
To every thought of friendship; one must fall.
Pem. Curse on thy friendship! I would break the band.
Guil. That as you please—Beside, this place is sacred,
And will not be profaned with brawls and outrage.
You know I dare be found on any summons.
Pem. 'Tis well. My vengeance shall not loiter long.
Henceforward let the thoughts of our past lives
Be turned to deadly and remorseless hate!
Here I give up the empty name of friend,
Renounce all gentleness, all commerce with thee;
To death defy thee as my mortal foe;
And, when we meet again, may swift destruction
Rid me of thee, or rid me of myself!
[*Exit Pembroke.*
Guil. The fate, I ever feared, is fallen upon me;
And long ago my boding heart divined
A breach like this from his ungoverned rage.
Oh, Pembroke! thou hast done me much injustice,
For I have borne thee true unfeigned affection;
'Tis past, and thou art lost to me for ever.
Love is, or ought to be, our greatest bliss;
Since every other joy, how dear soever,
Gives way to that, and we leave all for love.
At the imperious tyrant's lordly call,
In spite of reason or restraint we come,
Leave kindred, parents, and our native home.
The trembling maid, with all her fears, he charms,
And pulls her from her weeping mother's arms:
He laughs at all her leagues, and, in proud scorn,
Commands the bands of friendship to be torn;
Disdains a partner should partake his throne,
But reigns unbounded, lawless, and alone.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Tower.*

Enter PEMBROKE *and* GARDINER.

Gar. NAY, by the rood, my lord, you were to blame,
To let a hair-brained passion be your guide,
And hurry you into such mad extremes.
Marry, you might have made much worthy profit,
By patient hearing; the unthinking lord
Had brought forth every secret of his soul;
Then when you were the master of his bosom,
That was the time to use him with contempt,
And turn his friendship back upon his hands.
Pem. Thou talkest as if a madman could be wise.
Oh, Winchester! thy hoary frozen age
Can never guess my pain; can never know
The burning transports of untamed desire.
I tell thee, reverend lord, to that one bliss,
To the enjoyment of that lovely maid,
As to their centre, I had drawn each hope,
And every wish my furious soul could form;
Still with regard to that my brain forethought,
And fashioned every action of my life.
Then, to be robbed at once, and, unsuspecting,
Be dashed in all the height of expectation!
It was not to be borne.
Gar. Have you not heard of what has happened since?
Pem. I have not had a minute's peace of mind,
A moment's pause, to rest from rage, or think,

Gar. Learn it from me then: But ere I speak,
I warn you to be master of yourself.
Though, as you know, they have confined me long,
Gra'mercy to their goodness, prisoner here;
Yet as I am allowed to walk at large
Within the Tower, and hold free speech with any,
I have not dreamt away my thoughtless hours,
Without good heed to these our righteous rulers.
To prove this true, this morn a trusty spy
Has brought me word, that yester evening late,
In spite of all the grief for Edward's death,
Your friends were married.

Pem. Married! who?——Damnation!

Gar. Lord Guilford Dudley, and the lady Jane.

Pem. Curse on my stars!

Gar. Nay, in the name of grace,
Restrain this sinful passion! all's not lost
In this one single woman.

Pem. I have lost
More than the female world can give me back.
I had beheld even her whole sex, unmoved,
Looked o'er them like a bed of gaudy flowers,
That lift their painted heads, and live a day,
Then shed their trifling glories unregarded:
My heart disdained their beauties, till she came,
With every grace that Nature's hand could give,
And with a mind so great, it spoke its essence
Immortal and divine.

Gar. She was a wonder;
Detraction must allow that.

Pem. The virtues came,
Sorted in gentle fellowship, to crown her,
As if they meant to mend each other's work.
Candour with goodness, fortitude with sweetness,
Strict piety, and love of truth, with learning,
More than the schools of Athens ever knew,
Or her own Plato taught. A wonder, Winchester!
Thou know'st not what she was, nor can I speak her,
More than to say, she was that only blessing
My soul was set upon—and I have lost her.

Gar. Your state is not so bad as you would make it;
Nor need you thus abandon every hope.

Pem. Ha! wilt thou save me, snatch me from despair,
And bid me live again?

Gar. She may be yours.
Suppose her husband die.

Pem. O vain, vain hope!

Gar. Marry, I do not hold that hope so vain.
These gospellers have had their golden days,
And lorded it at will; with proud despite
Have trodden down our holy Roman faith,
Ransacked our shrines, and driven her saints to exile.
But if my divination fail me not,
Their haughty hearts shall be abased ere long,
And feel the vengeance of our Mary's reign.

Pem. And wouldst thou have my fierce impatience stay?
Bid me lie bound upon a rack, and wait
For distant joys, whole ages yet behind?
Can love attend on politicians' schemes,
Expect the slow events of cautious counsels,
Cold unresolving heads, and creeping time?

Gar. To-day, or I am ill informed, Northumberland,
With easy Suffolk, Guilford, and the rest,
Meet here in council, on some deep design,
Some traiterous contrivance, to protect
Their upstart faith from near approaching ruin.
But there are punishments—halters and axes
For traitors, and consuming flames for heretics:
The happy bridegroom may be yet cut short,
Even in his highest hope—But go not you,
Howe'er the fawning sire, old Dudley, court you;
No, by the holy rood, I charge you, mix not
With their pernicious counsels.—Mischief waits them,
Sure, certain, unavoidable destruction.

Pem. Ha! join with them! the cursed Dudley's race!
Who, while they held me in their arms, betrayed me;
Scorned me for not suspecting they were villains,
And made a mockery of my easy friendship!
No, when I do, dishonour be my portion,
And swift perdition catch me.—Join with them!

Gar. I would not have you—Hie you to the city,
And join with those that love our ancient faith.
Gather your friends about you, and be ready
To assert our zealous Mary's royal title,
And doubt not but her grateful hand shall give you
To see your soul's desire upon your enemies.
The church shall pour her ample treasures forth too,
And pay you with ten thousand years of pardon.

Pem. No; keep your blessings back, and give me vengeance!
Give me to tell that soft deceiver, Guilford,
Thus, traitor, hast thou done, thus hast thou wronged me,
And thus thy treason finds a just reward!

Gar. But, soft! no more! the lords of the council come—
Ha! by the mass, the bride and bridegroom too!
Retire with me, my lord; we must not meet them.

Pem. 'Tis they themselves, the cursed happy pair!
Haste, Winchester, haste! let us fly for ever,
And drive her from my very thoughts, if possible.
Oh! love, what have I lost! Oh! reverend lord!
Pity this fond, this foolish weakness in me!
Methinks, I go like our first wretched father,
When from his blissful garden he was driven:
Like me he went despairing, and like me,
Thus at the gate stopt short for one last view!

Then with the cheerless partner of his woe,
He turned him to the world that lay below:
There, for his Eden's happy plains, beheld
A barren, wild, uncomfortable field;
He saw 'twas vain his ruin to deplore,
He tried to give the sad remembrance o'er;
The sad remembrance still returned again,
And his lost paradise renewed his pain.
[*Exeunt Pembroke and Gardiner.*

SCENE II.

Enter Lord GUILFORD *and Lady* JANE.

Guil. What shall I say to thee! What power divine
Will teach my tongue to tell thee what I feel?
To pour the transports of my bosom forth,
And make thee partner of the joy dwells there?
For thou art comfortless, full of affliction,
Heavy of heart as the forsaken widow,
And desolate as orphans. Oh! my fair one!
Thy Edward shines amongst the brightest stars,
And yet thy sorrows seek him in the grave.

L. J. Gray. Alas, my dearest lord! a thousand griefs
Beset my anxious heart: and yet, as if
The burthen were too little, I have added
The weight of all thy cares; and, like the miser,
Increase of wealth has made me but more wretched.
The morning light seems not to rise as usual,
It dawns not to me, like my virgin days,
But brings new thoughts and other fears upon me;
I tremble, and my anxious heart is pained,
Lest aught but good should happen to my Guilford.

Guil. Nothing but good can happen to thy Guilford,
While thou art by his side, his better angel,
His blessing and his guard.

L. J. Gray. Why came we hither?
Why was I drawn to this unlucky place,
This Tower, so often stained with royal blood?
Here the fourth Edward's helpless sons were murdered,
And pious Henry fell by ruthless Gloster:
Is this the place allotted for rejoicing?
The bower adorned to keep our nuptial feast in?
Methinks Suspicion and Distrust dwell here,
Staring, with meagre forms, through grated windows:
Death lurks within, and unrelenting Punishment:
Without, grim Danger, Fear, and fiercest Power,
Sit on the rude old towers, and Gothic battlements;
While Horror overlooks the dreadful wall,
And frowns on all around.

Guil. In safety here,
The lords of the council have this morn decreed
To meet, and, with united care, support
The feeble tottering state. To thee, my princess,
Whose royal veins are rich in Henry's blood,
With one consent the noblest heads are bowed:
From thee they ask a sanction to their counsels,
And from thy healing hand expect a cure,
For England's loss in Edward.

L. J. Gray. How! from me!
Alas! my lord—But surethou meanst to mock me?

Guil. No; by the love my faithful heart is full of!
But see, thy mother, gracious Suffolk, comes
To intercept my story: she shall tell thee;
For in her look I read the labouring thought,
What vast event thy fate is now disclosing.

Enter the Duchess of SUFFOLK.

Duch. Suff. No more complain; indulge thy tears no more;
Thy pious grief has given the grave its due:
Let thy heart kindle with the highest hopes;
Expand thy bosom; let thy soul, enlarged,
Make room to entertain the coming glory!
For majesty and purple greatness court thee;
Homage, and low subjection, wait; a crown,
That makes the princes of the earth like gods;
A crown, my daughter, England's crown attends,
To bind thy brows with its imperial wreath.

L. J. Gray. Amazement chills my veins!—What says my mother?

Duch. Suff. 'Tis Heaven's decree; for our expiring Edward,
When now, just struggling to his native skies,
Even on the verge of heaven, in sight of angels,
That hovered round, to waft him to the stars,
Even then declared my Jane for his successor.

L. J. Gray. Could Edward do this? could the dying saint
Bequeath his crown to me? Oh, fatal bounty!
To me! But 'tis impossible! We dream.
A thousand and a thousand bars oppose me,
Rise in my way, and intercept my passage.
Even you, my gracious mother, what must you be,
Ere I can be a queen?

Duch. Suff. That, and that only,
Thy mother; fonder of that tender name,
Than all the proud additions power can give.
Yes, I will give up all my share of greatness,
And live in low obscurity for ever,
To see thee raised, thou darling of my heart,
And fixed upon a throne. But see; thy father,
Northumberland, with all the council, come
To pay their vowed allegiance at thy feet,
To kneel, and call thee queen.

L. J. Gray. Support me, Guilford;
Give me thy aid; stay thou my fainting soul,
And help me to repress this growing danger.

Enter SUFFOLK, NORTHUMBERLAND, *Lords and others of the Privy Council.*

North Hail, sacred princess! sprung from ancient kings,
Our England's dearest hope, undoubted offspring
Of York and Lancaster's united line;
By whose bright zeal, by whose victorious faith,

Guarded and fenced around, our pure religion,
That lamp of truth, which shines upon our altars,
Shall lift its golden head, and flourish long;
Beneath whose awful rule, and righteous sceptre,
The plenteous years shall roll in long succession;
Law shall prevail, and ancient right take place;
Fair liberty shall lift her cheerful head,
Fearless of tyranny and proud oppression;
No sad complaining in our streets shall cry,
But justice shall be exercised in mercy.
Hail, royal Jane! behold we bend our knees,
[*They kneel.*
The pledge of homage, and thy land's obedience;
With humblest duty thus we kneel, and own thee
Our liege, our sovereign lady, and our queen.

L. J. Gray. Oh, rise!
My father, rise! [*To Suff.*
And you, my father, too! [*To North.*
Rise all, nor cover me with this confusion.
[*They rise.*
What means this mock, this masquing shew of greatness?
Why do you hang these pageant glories on me,
And dress me up in honours not my own?

North. The daughters of our late great master Henry,
Stand both by law excluded from succession.
To make all firm,
And fix a power unquestioned in your hand,
Edward, by will, bequeathed his crown to you:
And the concurring lords, in council met,
Have ratified the gift.

L. J. Gray. Are crowns and empire,
The government and safety of mankind,
Trifles of such light moment, to be left
Like some rich toy, a ring, or fancied gem,
The pledge of parting friends? Can kings do thus,
And give away a people for a legacy?

North. Forgive me, princely lady, if my wonder
Seizes each sense, each faculty of mind,
To see the utmost wish the great can form,
A crown, thus coldly met: A crown, which, slighted,
And left in scorn by you, shall soon be sought,
And find a joyful wearer; one, perhaps,
Of blood unkindred to your royal house,
And fix its glories in another line.

L. J. Gray. Where art thou now, thou partner of my cares? [*Turning to Guilford.*
Come to my aid, and help to bear this burthen:
Oh! save me from this sorrow, this misfortune,
Which, in the shape of gorgeous greatness, comes
To crown, and make a wretch of me for ever!

Guil. Thou weep'st my queen, and hang'st thy drooping head,
Like nodding poppies, heavy with the rain,
That bow their weary necks and bend to earth.
See, by thy side, thy faithful Guilford stands,
Prepared to keep distress and danger from thee,
To wear thy sacred cause upon his sword,
And war against the world in thy defence.

North. Oh! stay this inauspicious stream of tears,
And cheer your people with one gracious smile.
Nor comes your fate in such a dreadful form,
To bid you shun it. Turn those sacred eyes
On the bright prospect empire spreads before you.
Methinks I see you seated on the throne;
Beneath your feet, the kingdom's great degrees
In bright confusion shine, mitres and coronets,
The various ermine, and the glowing purple;
Assembled senates wait, with awful dread,
To affirm your high commands, and make them fate.

L. J. Gray. You turn to view the painted side of royalty,
And cover all the cares that lurk beneath.
Is it, to be a queen, to sit aloft,
In solemn, dull, uncomfortable state,
The flattered idol of a servile court?
Is it to draw a pompous train along,
A pageant, for the wondering crowd to gaze at?
Is it, in wantonness of power to reign,
And make the world subservient to my pleasure?
Is it not rather, to be greatly wretched,
To watch, to toil, to take a sacred charge,
To bend each day before high Heaven, and own,
This people hast thou trusted to my hand,
And at my hand, I know, thou shalt require them?
Alas, Northumberland! My father! Is it not
To live a life of care, and, when I die,
Have more to answer for before my judge,
Than any of my subjects?

Duch. Suff. Every state,
Allotted to the race of man below,
Is, in proportion, doomed to taste some sorrow,
Nor is the golden wreath on a king's brow
Exempt from care; and yet, who would not bear it?
Think on the monarchs of your royal race:
They lived not for themselves: how many blessings,
How many lifted hands shall pay thy toil,
If for thy people's good thou happily borrow
Some portion from the hours of rest, and wake,
To give the world repose!

Suff. Behold, we stand upon the brink of ruin,
And only thou canst save us. Persecution,
That fiend of Rome and hell, prepares her tortures;
See where she comes in Mary's priestly train!
Still wilt thou doubt? till thou behold her stalk,
Red with the blood of martyrs, and wide wasting
O'er England's bosom? All the mourning year
Our towns shall glow with unextinguished fires;
Our youth on racks shall stretch their crackling bones;
Our babes shall sprawl on consecrated spears;
Matrons and husbands, with their new-born infants,
Shall burn promiscuous; a continued peal

Of lamentations, groans, and shrieks, shall sound,
Through all our purple ways.
Guil. Amidst that ruin,
Think thou beholdest thy Guilford's head laid low,
Bloody and pale——
L. J. Gray. Oh! spare the dreadful image!
Guil. Oh! would the misery be bounded there,
My life were little; but the rage of Rome
Demands whole hecatombs, a land of victims.
With Superstition comes that other fiend,
That bane of peace, of arts and virtue, Tyranny;
That foe of justice, scorner of all law;
That beast, which thinks mankind were born for one,
And made by heaven to be a monster's prey;
That heaviest curse of groaning nations, Tyranny.
Mary shall, by her kindred Spain, be taught
To bend our necks beneath a brazen yoke,
And rule o'er wretches with an iron sceptre.
L. J. Gray. Avert that judgment, Heaven!
Whate'er thy providence allots for me,
In mercy spare my country.
Guil. Oh, my queen!
Does not thy great, thy generous heart relent,
To think this land, for liberty so famed,
Shall have her towery front at once laid low,
And robbed of all its glory? Oh! my country!
Oh! fairest Albion, empress of the deep,
How have thy noblest sons, with stubborn valour,
Stood to the last, dyed many a field in blood,
In dear defence of birth-right and their laws!
And shall those hands, which fought the cause of freedom,
Be manacled in base unworthy bonds?
Be tamely yielded up, the spoil, the slaves
Of hair-brained zeal, and cruel coward priests?
L. J. Gray. Yes, my loved lord, my soul is moved like thine,
At every danger which invades our England;
My cold heart kindles at the great occasion,
And could be more than man in her defence.
But where is my commission to redress?
Or whence my power to save? Can Edward's will,
Or twenty met in council, make a queen?
Can you, my lords, give me the power to canvass
A doubtful title with king Henry's daughters?
Where are the reverend sages of the law,
To guide me with their wisdoms, and point out
The paths, which right and justice bid me tread?
North. The judges all attend, and will at leisure
Resolve you every scruple.
L. J. Gray. They expound;
But where are those, my lord, that make the law?
Where are the ancient honours of the realm,
The nobles, with the mitred fathers joined?
The wealthy commons solemnly assembled?
Where is that voice of a consenting people,
To pledge the universal faith with mine,
And call me justly queen?
North. Nor shall that long
Be wanting to your wish. The lords and commons
Shall, at your royal bidding, soon assemble,
And with united homage own your title.
Delay not then the general wish,
But be our queen, be England's better angel!
Nor let mistaken piety betray you
To join with cruel Mary in our ruin:
Her bloody faith commands her to destroy,
And yours forbids to save.
Guil. Our foes, already
High in their hopes, devote us all to death:
The drouish monks, the scorn and shame of manhood,
Rouse, and prepare once more to take possession,
To nestle in their ancient hives again:
Again they furbish up their holy trumpery,
Relicks and wooden wonder-working saints,
Whole loads of lumber and religious rubbish,
In high procession mean to bring them back,
And place the puppets in their shrines again:
While those of keener malice, savage Bonner,
And deep-designing Gardiner, dream of vengeance;
Devour the blood of innocents, in hope;
Like vultures, snuff the slaughter in the wind,
And speed their flight to havock and the prey.
Haste then, and save us, while 'tis given to save
Your country, your religion.
North. Save your friends!
Suff. Your father!
Duch. Suff. Mother!
Guil. Husband!
L. J. Gray. Take me, crown me,
Invest me with this royal wretchedness!
Let me not know one happy minute more;
Let all my sleepless nights be spent in care,
My days be fixed with tumults and alarms;
If only I can save you, if my fate
Has marked me out to be the public victim,
I take the lot with joy! Yes, I will die
For that eternal truth my faith is fixed on,
And that dear native land which gave me birth!
Guil. Wake every tuneful instrument to tell it,
And let the trumpet's sprightly note proclaim,
My Jane is England's queen! Let the loud cannon
In peals of thunder speak it to Augusta;
Imperial Thames, catch thou the sacred sound,
And roll it to the subject ocean down:
Tell the old deep, and all thy brother floods,
My Jane is empress of the watery world!
Now with glad fires our bloodless streets shall shine,
With cries of joy our cheerful ways shall ring;
Thy name shall echo through the rescued isle,
And reach applauding heaven!
L. J. Gray. Oh, Guilford! what do we give up for glory!
For glory! that's a toy I would not purchase;
An idle, empty bubble. But for England!

What must we lose for that? Since then my fate
Has forced this hard exchange upon my will,
Let gracious Heaven allow me one request:
For that blest peace in which I once did dwell,
For books, retirement, and my studious cell,
For all those joys my happier days did prove,
For Plato, and his academic grove;
All that I ask, is, though my fortune frown,
And bury me beneath this fatal crown;
Let that one good be added to my doom,
To save this land from tyranny and Rome.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter PEMBROKE *and* GARDINER.

Gar. In an unlucky and accursed hour
Set forth that traitor duke, that proud Northumberland,
To draw his sword upon the side of heresy,
And war against our Mary's holy right:
Ill fortune fly before, and pave his way
With disappointments, mischief, and defeat!
Do thou, O holy Becket, the protector,
The champion, and the martyr of our church,
Appear, and once more own the cause of Rome:
Beat down his lance, break thou his sword in battle,
And cover foul rebellion with confusion!

Pem. I saw him marching at his army's head;
I marked him issuing through the city-gate,
In harness all appointed, as he passed;
And (for he wore his beaver up) could read
Upon his visage, horror and dismay.
No voice of cheerful salutation cheered him,
None wished his arms might thrive, or bade God speed him,
But, through a staring ghastly-looking crowd,
Unhailed, unblessed, with heavy heart he went;
As if his traitor father's haggard ghost,
And Somerset, fresh bleeding from the axe,
On either hand had ushered him to ruin.

Gar. Nor shall the holy vengeance loiter long.
At Farmingham, in Suffolk, lies the queen,
Mary, our pious mistress: where each day
The nobles of the land, and swarming populace,
Gather, and list beneath her royal ensigns.
The fleet, commanded by Sir Thomas Jerningham,
Set out in warlike manner to oppose her,
With one consent have joined to own her cause:
The valiant Sussex, and Sir Edward Hastings,
With many more of note, are up in arms,
And all declare for her.

Pem. The citizens,
Who held the noble Somerset right dear,
Hate this aspiring Dudley and his race,
And would upon the instant join to oppose him;
Could we but draw some of the lords of the council
To appear among them, own the same design,
And bring the reverend sanction of authority
To lead them into action. For that purpose,
To thee, as to an oracle, I come,
To learn what fit expedient may be found,
To win the wary council to our side.
Say thou, whose head is grown thus silver-white,
In arts of government, and turns of state,
How we may blast our enemies with ruin,
And sink the cursed Northumberland to hell!

Gar. In happy time be your whole wish accomplished.
Since the proud duke set out, I have had conference,
As fit occasion served, with divers of them,
The earl of Arundel, Mason, and Cheyney,
And find them all disposed as we could ask.
By holy Mary, if I count aright,
To-day the better part shall leave this place,
And meet at Baynard's castle in the city;
There own our sovereign's title, and defy
Jane and her gospel crew. But, hie you hence!
This place is still within our foe's command;
Their puppet-queen reigns here.

Enter an Officer with a Guard.

Offi. Seize on them both.
[*Guards seize Pembroke and Gardiner.*
My lord, you are a prisoner to the state.

Pem. Ha! by whose order?

Offi. By the queen's command,
Signed and delivered by lord Guilford Dudley.

Pem. Curse on his traitor's heart!

Gar. Rest you contented:
You have loitered here too long; but use your patience;
These bonds shall not be lasting.

Offi. As for you, sir, [*To Gardiner.*
'Tis the queen's pleasure you be close confined:
You have used that fair permission was allowed you,
To walk at large within the Tower, unworthily.
You are noted for an over-busy meddler,
A secret practiser against the state;
For which, henceforth, your limits shall be straiter.
Hence, to your chamber!

Gar. Farewell, gentle Pembroke;
I trust that we shall meet on blither terms:
Till then, amongst my beads I will remember you,
And give you to the keeping of the saints.
[*Exeunt part of the guards with Gardiner.*

Pem. Now, whither must I go?

Offi. This way, my lord. [*Going off.*

Enter GUILFORD.

Guil. Hold, Captain! ere you go, I have a word or two

For this your noble prisoner.
Offi. At your pleasure;
I know my duty, and attend your lordship.
[*The Officer and Guards retire to the furthest part of the stage.*
Guil. Is all the gentleness, that was betwixt us,
So lost, so swept away from thy remembrance,
Thou canst not look upon me?
Pem. Ha! not look!
What terrors are there in the Dudley's race,
That Pembroke dares not look upon and scorn?
And yet, 'tis true, I would not look upon thee:
Our eyes avoid to look on what we hate,
As well as what we fear.
Guil. You hate me, then!
Pem. I do: and wish perdition may o'ertake
Thy father, thy false self, and thy whole name.
Guil. And yet, as sure as rage disturbs thy reason,
And masters all the noble nature in thee,
As sure as thou hast wronged me, I am come,
In tenderness of friendship, to preserve thee;
To plant even all the power I have before thee,
And fence thee from destruction with my life.
Pem. Friendship from thee! But my just soul disdains thee.
Hence! take the prostituted bauble back!
Hang it to grace some slavering idiot's neck,
For none but fools will praise the tinsel toy.
But thou art come, perhaps, to vaunt thy greatness,
And set thy purple pomp to view before me;
To let me know that Guilford is a king,
That he can speak the word, and give me freedom.
Oh, short-lived pageant! Hadst thou all the power
Which thy vain soul would grasp at, I would die,
Rot in a dungeon, ere receive a grace,
The least, the meanest courtesy from thee.
Guil. Oh, Pembroke! but I have not time to talk,
For danger presses; danger unforeseen,
And secret as the shaft that flies by night,
Is aiming at thy life. Captain, a word!
[*To the Officer.*
I take your prisoner to my proper charge;
Draw off your guard, and leave his sword with me.
[*The Officer delivers the sword to Lord Guilford, and goes out with his guard.*
[*Lord Guilford offering the sword to Pembroke.*
Receive this gift, even from a rival's hand;
And, if thy rage will suffer thee to hear
The counsel of a man, once called thy friend,
Fly from this fatal place, and seek thy safety!
Pem. How now! what shew! what mockery is this?
Is it in sport you use me thus? What means
This swift fantastic changing of the scene?
Guil. Oh, take thy sword, and let thy valiant hand
Be ready armed to guard thy noble life.
The time, the danger, and thy wild impatience,
Forbid me all to enter into speech with thee,
Or I could tell thee———
Pem. No, it needs not, traitor!
For all thy poor, thy little arts are known.
Thou fearest my vengeance, and art come to fawn,
To make a merit of that proffered freedom,
Which, in despite of thee, a day shall give me.
Nor can my fate depend on thee, false Guilford;
For know, to thy confusion, ere the sun
Twice gild the east, our royal Mary comes
To end thy pageant reign, and set me free.
Guil. Ungrateful and unjust! Hast thou then known me
So little, to accuse my heart of fear?
Hast thou forgotten Musselborough's field?
Did I then fear, when by thy side I fought,
And dyed my maiden sword in Scottish blood?
But this is madness all.
Pem. Give me my sword. [*Taking his sword.*
Perhaps, indeed, I wrong thee. Thou hast thought;
And, conscious of the injury thou hast done me,
Art come to proffer me a soldier's justice,
And meet my arm in single opposition.
Lead, then, and let me follow to the field.
Guil. Yes, Pembroke, thou shalt satisfy thy vengeance,
And write thy bloody purpose on my bosom.
But let death wait to-day. By our past friendship,
In honour's name, by every sacred tie,
I beg thee ask no more, but haste from hence.
Pem. What mystic meaning lurks beneath thy words?
What fear is this, which thou wouldst awe my soul with?
Is there a danger Pembroke dares not meet?
Guil. Oh, spare my tongue a tale of guilt and horror!
Trust me this once: believe me when I tell thee,
Thy safety and thy life is all I seek.
Away.
Pem. By Heaven, I will not stir a step!
Curse on this shuffling, dark, ambiguous phrase!
If thou wouldst have me think thou mean'st me fairly,
Speak with that plainness honesty delights in,
And let thy double tongue for once be true.
Guil. Forgive me, filial piety and nature,
If, thus compelled, I break your sacred laws,
Reveal my father's crime, and blot with infamy
The hoary head of him who gave me being,
To save the man, whom my soul loves, from death!
[*Giving a paper.*
Read there the fatal purpose of thy foe,
A thought which wounds my soul with shame and horror!
Somewhat that darkness should have hid for ever,

But that thy life—Say, hast thou seen that character?
Pem. I know it well; the hand of proud Northumberland,
Directed to his minions, Gates and Palmer.
What's this? [*Reads.*
'Remember, with your closest care, to observe 'those whom I named to you at parting; espe- 'cially keep your eye upon the earl of Pembroke; 'as his power and interest are most considerable, 'so his opposition will be most fatal to us. Re- 'member the resolution was taken, if you should 'find him inclined to our enemies. The forms of 'justice are tedious, and delays are dangerous. 'If he falters, lose not the sight of him till your 'daggers have reached his heart.'
My heart! Oh, murderous villain!
Guil. Since we parted,
Thy ways have all been watched, thy steps been marked;
Thy secret treaties with the malecontents,
That harbour in the city, thy conferring
With Gardiner here in the Tower; all is known:
And, in pursuance of that bloody mandate,
A set of chosen ruffians wait to end thee:
There was but one way left me to preserve thee;
I took it; and this morning sent my warrant
To seize thy person——But begone!
Pem. 'Tis so—'tis truth——I see his honest heart—
Guil. I have a friend of well-tried faith and courage,
Who, with a fit disguise, and arms concealed,
Attends without, to guide thee hence with safety.
Pem. What is Northumberland? And what art thou?
Guil. Waste not the time. Away!
Pem. Here let me fix,
And gaze with everlasting wonder on thee.
What is there good or excellent in man,
That is not found in thee? Thy virtues flash,
They break at once on my astonished soul;
As if the curtains of the dark were drawn,
To let in day at midnight.
Guil. Think me true;
And though ill fortune crossed upon our friendship—
Pem. Curse on our fortune!—Think I know thee honest.
Guil. For ever I could hear thee—but thy life,
Oh, Pembroke! linger not——
Pem. And can I leave thee,
Ere I have clasped thee in my eager arms,
And given thee back my sad repenting heart?
Believe me, Guilford, like the patriarch's dove,
[*Embracing.*
It wandered forth, but found no resting place,
'Till it came home again to lodge with thee.
Guil. What is there that my soul can more desire,
Than these dear marks of thy returning friendship?
The danger comes——If you stay longer here,
You die, my Pembroke.
Pem. Let me stay and die;
For if I go, I go to work thy ruin.
Thou know'st not what a foe thou send'st me forth;
That I have sworn destruction to the queen,
And pledged my faith to Mary and her cause:
My honour is at stake.
Guil. I know 'tis given.
But go—the stronger thy engagements there,
The more's thy danger here. There is a power
Who sits above the stars; in him I trust:
All that I have, his bounteous hand bestowed;
And he, that gave it, can preserve it to me.
If his o'er-ruling will ordains my ruin,
What is there more, but to fall down before him,
And humbly yield obedience?——Fly! begone!
Pem. Yes, I will go—for, see! Behold who comes!
Oh, Guilford! hide me, shield me from her sight;
Every mad passion kindles up again,
Love, rage, despair—and yet I will be master—
I will remember thee——Oh, my torn heart!
I have a thousand things to say,
But cannot, dare not, stay to look on her.
Thus gloomy ghosts, where'er the breaking morn
Gives notice of the cheerful sun's return,
Fade at the light, with horror stand oppressed,
And shrink before the purple dawning east;
Swift with the fleeting shades they wing their way,
And dread the brightness of the rising day.
[*Exeunt Guilford and Pembroke.*

SCENE II.

Enter Lady JANE, *reading.*

L. J. Gray. 'Tis false! The thinking soul is somewhat more
Than symmetry of atoms well disposed,
The harmony of matter. Farewell else
The hope of all hereafter, that new life,
That separate intellect, which must survive,
When this fine frame is mouldered into dust.

Enter GUILFORD.

Guil. What read'st thou there, my queen?
L. J. Gray. 'Tis Plato's Phædon;
Where dying Socrates takes leave of life,
With such an easy, careless, calm indifference,
As if the trifle were of no account;
Mean in itself, and only to be worn
In honour of the giver.
Guil. Shall thy soul
Still scorn the world, still fly the joys that court
Thy blooming beauty, and thy tender youth?
Still shall she soar on contemplation's wing,
And mix with nothing meaner than the stars;
As heaven and immortality alone
Were objects worthy to employ her faculties?
L. J. Gray. Bate but thy truth, what is there here below
Deserves the least regard? Is it not time

To bid our souls look out, explore hereafter,
And seek some better sure abiding place;
When all around our gathering foes come on,
To drive, to sweep us from this world at once?
Guil. Does any danger new——
L. J. Gray. The faithless counsellors
Are fled from hence to join the princess Mary.
The servile herd of courtiers, who so late
In low obedience bent the knee before me;
They, who with zealous tongues, and hands uplifted,
Besought me to defend their laws and faith;
Vent their lewd execrations on my name,
Proclaim me traitress now, and to the scaffold
Doom my devoted head.
Guil. The changeling villains!
That pray for slavery, fight for their bonds,
And shun the blessing, liberty, like ruin.
What art thou, human nature, to do thus?
Does fear of folly make thee, like the Indian,
Fall down before this dreadful devil, tyranny,
And worship the destroyer?
But wherefore do I loiter tamely here?
Give me my arms: I will preserve my country,
Even in her own despite. Some friends I have,
Who will or die or conquer in the cause,
Thine and religion's, thine and England's cause.
L. J. Gray. Art thou not all my treasure, all my guard?
And wilt thou take from me the only joy,
The last defence is left me here below?
Think not thy arm can stem the driving torrent,
Or save a people, who with blinded rage
Urge their own fate, and strive to be undone.
Northumberland, thy father, is in arms;
And if it be in valour to defend us,
His sword, that long has known the way to conquest,
Shall be our surest safety.

Enter the Duke of SUFFOLK.

Suff. Oh, my children!
L. J. Gray. Alas! what means my father?
Suff. Oh, my son,
Thy father, great Northumberland, on whom
Our dearest hopes were built———
Guil. Ha! What of him?
Suff. Is lost! betrayed!
His army, onward as he marched, shrunk from him,
Mouldered away, and melted by his side;
Like falling hail thick strewn upon the ground,
Which, ere we can essay to count, is vanished.
With some few followers he arrived at Cambridge;
But there even they forsook him, and himself
Was forced, with heavy heart and watery eye,
To cast his cap up, with dissembled cheer,
And cry, God save queen Mary! But, alas!
Little availed the semblance of that loyalty:
For soon thereafter, by the earl of Arundel
With treason he was charged, and there arrested;
And now he brings him prisoner up to London.
L. J. Gray. Then there's an end of greatness; the vain dream
Of empire, and a crown, that danced before me,
With all those unsubstantial empty forms:
The gaudy mask, tedious, and nothing meaning,
Is vanished all at once——Why, fare it well.
Guil. And canst thou bear this sudden turn of fate,
With such unshaken temper?
L. J. Gray. For myself,
If I could form a wish for Heaven to grant,
It should have been, to rid me of this crown.
And thou, o'er-ruling, great, all-knowing Power!
Thou who discern'st our thoughts, who see'st them rising
And forming in the soul! Oh, judge me, thou,
If e'er ambition's guilty fires have warmed me,
If e'er my heart inclined to pride, to power,
Or joined in being a queen. I took the sceptre
To save this land, thy people, and thy altars:
And now, behold, I bend my grateful knee,
[*Kneeling.*
In humble adoration of that mercy,
Which quits me of the vast unequal task.

Enter the Duchess of SUFFOLK.

Duch. Suff. Nay, keep that posture still, and let us join,
Fix all our knees by thine, lift up our hands,
And seek for help and pity from above;
For earth and faithless man will give us none!
L. J. Gray. What is the worst our cruel fate ordains us?
Duch. Suff. Cursed be my fatal counsels, cursed my tongue,
That pleaded for thy ruin, and persuaded
Thy guiltless feet to tread the paths of greatness!
My child——I have undone thee!
L. J. Gray. Oh, my mother!
Should I not bear a portion in thy sorrows?
Duch. Suff. Alas, thou hast thy own, a double portion.
Mary is come, and the revolting Londoners,
Who beat the heavens with thy applauding name,
Now crowd to meet, and hail her as their queen.
Sussex is entered here, commands the Tower,
Has placed his guards around, and this sad place,
So late thy palace, is become our prison.
I saw him bend his knee to cruel Gardiner,
Who, freed from his confinement, ran to meet him,
Embraced and blest him with a hand of blood;
Each hastening moment I expect them here,
To seize and pass the doom of death upon us.
Guil. Ha! seized! Shalt thou be seized? and shall I stand,
And tamely see thee borne away to death?
Then blasted be my coward name for ever!
No, I will set myself to guard this spot,
To which our narrow empire now is shrunk:
Here I will grow, the bulwark of my queen;

Nor shall the hand of violence profane thee,
Until my breast have borne a thousand wounds,
Till this torn mangled body sink at once,
A heap of purple ruin, at thy feet.
L. J. Gray. And could thy rash distracted rage do thus?
Draw thy vain sword against an armed multitude,
Only to have my poor heart split with horror,
To see thee stabbed and butchered here before me?
Oh, call thy better nobler courage to thee,
And let us meet this adverse fate with patience!
Greet our insulting foes with equal tempers,
With even brows, and souls secure of death;
Here stand unmoved; as once the Roman senate
Received fierce Brennus, and the conquering Gauls,
Till even the rude barbarians stood amazed
At such superior virtue. Be thyself,
For see, the trial comes!

Enter SUSSEX, GARDINER, *Officers and Soldiers.*

Suss. Guards, execute your orders; seize the traitors:
Here my commission ends. To you, my lord,
[*To Gar.*
So our great mistress, royal Mary, bids,
I leave the full disposal of these prisoners.
To your wise care the pious queen commends
Her sacred self, her crown, and, what's yet more,
The holy Roman church; for whose dear safety,
She wills your utmost diligence be shewn,
To bring rebellion to the bar of justice.
Yet farther, to proclaim how much she trusts
In Winchester's deep thought, and well tried faith,
The seal attends to grace those reverend hands;
And when I next salute you, I must call you
Chief minister and chancellor of England.
Gar. Unnumbered blessings fall upon her head,
My ever-gracious lady! to remember
With such full bounty her old humble beadsman!
For these, her foes, leave me to deal with them.
Suss. The queen is on her entrance, and expects me:
My lord, farewell.
Gar. Farewell, right noble Sussex:
Commend me to the queen's grace; say her bidding
Shall be observed by her most lowly creature.
[*Exit Sussex.*
Lieutenant of the Tower, take hence your prisoners:
Be it your care to see them kept apart,
That they may hold no commerce with each other.
L. J. Gray. That stroke was unexpected.
Guil. Wilt thou part us?
Gar. I hold no speech with heretics and traitors.
Lieutenant, see my orders are obeyed.
[*Exit Gar.*
Guil. Inhuman, monstrous, unexampled cruelty!
Oh, tyrant! but the task becomes thee well;
Thy savage temper joys to do death's office;
To tear the sacred bands of love asunder,
And part those hands which heaven itself hath joined.
Duch. Suff. To let us waste the little rest of life
Together, had been merciful.
Suff. Then it had not
Been done like Winchester.
Guil. Thou stand'st unmoved;
Calm temper sits upon thy beauteous brow;
Thy eyes, that flowed so fast for Edward's loss,
Gaze unconcerned upon the ruin round thee;
As if thou hadst resolved to brave thy fate,
And triumph in the midst of desolation.
Ha! see, it swells; the liquid crystal rises,
It starts, in spite of thee,——but I will catch it;
Nor let the earth be wet with dew so rich.
L. J. Gray. And dost thou think, my Guilford, I can see
My father, mother, and even thee my husband,
Torn from my side without a pang of sorrow?
How art thou thus unknowing in my heart!
Words cannot tell thee what I feel. There is
An agonizing softness busy here,
That tugs the string, that struggles to get loose,
And pour my soul in wailings out before thee.
Guil. Give way, and let the gushing torrent come;
Behold the tears we bring to swell the deluge,
Till the flood rise upon the guilty world,
And make the ruin common.
L. J. Gray. Guilford! No!
The time for tender thoughts and soft endearments
Is fled away and gone: joy has forsaken us;
Our hearts have now another part to play;
They must be steeled with some uncommon fortitude,
That, fearless, we may tread the paths of horror;
And, in despite of fortune and our foes,
Even in the hour of death, be more than conquerors.
Guil. Oh, teach me! say, what energy divine
Inspires thy softer sex, and tender years,
With such unshaken courage!
L. J. Gray. Truth and innocence;
A conscious knowledge rooted in my heart,
That to have saved my country was my duty.
Yes, England, yes, my country, I would save thee;
But heaven forbids, heaven disallows my weakness;
And to some dear selected hero's hand
Reserves the glory of thy great deliverance.
Lieut. My lord, my orders———
Guil. See! we must—must part.
L. J. Gray. Yet surely we shall meet again.
Guil. Oh! Where?
L. J. Gray. If not on earth, among you golden stars,

Where other suns arise on other earths,
And happier beings rest on happier seats:
Where, with a reach enlarged, our souls shall view
The great Creator's never ceasing hand
Pour forth new worlds to all eternity,
And people the infinity of space.
Guil. Fain would I cheer my heart with hopes like these;
But my sad thoughts turn ever to the grave;
To that last dwelling, whither now we haste;
Where the black shade shall interpose betwixt us,
And veil thee from these longing eyes for ever.
L. J. Gray. 'Tis true, by those dark paths our journey leads,
And through the vale of death we pass to life.
But what is there in death to blast our hopes?
Behold the universal marks of nature,
Where life still springs from death. To us the sun
Dies every night, and every morn revives:
The flowers, which winter's icy hand destroyed,
Lift their fair heads, and live again in spring.
Mark, with what hopes upon the furrowed plain,
The careful plowman casts the pregnant grain;
There hid, as in a grave, a while it lies,
Till the revolving season bids it rise;
Till nature's genial powers command a birth,
And potent call it from the teeming earth:
Then large increase the buried treasures yield,
And with full harvest crown the plenteous field.
[*Exeunt severally with guards.*

ACT V.

CENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter Gardiner, *as Lord Chancellor, and the Lieutenant of the Tower. Servants with lights before them.*

Lieut. Good morning to your lordship; you rise early.
Gar. Nay, by the rood, there are too many sleepers;
Some must stir early, or the state shall suffer.
Did you, as yesterday our mandate bade,
Inform your prisoners, lady Jane and Guilford,
They were to die this day?
Lieut. My lord, I did.
Gar. 'Tis well. But say, how did your message like them?
Lieut. My lord, they met the summons with a temper,
That shewed a solemn, serious sense of death,
Mixed with a noble scorn of all its terrors.
In short, they heard me with the self-same patience,
With which they still have borne them in their prison.
In one request they both concurred; each begged
To die before the other.
Gar. That dispose
As you think fitting.
Lieut. The lord Guilford only
Implored another boon, and urged it warmly;
That, ere he suffered, he might see his wife,
And take a last farewell.
Gar. That's not much;
That grace may be allowed him. See you to it.
How goes the morning?
Lieut. Not yet four, my lord.
Gar. By ten they meet their fate. Yet one thing more.
You know 'twas ordered that the lady Jane
Should suffer here within the Tower. Take care
No crowds may be let in, no maudlin gazers
To wet their handkerchiefs, and make report
How like a saint she ended. Some fit number,
And those, too, of our friends, were most convenient;
But, above all, see that good guard be kept:
You know the queen is lodged at present here;
Take care that no disturbance reach her highness.
And so good morning, good master lieutenant.
[*Exit Lieutenant.*
How now! What light comes here?
Ser. So please your lordship,
If I mistake not, 'tis the earl of Pembroke.
Gar. Pembroke! 'Tis he: What calls him forth thus early?
Somewhat he seems to bring of high import;
Some flame uncommon kindles up his soul,
And flashes forth impetuous at his eyes.

Enter Pembroke; *a page with a light before him.*

Good morrow, noble Pembroke! What importunate
And strong necessity breaks on your slumbers,
And rears your youthful head from off your pillow
At this unwholesome hour; while yet the night
Lasts in her latter course, and with her raw
And rheumy damps infests the dusky air?
Pem. Oh, reverend Winchester! my beating heart
Exults and labours with the joy it bears:
The news I bring shall bless the breaking morn.
This coming day the sun shall rise more glorious
Than when his maiden beams first gilded o'er
The rich immortal greens, the flow'ry plains,
And fragrant bowers of paradise new-born!
Gar. What happiness is this?
Pem. 'Tis mercy, mercy,
The mark of Heaven impressed on human kind;
Mercy, that glads the world, deals joy around;
Mercy, that smooths the dreadful brow of power,
And makes dominion light; mercy, that saves,
Binds up the broken heart, and heals despair.

Mary, our royal, ever-gracious mistress,
Has to my services and humblest prayers
Granted the lives of Guilford and his wife;
Full and free pardon!
Gar. Ha! what said you? Pardon!
But sure you cannot mean it; could not urge
The queen to such a rash and ill-timed grace?
What! save the lives of those who wore her crown!
My lord! 'tis most unweighed, pernicious counsel,
And must not be complied with.
Pem. Not complied with!
And who shall dare to bar her sacred pleasure,
And stop the stream of mercy!
Gar. That will I;
Who will not see her gracious disposition
Drawn to destroy herself.
Pem. Thy narrow soul
Knows not the god-like glory of forgiving:
Nor can thy cold, thy ruthless heart conceive,
How large the power, how fixed the empire is,
Which benefits confer on generous minds:
Goodness prevails upon the stubborn foe,
And conquers more than even Cæsar's sword did.
Gar. These are romantic, light, vain-glorious dreams.
Have you considered well upon the danger?
How dear to the fond many, and how popular
These are whom you would spare? Have you forgot,
When at the bar, before the seat of judgment,
This lady Jane, this beauteous traitress, stood,
With what command she charmed the whole assembly?
With silent grief the mournful audience sat,
Fixed on her face, and listening to her pleading.
Her very judges wrung their hands for pity;
Their old hearts melted in them as she spoke,
And tears ran down upon their silver beards.
Even I myself was moved, and for a moment
Felt wrath suspended in my doubtful breast,
And questioned if the voice I heard was mortal.
But when her tale was done, what loud applause,
Like bursts of thunder, shook the spacious hall!
At last, when, sore constrained, the unwilling lords
Pronounced the fatal sentence on her life,
A peal of groans ran through the crowded court,
As every heart was broken, and the doom,
Like that which waits the world, were universal.
Pem. And can that sacred form, that angel's voice,
Which moved the hearts of a rude ruthless crowd,
Nay, moved even thine, now sue in vain for pity?
Gar. Alas, you look on her with lovers' eyes:
I hear and see through reasonable organs,
Where passion has no part. Come, come, my lord,
You have too little of the statesman in you.
Pem. And you, my lord, too little of the churchman
Is not the sacred purpose of our faith
Peace and good-will to man? The hallowed hand,
Ordained to bless, should know no stain of blood.
'Tis true, I am not practised in your politics;
'Twas your pernicious counsel led the queen
To break her promise with the men of Suffolk,
To violate, what in a prince should be
Sacred above the rest, her royal word.
Gar. Yes, and I dare avow it: I advised her
To break through all engagements made with heretics,
And keep no faith with such a miscreant crew.
Pem. Where shall we seek for truth, when even religion,
The priestly robe and mitred head, disclaim it?
But thus bad men dishonour the best cause.
I tell thee, Winchester, doctrines like thine
Have stained our holy church with greater infamy
Than all your eloquence can wipe away.
Hence 'tis, that those who differ from our faith,
Brand us with breach of oaths, with persecution,
With tyranny o'er conscience, and proclaim
Our scarlet prelates men that thirst for blood,
And Christian Rome more cruel than the Pagan.
Gar. Nay, if you rail, farewell. The queen must be
Better advised, than thus to cherish vipers,
Whose mortal stings are armed against her life.
But while I hold the seal, no pardon passes
For heretics and traitors. [*Exit Gardiner.*
Pem. 'Twas unlucky
To meet and cross upon this froward priest:
But let me lose the thought on't; let me haste,
Pour my glad tidings forth in Guilford's bosom,
And pay him back the life his friendship saved.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Lady JANE *kneeling, as at her devotion: a light, and a book placed on a table before her. Enter Lieutenant of the Tower, Lord* GUILFORD, *and one of Lady* JANE'S *women.*

Lieut. Let me not press upon your lordship farther,
But wait your leisure in the anti-chamber.
Guil. I will not hold you long.
[*Exit Lieutenant.*
Wom. Softly, my lord!
For yet, behold she kneels. Before the night
Had reached her middle space, she left her bed,
And with a pleasing, sober cheerfulness,
As for her funeral, arrayed herself
In those sad solemn weeds. Since then her knee
Has known that posture only, and her eye,
Or fixed upon the sacred page before her,
Or lifted, with her rising hopes, to heaven.
Guil. See, with what zeal those holy hands are reared!
Mark her vermilion lip, with fervour trembling;
Her spotless bosom swells with sacred ardour,

And burns with ecstasy and strong devotion;
Her supplication sweet, her faithful vows
Fragrant and pure, and grateful to high Heaven,
Like incense from the golden censer rise;
Or blessed angels minister unseen,
Catch the soft sounds, and with alternate office,
Spread their ambrosial wings, then mount with joy,
And waft them upwards to the throne of grace.
But she has ended, and comes forward.

[Lady Jane rises, and comes towards the front of the stage.

L. J. Gray. Ha!
Art thou my Guilford? Wherefore dost thou come,
To break the settled quiet of my soul?
I meant to part without another pang,
And lay my weary head down full of peace.

Guil. Forgive the fondness of my longing soul,
That melts with tenderness, and leans toward thee,
Though the imperious, dreadful voice of fate
Summon her hence, and warn her from the world.
But if to see thy Guilford give thee pain,
Would I had died, and never more beheld thee,
Though my lamenting discontented ghost
Had wandered forth unblessed by those dear eyes,
And wailed thy loss in death's eternal shades!

L. J. Gray. My heart has ended every earthly care,
And offered up its prayers for thee and England,
And fixed its hopes upon a rock unfailing;
While all the little business that remained,
Was but to pass the forms of death and constancy,
And leave a life become indifferent to me.
But thou hast wakened other thoughts within me;
Thy sight, my dearest husband and my lord,
Strikes on the tender strings of love and nature:
My vanquished passions rise again, and tell me,
'Tis more, far more than death to part from thee.

Enter Pembroke.

Pem. Oh, let me fly, bear me, thou swift impatience,
And lodge me in my faithful Guilford's arms!
[Embracing.
That I may snatch him from the greedy grave,
That I may warm his gentle heart with joy,
And talk to him of life, of life and pardon.

Guil. What means my dearest Pembroke?

Pem. Oh, my speech
Is choaked with words that crowd to tell my tidings!
But I have saved thee—and—Oh, joy unutterable!
The queen, my gracious, my forgiving mistress,
Has given not only thee to my request,
But she, she too, in whom alone thou liv'st,
The partner of thy heart, thy love is safe.

Guil. Millions of blessings wait her!—Has she—tell me,
Oh, has she spared my wife?

Pem. Both, both are pardoned.
But haste, and do thou lead me to thy saint,
That I may cast myself beneath her feet,
And beg her to accept this poor amends
For all I've done against her——Thou fair excellence, *[Kneeling.*
Canst thou forgive the hostile hand, that armed
Against thy cause, and robbed thee of a crown?

L. J. Gray. Oh, rise, my lord, and let me take your posture!
Life and the world are hardly worth my care,
But you have reconciled me to them both;
Then let me pay my gratitude, and for
This free, this noble, unexpected mercy,
Thus low I bow to Heaven, the queen, and you.

Pem. To me! forbid it goodness! if I live,
Somewhat I will do shall deserve your thanks.
All discord and remembrance of offence
Shall be clean blotted out; and for your freedom,
Myself have undertaken to be your caution.
Hear me, you saints, and aid my pious purpose!
These that deserve so much, this wondrous pair,
Let these be happy: every joy attend them;
A fruitful bed, a chain of love unbroken,
A good old age, to see their children's children;
A holy death, and everlasting memory;
While I resign to them my share of happiness,
Contented still to want what they enjoy,
And singly to be wretched.

Enter Lieutenant of the Tower.

Lieut. The Lord Chancellor
Is come with orders from the queen.

Enter Gardiner, *and Attendant.*

Pem. Ha! Winchester!

Gar. The queen, whose days be many,
By me confirms her first accorded grace;
But, as the pious princess means her mercy
Should reach e'en to the soul as well as body,
By me she signifies her royal pleasure,
That thou, lord Guilford, and the lady Jane,
Do instantly renounce, abjure your heresy,
And yield obedience to the see of Rome.

L. J. Gray. What! turn apostate?

Guil. Ha! forego my faith!

Gar. This one condition only seals your pardon:
But if, through pride of heart, and stubborn obstinacy,
With wilful hands you push the blessing from you,
And shut your eyes against such manifest light,
Know ye, your former sentence stands confirmed.
And you must die to-day.

Pem. 'Tis false as hell:

The mercy of the queen was free and full.
Think'st thou that princes merchandize their grace,
As Roman priests their pardons? Do they barter,
Screw up, like you, the buyer to a price,
And doubly sell what was designed a gift?
Gar. My lord, this language ill becomes your nobleness;
Nor come I here to bandy words with madmen.
Behold the royal signet of the queen,
Which amply speaks her meaning. You, the prisoners,
Have heard, at large, its purport, and must instantly
Resolve upon the choice of life or death.
Pem. Curse on——But wherefore do I loiter here?
I'll to the queen this moment, and there know
What 'tis this mischief-making priest intends.
[*Exit.*
Gar. Your wisdom points you out a proper course.
A word with you, Lieutenant.
[*Talks with the Lieutenant aside.*
Guil. Must we part, then?
What are those hopes that flattered us but now;
Those joys, that, like the spring, with all its flowers,
Poured out their pleasures every where around us?
In one poor minute gone; at once they withered,
And left their place all desolate behind them.
L. J. Gray. Such is this foolish world, and such the certainty
Of all the boasted blessings it bestows:
Then, Guilford, let us have no more to do with it;
Think only how to leave it as we ought;
But trust no more, and be deceived no more.
Guil. Yes, I will copy thy divine example,
And tread the paths are pointed out by thee:
By thee instructed, to the fatal block
I bend my head with joy, and think it happiness
To give my life a ransom for my faith.
From thee, thou angel of my heart, I learn
That greatest, hardest task, to part with thee.
L. J. Gray. Oh, gloriously resolved! Heaven is my witness,
My heart rejoices in thee more even now,
Thus constant as thou art, in death thus faithful,
Than when the holy priest first joined our hands,
And knit the sacred knot of bridal love.
Gar. The day wears fast; Lord Guilford, have you thought?
Will you lay hold on life?
Guil. What are the terms?
Gar. Death, or the mass, attend you.
Guil. 'Tis determined:
Lead to the scaffold.
Gar. Bear him to his fate.
Guil. Oh, let me fold thee once more in my arms,
Thou dearest treasure of my heart, and print
A dying husband's kiss upon thy lip!
Shall we not live again, even in those forms?
Shall I not gaze upon thee with these eyes?
L. J. Gray. Oh, wherefore dost thou soothe me with thy softness?
Why dost thou wind thyself about my heart,
And make this separation painful to us?
Here break we off at once; and let us now,
Forgetting ceremony, like two friends
That have a little business to be done,
Take a short leave, and haste to meet again.
Guil. Rest on that hope, my soul—my wife—
L. J. Gray. No more.
Guil. My sight hangs on thee——Oh, support me, Heaven,
In this last pang—and let us meet in bliss!
[*Guilford is led off by the guard.*
L. J. Gray. Can nature bear this stroke?
Wom. Alas, she faints! [*Supporting.*
L. J. Gray. Wilt thou fail now——The killing stroke is past,
And all the bitterness of death is o'er.
Gar. Here let the dreadful hand of vengeance stay;
Have pity on your youth, and blooming beauty;
Cast not away the good which Heaven bestows;
Time may have many years in store for you,
All crowned with fair prosperity, Your husband
Has perished in perverseness.
L. J. Gray. Cease, thou raven,
Nor violate, with thy profaner malice,
My bleeding Guilford's ghost—'Tis gone, 'tis flown:
But lingers on the wing, and waits for me.
[*The scene draws, and discovers a scaffold hung with black, executioner and guards.*
And see my journey's end.
1 *Wom.* My dearest lady! [*Weeping.*
2 *Wom.* Oh, misery!
L. J. Gray. Forbear, my gentle maids,
Nor wound my peace with fruitless lamentations;
The good and gracious hand of Providence
Shall raise you better friends than I have been.
1 *Wom.* Oh, never, never!——
L. J. Gray. Help to disarray,
And fit me for the block; do this last service,
And do it cheerfully. Now you will see
Your poor unhappy mistress sleep in peace,
And cease from all her sorrows. These few trifles,
The pledges of a dying mistress' love,
Receive and share among you. Thou, Maria,
[*To 1 Wom.*
Hast been my old, my very faithful servant:
In dear remembrance of thy love, I leave thee
This book, the law of everlasting truth:
Make it thy treasure still; 'twas my support,
When all help else forsook me.
Gar. Will you yet
Repent, be wise, and save your precious life?

L. J. Gray. Oh, Winchester! has learning taught thee that,
To barter truth for life?
Gar. Mistaken folly!
You toil and travail for your own perdition,
And die for damned errors.
L. J. Grey. Who judge rightly,
And who persists in error, will be known,
Then, when we meet again. Once more, farewell! [*To her women.*
Goodness be ever with you. When I'm dead,
Entreat they do no rude, dishonest wrong
To my cold, headless corpse; but see it shrouded,
And decent laid in earth.
Gar. Wilt thou then die?
Thy blood be on thy head.
L. J. Gray. My blood be where it falls; let the earth hide it;
And may it never rise, or call for vengeance.
Oh, that it were the last shall fall a victim
To zeal's inhuman wrath! Thou, gracious Heaven,
Hear and defend at length thy suffering people;
Raise up a monarch of the royal blood,
Brave, pious, equitable, wise, and good.
In thy due season let the hero come,
To save thy altars from the rage of Rome:
Long let him reign, to bless the rescued land,
And deal out justice with a righteous hand.
And when he fails, oh, may he leave a son,
With equal virtues to adorn his throne;
To latest times the blessing to convey,
And guard that faith for which I die to-day!
[*Lady Jane goes up to the scaffold. The scene closes.*

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pem. Horror on horror! Blasted be the hand
That struck my Guilford! Oh, his bleeding trunk
Shall live in these distracted eyes for ever!
Curse on thy fatal arts, thy cruel counsels!
[*To Gardiner,*
The queen is deaf, and pitiless as thou art.
Gar. The just reward of heresy and treason
Is fallen upon them both, for their vain obstinacy;
Untimely death, with infamy on earth,
And everlasting punishment hereafter.
Pem. And canst thou tell? Who gave thee to explore
The secret purposes of Heaven, or taught thee
To set a bound to mercy unconfined?
But know, thou proud, perversely-judging Winchester!
Howe'er you hard, imperious censures doom,
And portion out our lot in worlds to come,
Those, who, with honest hearts, pursue the right,
And follow faithfully truth's sacred light,
Though suffering here, shall from their sorrows cease,
Rest with the saints, and dwell in endless peace.
[*Exeunt.*

THE

SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

BY

HUGHES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CHRISTIANS.

EUMENES, *Governor of Damascus.*
HERBIS, *his friend, one of the Chiefs of the City.*
PHOCYAS, *a noble and valiant Syrian, privately in love with Eudocia,*
ARTAMON, *an Officer of the Guards.*
SERGIUS, *an Express from the Emperor Heraclius.*

WOMEN.

EUDOCIA, *Daughter to Eumenes.*

Officers, Soldiers, Citizens, and Attendants.

MEN.

SARACENS.

CALED, *General of the Saracen Army.*
ABUDAH, *next in command under Caled.*
DARAN, *A wild Arabian, professing Mahometanism for the sake of the spoil.*
SERJABIL, RAPHAN, &c. } *Saracen Captains.*

Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

Scene,—The City of Damascus, in Syria, and the Saracen Camp before it. And, in the last Act, a Valley adjacent.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The City.*

Enter EUMENES, *followed by a crowd of people.*

Eum. I'll hear no more. Begone!
Or stop your clamorous mouths, that still are open
To bawl sedition, and consume our corn.
If you will follow me, send home your women,
And follow to the walls; there earn your safety,
As brave men should. Pity your wives and children!
Yes, I do pity them, Heaven knows I do,
Even more than you; nor will I yield them up,
Though at your own request, a prey to ruffians—
Herbis, what news?

Enter HERBIS.

Herb. News! we are betrayed, deserted;
The works are but half-manned; the Saracens
Perceive it, and pour on such crowds, they blunt
Our weapons, and have drained our stores of death,
What will you next?
Eum. I have sent a fresh recruit;
The valiant Phocyas leads them on—whose deeds
In early youth assert his noble race;
A more than common ardour seems to warm
His breast, as if he loved and courted danger.
Herb. I fear it will be too late.
Eum. [*Aside.*] I fear it too:
And though I braved it to the trembling crowd,
I have caught the infection, and I dread the event.
Would I had treated—but 'tis now too late—
Come, Herbis. [*Exeunt.*

[*A noise is heard without, of officers giving orders.*

1st Offi. Help there! more help! all to the eastern gate!
2d Offi. Look where they cling aloft, like clustered bees!
Here, archers, ply your bows.
1st Offi. Down with the ladders!
What, will you let them mount?
2d Offi. Aloft there! give the signal, you that wait
In St Mark's tower.
1st Offi. Is the town asleep!
Ring out the alarum bell!
[*Bell rings, and the citizens run to and fro in confusion.*
[*A great shout.*

Enter HERBIS.

Herb. So—the tide turns; Phocyas has driven it back.
The gate once more is ours.

Enter EUMENES, PHOCYAS, ARTAMON, *&c.*

Eum. Brave Phocyas, thanks! Mine and the people's thanks.
[*People shout and cry, A Phocyas, &c.*
Yet, that we may not lose this breathing space,
Hang out the flag of truce. You, Artamon,
Haste with a trumpet to the Arabian chiefs,
And let them know, that, hostages exchanged,
I would meet them now upon the eastern plain.
[*Exit Artamon.*
Pho. What means Eumenes?
Eum. Phocyas, I would try
By friendly treaty, if on terms of peace
They will yet withdraw their powers.
Pho. On terms of peace!
What terms can you expect from bands of robbers!
What terms from slaves, but slavery? You know
These wretches fight not at the call of honour;
For injured rights, or birth, or jealous greatness,
That sets the princes of the world in arms.
Base-born, and starved amidst their stoney deserts,
Long have they viewed from far, with wishing eyes,
Our fruitful vales, our fig-trees, olives, vines,
Our cedars, palms, and all the verdant wealth
That crowns fair Lebanon's aspiring brows.
Here have the locusts pitched, nor will they leave
These tasted sweets, these blooming fields of plenty,
For barren sands, and native poverty,
Till driven away by force.
Eum. What can we do?
Our people in despair, our soldiers harrassed
With daily toil, and constant nightly watch:
Our hopes of succour from the emperor
Uncertain; Eutyches not yet returned,
That went to ask them; one brave army beaten;
The Arabians numerous, cruel, flushed with conquest.
Herb. Besides, you know what frenzy fires their minds
Of their new faith, and drives them on to danger.
Eum. True; they pretend the gates of Paradise
Stand ever open, to receive the souls
Of all that die in fighting for their cause.
Pho. Then would I send their souls to Paradise,
And give their bodies to our Syrian eagles.
Our ebb of fortune is not yet so low
To leave us desperate. Aids may soon arrive;
Mean time, in spite of their late bold attack,
The city still is ours; their force repelled,
And therefore weaker; proud of this success,
Our soldiers too have gained redoubled courage,
And long to meet them on the open plain.
What hinders, then, but we repay this outrage,
And sally on their camp?
Eum. No—let us first
Believe the occasion fair, by this advantage,
To purchase their retreat on easy terms:
That failing, we the better stand acquitted
To our own citizens. However, brave Phocyas,
Cherish this ardour in the soldiery,
And in our absence form what force thou canst;
Then if these hungry bloodhounds of the war
Should still be deaf to peace, at our return
Our widened gates shall pour a sudden flood
Of vengeance on them, and chastise their scorn.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Plain before the City. A Prospect of Tents at a distance.*

Enter CALED, ABUDAH, *and* DARAN.

Dar. To treat, my chiefs! what, are we merchants then,
That only come to traffic with those Syrians,
And poorly cheapen conquest on conditions?
No; we were sent to fight the caliph's battles,
Till every iron neck bend to obedience.
Another storm makes this proud city ours;
What need we treat? I am for war and plunder.
Cal. Why, so am I—and but to save the lives
Of mussulmans, not christians, I would not treat.
I hate these christian dogs; and 'tis our task,
As thou observest, to fight; our law enjoins it:
Heaven, too, is promised only to the valiant.
Oft has our prophet said, the happy plains
Above lie stretched beneath the blaze of swords.
Abu. Yet, Daran's loth to trust that heaven for pay;
This earth, it seems, has gifts that please him more.
Cal. Check not his zeal, Abudah.
Abu. No; I praise it.
Yet, I could wish that zeal had better motives.
Has victory no fruits but blood and plunder?
That we were sent to fight, 'tis true; but wherefore?
For conquest, not destruction. That obtained,
The more we spare, the caliph has more subjects,
And Heaven is better served—But see, they come.

Enter EUMENES, HERBIS, *and* ARTAMON.

Cal. Well, christians, we are met, and war awhile,

At your request, has stilled his angry voice,
To hear what you will propose.
Eum. We come to know,
After so many troops you have lost in vain,
If you will draw off in peace, and save the rest.
Herb. Or rather to know first—for yet we know not—
Why on your heads you call our pointed arrows,
In our own just defence? What means this visit?
And why see we so many thousand tents
Rise in the air, and whiten all our fields?
Cal. Is that a question now? you had our summons,
When first we marched against you, to surrender.
Two moons have wasted since, and now the third
Is in it's wane. 'Tis true, drawn off awhile,
At Aiznadin we met and fought the powers
Sent by your emperor to raise our siege.
Vainly you thought us gone; we gained a conquest.
You see we are returned; our hearts, our cause,
Our swords the same.
Herb. But why those swords were drawn,
And what's the cause, inform us.
Eum. Speak your wrongs,
If wrongs you have received, and by what means
They may be now repaired.
Abu. Then, christians, hear!
And heaven inspire you to embrace its truth!
Not wrongs to avenge, but to establish right,
Our swords were drawn: For such is heaven's command
Immutable. By us great Mahomet,
And his successor, holy Abubeker,
Invite you to the faith.
Art. [*Aside.*] So—then, it seems
There is no harm meant; we are only to be beaten
Into a new religion—If that's all,
I find I am already half a convert.
Eum. Now, in the name of Heaven, what faith is this,
That stalks gigantic forth thus armed with terrors,
As if it meant to ruin, not to save?
That leads embattled legions to the field,
And marks its progress out with blood and slaughter?
Herb. Bold, frontless men! that impudently dare
To blend religion with the worst of crimes!
And sacrilegiously usurp that name,
To cover fraud and justify oppression!
Eum. Where are your priests? What doctors of your law
Have you e'er sent to instruct us in its precepts?
To solve our doubts, and satisfy our reason,
And kindly lead us through the wilds of error
To these new tracts of truth—This would be friendship,
And well might claim our thanks.
Cal. Friendship like this
With scorn had been received: your numerous vices,
Your clashing sects, your mutual rage and strife,
Have driven religion and her angel guards,
Like out-casts, from among you. In her stead,
Usurping superstition bears the sway,
And reigns in mimic state, 'midst idol shows,
And pageantry of power. Who does not mark
Your lives! Rebellious to your own great prophet
Who mildly taught you—Therefore Mahomet
Has brought the sword to govern you by force,
Nor will accept obedience so precarious.
Eum. O solemn truths! though from an impious tongue! [*Aside.*
That we're unworthy of our holy faith,
To Heaven, with grief and conscious shame, we own.
But what are you, that thus arraign our vices,
And consecrate your own? Vile hypocrite!
Are you not sons of rapine, foes to peace,
Base robbers, murderers——
Cal. Christians, no—
Eum. Then say,
Why have you ravaged all our peaceful borders?
Plundered our towns? and by what claim e'en now,
You tread this ground?
Herb. What claim, but that of hunger?
The claim of ravenous wolves, that leave their dens
To prowl at midnight round some sleeping village,
Or watch the shepherd's folded flock for prey?
Cal. Blasphemer, know, your fields and towns are our's;
Our prophet has bestowed them on the faithful,
And heaven itself has ratified the grant.
Eum. Oh! now indeed you boast a noble title!
What could your prophet grant? a hireling slave!
Not even the mules and camels, which he drove,
Were his to give; and yet the bold impostor
Has cantoned out the kingdoms of the earth,
In frantic fits of visionary power,
To soothe his pride, and bribe his fellow madmen!
Cal. Was it for this you sent to ask a parley,
To affront our faith, and to traduce our prophet?
Well might we answer you with quick revenge.
Nor such indignities—Yet hear, once more,
Hear this, our last demand; and this accepted
We yet withdraw our war. Be christians still,
But swear to live with us in firm alliance,
To yield us aid, and pay us annual tribute.
Eum. No—Should we grant you aid, we must be rebels;
And tribute is the slavish badge of conquest.
Yet since, on just and honourable terms,
We ask but for own—Ten silken vests,
Weighty with pearl and gems, we'll send your caliph;
Two, Caled, shall be thine; two thine, Abudah.
To each inferior captain we decree
A turban spun from our Damascus flax,
White as the snows of heaven; to every soldier

A scimitar. This, and of solid gold
Ten ingots, be the price to buy your absence.
Cal. This, and much more, even all your shining wealth,
Will soon be ours: look round your Syrian frontiers!
See in how many towns our hoisted flags
Are waving in the wind; Sachna, and Hawran,
Proud Tadmor, Aracah, and stubborn Bosra
Have bowed beneath the yoke—behold our march
O'er half your land, like flame through fields of harvest.
And last view Aizuadin, that vale of blood!
There seek the souls of forty thousand Greeks,
That, fresh from life, yet hover o'er their bodies.
Then think, and then resolve.
Herb. Presumptuous men!
What though you yet can boast successful guilt,
Is conquest only your's? Or dare you hope
That you shall still pour on the swelling tide,
Like some proud river that has left its banks,
Nor ever know repulse?
Eum. Have you forgot!
Not twice seven years are past since e'en your prophet,
Bold as he was, and boasting aid divine,
Was by the tribe of Corish forced to fly,
Poorly to fly, to save his wretched life,
From Mecca to Medina.
Abu. No—forgot!
We well remember how Medina screened
That holy head, preserved for better days,
And ripening years of glory!
Dar. Why, my chiefs,
Will you waste time in offering terms despised
To these idolaters?—Words are but air;
Blows would plead better.
Cal. Daran, thou say'st true.
Christians, here end our truce. Behold once more
The sword of heaven is drawn! nor shall be sheathed
But in the bowels of Damascus.
Eum. That,
Or speedy vengeance, and destruction due
To the proud menacers, as Heaven sees fit!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Garden.*

Enter EUDOCIA.

Eud. All is hushed around!—No more the shout of soldiers
And clash of arms tumultuous fill the air.
Methinks this interval of terror seems
Like that, when the loud thunder just has rolled
O'er our affrighted heads, and in the heavens
A momentary silence but prepares
A second and a louder clap to follow.

Enter PHOCYAS.

O no—my hero comes, with better omens,
And every gloomy thought is now no more.
Pho. Where is the treasure of my soul!—Eudocia,
Behold me here impatient, like the miser
That often steals in secret to his gold,
And counts with trembling joy, and jealous transport,
The shining heaps which he still fears to lose.
Eud. Welcome, thou brave, thou best deserving lover!
How do I doubly share the common safety,
Since 'tis a debt to thee!—But tell me, Phocyas,
Dost thou bring peace?—Thou dost, and I am happy!
Pho. Not yet, Eudocia; 'tis decreed by Heaven
I must do more to merit thy esteem.
Peace, like a frighted dove, has winged her flight
To distant hills, beyond these hostile tents;
And through them we must thither force our way,
If we would call the lovely wanderer back
To her forsaken home.
Eud. False flattering hope!
Vanished so soon!—alas, my faithful fears
Return, and tell me, we must still be wretched!
Pho. Not so, my fair; if thou but gently smile,
Inspiring valour, and presaging conquest,
These barbarous foes to peace and love shall soon
Be chased, like fiends before the morning light,
And all be calm again.
Eud. Is the truce ended?
Must war, alas! renew its bloody rage,
And Phocyas ever be exposed to danger?
Pho. Think for whose sake danger itself has charms.
Dismiss thy fears; the lucky hour comes on,
Full fraught with joys, when my big soul no more
Shall labour with this secret of my passion,
To hide it from thy jealous father's eyes.
Just now, by signals from the plain, I've learned
That the proud foe refuse us terms of honour;
A sally is resolved; the citizens
And soldiers, kindled into sudden fury,
Press all in crowds, and beg I'll lead them on.
Oh, my Eudocia! if I now succeed——
Did I say if——I must, I will; the cause
Is love, 'tis liberty, it is Eudocia!——
What then shall hinder, since our mutual faith
Is pledged, and thou consenting to my bliss,
But I may boldly ask thee of Eumenes,
Nor fear a rival's more prevailing claim?
Eud. May blessings still attend thy arms!—Methinks
I've caught the flame of thy heroic ardour!
And now I see thee crowned with palm and olive;
The soldiers bring thee back with songs of triumph
And loud applauding shouts; thy rescued country
Resounds thy praise; our emperor Heraclius
Decrees thee honours for a city saved,
And pillars rise, of monumental brass,
Inscribed——To Phocyas the deliverer.
Pho. The honours and rewards, which thou hast named,
Are bribes too little for my vast ambition.

My soul is full of thee!——Thou art my all
Of fame, of triumph, and of future fortune.
'Twas love of thee first sent me forth in arms,
My service is all thine, to thee devoted,
And thou alone canst make e'en conquest pleasing.
Eud. O, do not wrong thy merit, nor restrain it
To narrow bounds; but know, I best am pleased
To share thee with thy country. Oh, my Phocyas!
With conscious blushes oft I've heard thy vows,
And strove to hide, yet more revealed my heart;
But 'tis thy virtue justifies my choice,
And what at first was weakness, now is glory.
Pho. Forgive me, thou fair pattern of all goodness,
If in the transport of unbounded passion,
I still am lost to every thought but thee;
Yet sure to love thee thus is every virtue;
Nor need I more perfection.—Hark! I'm called.
[*Trumpet sounds.*
Eud. Then go—and Heaven with all its angels guard thee!
Pho. Farewell!—for thee once more I draw the sword.
Now to the field to gain the glorious prize;
'Tis victory—the word—Eudocia's eyes!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Governor's Palace.*

Enter EUMENES *and* HERBIS.

Herb. STILL I must say, 'twas wrong, 'twas wrong, Eumenes,
And mark the event!
Eum. What could I less? You saw
'Twas vain to oppose it, whilst his eager valour,
Impatient of restraint——
Herb. His eager valour!
His rashness, his hot youth, his valour's fever!
Must we, whose business is to keep our walls,
And manage warily our little strength,
Must we at once lavish away our blood,
Because his pulse beats high, and his mad courage
Wants to be breathed in some new enterprize?—
You should not have consented.
Eum. You forget.
'Twas not my voice alone; you saw the people
(And sure such sudden instincts are from Heaven!)
Rose all at once to follow him, as if
One soul inspired them, and that soul was Phocyas'.
Herb. I had indeed forgot; and ask your pardon.
I took you for Eumenes, and I thought
That in Damascus you had chief command.
Eum. What dost thou mean?
Herb. Nay, who's forgetful now?
You say, the people—Yes, that very people,
That coward tribe that pressed you to surrender!
Well may they spurn at lost authority;
Whom they like better, better they'll obey.
Eum. O I could curse the giddy changeful slaves,
But that the thought of this great hour's event
Possesses all my soul.——If we are beaten!——
Herb. The poison works; 'tis well—I'll give him more. [*Aside.*
True, if we're beaten, who shall answer that?
Shall you, or I?——Are you the governor?
Or say we conquer, whose is then the praise?
Eum. I know thy friendly fears; that thou and I
Must stoop beneath a beardless rising hero;
And in Heraclius' court it shall be said,
Damascus, nay perhaps the empire too,
Owed its deliverance to a boy.——Why, be it,
So that he now return with victory;
'Tis honour greatly won, and let him wear it.
Yet I could wish I needed less his service.
Were Eutyches returned——
Herb. [*Aside.*] That, that's my torture.
I sent my son to the emperor's court, in hopes
His merit at this time might raise his fortunes;
But Phocyas—curse upon his forward virtues!—
Is reaping all this field of fame alone,
Or leaves him scarce the gleanings of a harvest.
Eum. See, Artamon with hasty strides returning.
He comes alone!—O friend, thy fears were just.
What are we now, and what is lost Damascus?

Enter ARTAMON.

Art. Joy to Eumenes!
Eum. Joy!———is it possible?
Dost thou bring news of victory?
Art. The sun
Is set in blood, and from the western skies
Has seen three thousand slaughtered Arabs fall.
Herb. Is Phocyas safe?
Art. He is, and crowned with triumph.
Herb. [*Aside.*] My fears indeed were just.
[*Shout,* A Phocyas! A Phocyas!
Eum. What noise is that?
Herb. The people worshipping their new divinity.
Shortly they'll build him temples.
Eum. Tell us, soldier,
Since thou hast shared the glory of this action,
Tell us how it began.
Art. At first the foe
Seemed much surprised; but, taking soon the alarm,
Gathered some hasty troops, and marched to meet us.
The captain of these bands looked wild and fierce,

His head unarmed, as if in scorn of danger,
And naked to the waist; as he drew near,
He raised his arm, and shook a ponderous lance;
When all at once, as at a signal given,
We heard the Tecbir, so these Arabs call
Their shouts of onset, when with loud appeal
They challenge Heaven, as if demanding conquest.
The battle joined, and through the barbarous host,
Fight, fight, and paradise! was all the cry.
At last our leaders met; and gallant Phocyas—
But what are words to tell the mighty wonders
We saw him then perform?—Their chief unhorsed,
The Saracens soon broke their ranks and fled;
And had not a thick evening fog arose,
(Which sure the devil raised up to save his friends)
The slaughter had been double———But, behold!
The hero comes,

Enter PHOCYAS, EUMENES *meeting him.*

Eum. Joy to brave Phocyas!
Eumenes gives him back the joy he sent.
The welcome news has reached this place before thee.
How shall thy country pay the debt she owes *thee?*

Pho. By taking this as earnest of a debt
Which I owe her, and fain would better pay.

Her. In spite of envy I must praise him too. [*Aside.*
Phocyas, thou hast done bravely, and 'tis fit
Successful virtue take a time to rest.
Fortune is fickle, and may change; besides,
What shall we gain, if from a mighty ocean
By sluices we draw off some little streams?
If thousands fall, ten thousands more remain;
Nor ought we hazard worth so great as thine
Against such odds. Suffice what's done already:
And let us now, in hopes of better days,
Keep wary watch, and wait the expected succours.

Pho. What!——to be cooped whole months within our walls?
To rust at home, and sicken with inaction?
The courage of our men will droop and die,
If not kept up by daily exercise.
Again the beaten foe may force our gates;
And victory, if slighted thus, take wing,
And fly where she may find a better welcome.

Art. [*Aside.*] It must be so—he hates him, on my soul!
This Herbis is a foul old envious knave.
Methinks Eumenes too might better thank him.

Eum. [*To Herbis aside.*] Urge him no more;—
I'll think of thy late warning;
And thou shalt see I'll yet be governor.

A letter brought in.

Pho. [*Looking on it.*] 'Tis to Eumenes.

Eum. Ha! from Eutyches.

[*Reads.*] 'The emperor, awakened with the danger,
'That threatens his dominions, and the loss
'At Aiznadin, has drained his garrisons
'To raise a second army. In few hours
'We will begin our march. Sergius brings this,
'And will inform you further.'———

Herb. [*Aside.*] Heaven, I thank thee!
'Twas even beyond my hopes.

Eum. But where is Sergius?

Mess. The letter, fastened to an arrow's head,
Was shot into the town.

Eum. I fear he's taken———
O Phocyas, Herbis, Artamon! my friends!
You all are sharers in this news: the storm
Is blowing o'er, that hung like night upon us,
And threatened deadly ruin——Haste, proclaim
The welcome tidings loud through all the city.
Let sparkling lights be seen from every turret,
To tell our joy, and spread their blaze to heaven.
Prepare for feasts; danger shall wait at distance,
And fear be now no more. The jolly soldier
And citizens shall meet o'er their full bowls,
Forget their toils, and laugh their cares away,
And mirth and triumphs close this happy day.
[*Exeunt Herb. and Art.*

Pho. And may succeeding days prove yet more happy!
Well dost thou bid the voice of triumph sound
Through all our streets; our city calls thee father;
And say, Eumenes, dost thou not perceive
A father's transport rise within thy breast,
Whilst in this act thou art the hand of Heaven,
To deal forth blessings, and distribute joy?

Eum. The blessings Heaven bestows are freely sent,
And should be freely shared.

Pho. True——Generous minds
Redoubled feel the pleasures they impart.
For me, if I've deserved by arms or counsels,
By hazards gladly sought, and greatly prospered,
Whate'er I've added to the public stock,
With joy I see it in Eumenes' hands,
And wish but to receive my share from thee.

Eum. I cannot, if I would, withhold thy share.
What thou hast done is thine, the fame thy own;
And virtuous actions will reward themselves.

Pho. Fame—What is that, if courted for herself?
Less than a vision; a mere sound, an echo,
That calls, with mimic voice, through woods and labyrinths,
Her cheated lovers; lost and heard by fits,
But never fixed: a seeming nymph, yet nothing.
Virtue indeed is a substantial good,
A real beauty; yet with weary steps
Through rugged ways, by long, laborious service,
When we have traced, and wooed, and won the dame,
May we not then expect the dower she brings

Eum. Well——ask that dowry; say, can Damascus pay it?
Her riches shall be taxed: name but the sum,
Her merchants with some costly gems shall grace thee;
Nor can Heraclius fail to grant thee honours,
Proportioned to thy birth and thy desert.
Pho. And can Eumenes think I would be bribed
By trash, by sordid gold, to venal virtue?
What! serve my country for the same mean hire,
That can corrupt each villain to betray her?
Why is she saved from the Arabian spoilers,
If to be stripped by her own sons?—Forgive me
If the thought glows on my cheeks! I know
'Twas mentioned, but to prove how much I scorn it.
As for the emperor, if he owns my conduct,
I shall indulge an honest pride in honours
Which I have strove to merit. Yes, Eumenes,
I have ambition——yet the vast reward,
That swells my hopes, and equals all my wishes,
Is in thy gift alone——it is Eudocia.
Eum. Eudocia! Phocyus, I am yet thy friend,
And therefore will not hold thee long in doubt.
Thou must not think of her.
Pho. Not think of her?
Impossible! She's ever present to me,
My life, my soul! She animates my being,
And kindles up my thoughts to worthy actions.
And why, Eumenes, why not think of her?
Is not my rank——
Eum. Forbear——What need a herald
To tell me who thou art? Yet once again——
Since thou wilt force me to a repetition,
I say, thou must not think of her.
Pho. Yet hear me;
Why wilt thou judge, ere I can plead my cause?
Eum. Why wilt thou plead in vain? hast thou not heard
My choice has destined her to Eutyches?
Pho. And has she consented to that choice?
Eum. Has she consented! What is her consent?
Is she not mine?
Pho. She is——and in that title
Even kings with envy may behold thy wealth,
And think their kingdoms poor! and yet, Eumenes,
Shall she, by being thine, be barred a privilege
Which even the meanest of her sex may claim?
Thou wilt not force her?
Eum. Who has told thee so?
I would force her to be happy.
Pho. Thou canst not.
What happiness subsists in loss of freedom?
The guest, constrained, but murmurs at the banquet;
Nor thanks his host, but starves amidst abundance.
Eum. 'Tis well, young man—Why then, I'll learn from thee
To be a very tame obedient father.
Thou hast already taught my child her duty.
I find the source of all her disobedience,
Her hate of me, her scorn of Eutyches;
Ha! Is it not so!——Come, tell me? I'll forgive thee:
Hast thou not found her a most ready scholar?
I know thou hast. Why, what a dull old wretch
Was I, to think I ever had a daughter!
Pho. I am sorry that Eumenes thinks——
Eum. No——sorry!
Sorry for what? Then thou dost own thou'st wronged me!
That's somewhat yet—Curse on my stupid blindness!
For had I eyes I might have seen it sooner.
Was this the spring of thy romantic bravery,
Thy boastful merit, thy officious service?
Pho. It was—with pride I own it—'twas Eudocia,
I have served thee in serving her, thou knowest it,
And thought I might have found a better treatment.
Why wilt thou force me thus to be a braggart,
And tell thee that which thou shouldst tell thyself?
It grates my soul—I am not wont to talk thus.
But I recall my words——I have done nothing,
And would disclaim all merit, but my love.
Eum. O no—say on, that thou hast saved Damascus;
Is it not so? Look o'er her battlements,
See if the flying foe have left their camp!
Why are our gates yet closed, if thou hast freed us?
'Tis true, thou'st fought a skirmish—What of that?
Had Eutyches been present——
Pho. Eutyches!
Why wilt thou urge my temper with that trifler?
O let him come! that in yon spacious plain
We may together charge the thickest ranks,
Rush on to battle, wounds, and glorious death,
And prove who it was that best deserved Eudocia.
Eum. That will be seen ere long—But since I find
Thou arrogantly would'st usurp dominion,
Believest thyself the guardian genius here,
And that our fortunes hang upon thy sword;
Be that first tried—for know, that from this moment
Thou here hast no command—Farewell!—So stay,
Or hence and join the foe—thou hast thy choice.
[*Exit* Eumenes.
Pho. Spurned and degraded!—Proud, ungrateful man!
Am I a bubble then, blown up by thee,
And tossed into the air to make thee sport?
Hence to the foe! 'Tis well——Eudocia,
Oh, I will see thee, thou wronged excellence!
But how to speak thy wrongs, or my disgrace—

Impossible! Oh, rather let me walk
Like a dumb ghost, and burst my heart in silence.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Garden.*

Enter EUDOCIA.

Eud. Why must we meet by stealth, like guilty lovers!
But 'twill not long be so—What joy it will be
To own my hero in his ripened honours,
And hear applauding crowds pronounce me blest!
Sure he'll be here—See the fair rising moon,
Ere day's remaining twilight scarce is spent,
Hangs up her ready lamp, and with mild lustre
Drives back the hovering shade! Come, Phocyas, come;
This gentle season is a friend to love;
And now, methinks, I could with equal passion,
Meet thine, and tell thee all my secret soul.

Enter PHOCYAS.

He hears me—O my Phocyas!—What—not answer!
Art thou not he; or art some shadow?——Speak.
Pho. I am indeed a shadow—I am nothing—
Eud. What dost thou mean?——for now I know thee, Phocyas.
Pho. And never can be thine!
It will have vent——O barbarous, cursed—but hold—
I had forgot——it was Eudocia's father!——
O, could I too forget how he has used me!
Eud. I fear to ask thee——
Pho. Dost thou fear!—Alas,
Then thou wilt pity me——O generous maid!
Thou hast charmed down the rage that swelled my heart,
And choaked my voice—now I can speak to thee.
And yet 'tis worse than death what I have suffered;
It is the death of honour! Yet that's little;
'Tis more, Eudocia, 'tis the loss of thee!
Eud. Hast thou not conquered? What are all these shouts,
This voice of general joy, heard far around?
What are these fires, that cast their glimmering light
Against the sky? Are not all these thy triumphs?
Pho. O name not triumph! Talk no more of conquest!
It is indeed a night of general joy,
But not to me! Eudocia, I am come
To take a last farewell of thee for ever.
Eud. A last farewell!
Pho. Yes;——How wilt thou hereafter
Look on a wretch despised, reviled, cashiered,
Stript of command, like a base beaten coward?
Thy cruel father——I have told too much;
I should not, but for this, have felt the wounds
I got in fight for him—now, now they bleed.
But I have done——and now thou hast my story,
Is there a creature so accurst as Phocyas?
Eud. And can it be? Is this then thy reward?
O Phocyas! never wouldst thou tell me yet
That thou hadst wounds; now I must feel them too.
For is it not for me that thou hast borne this?
What else could be thy crime?—Wert thou a traitor,
Had'st thou betrayed us, sold us to the foe——
Pho. Would I be yet a traitor, I have leave;
Nay, I am dared to it with mocking scorn.
My crime indeed was asking thee; that only
Has cancelled all, if I had any merit!
The city now is safe, my service slighted,
And I discarded, like an useless thing,
Nay, bid begone——and, if I like that better,
Seek out new friends, and join you barbarous host.
Eud. Hold—let me think a while—
[*Walks aside.*
Though my heart bleed,
I would not have him see these dropping tears—
And wilt thou go, then, Phocyas?
Pho. To my grave;
Where can I bury else this foul disgrace?
Alas! that question shows how poor I am,
How very much a wretch; for if I go,
It is from thee, thou only joy of life!
And death will then be welcome.
Eud. Art thou sure
Thou hast been used thus? Art thou quite undone?
Pho. Yes, very sure——What dost thou mean?
Eud. That then, it is a time for me—O, Heaven! that I
Alone am grateful to this wondrous man!
To own thee, Phocyas, thus—[*Giving her hand.*] nay, glory in thee,
And show, without a blush, how much I love.
We must not part——
Pho. Then I am rich again! [*Embracing her.*
O, no—we will not part! Confirm it, Heaven!
Now thou shalt see how I will bend my spirit,
With what soft patience I will bear my wrongs,
'Till I have wearied out thy father's scorn.
Yet I have worse to tell thee—Eutyches——
Eud. Why wilt thou name him?
Pho. Now, even now, he's coming!
Just hovering o'er thee, like a bird of prey.
Thy father vows—for I must tell thee all——
'Twas this that wrung my heart, and racked my brain,
Even to distraction!—vows thee to his bed;
Nay, threatened force, if thou refuse obedience.
Eud. Force! threatened force! my father——where is nature?
Is that, too, banished from his heart!—O then
I have no father—How have I deserved this?—
[*Weeping.*
No home, but am henceforth an out-cast orphan;
For I will wander to earth's utmost bounds,
Ere give my hand to that detested contract.

O save me, Phocyas! thou hast saved my father;
Must I yet call him so, this cruel father——
How wilt thou now deliver poor Eudocia?
Pho. See, how we're joined in exile! How our fate
Conspires to warn us both to leave this city!
Thou knowest the emperor is now at Antioch;
I have an uncle there, who, when the Persian,
As now the Saracen, had nigh o'er run
The ravaged empire, did him signal service,
And nobly was rewarded. There, Eudocia,
Thou might'st be safe, and we may meet with justice.
Eud. There—any where, so we may fly this place.
See, Phocyas, what thy wrongs and mine have wrought
In a weak woman's frame! for I have courage
To share thy exile now through every danger.
Danger is only here, and dwells with guilt,
With base ingratitude, and hard oppression.
Pho. Then let us lose no time, but hence this night.
The gates I can command, and will provide
The means of our escape. Some five hours hence
('Twill then be turned of midnight) we may meet
In the piazza of Honoria's convent.
Eud. I know it well; the place is most secure,
And near adjoining to this garden wall.
There thou shalt find me—O protect us, Heaven!
Pho. Fear not;—thy innocence will be our guard.
I've thought already how to shape our course;
Some pitying angel will attend thy steps,
Guide thee unseen, and charm the sleeping foe,
Till thou art safe! O, I have suffered nothing!
Thus gaining thee, and this great generous proof,
How blest I am in my Eudocia's love!
My only joy, farewell!
Eud. Farewell, my Phocyas!
I have no friend but thee—yet thee I'll call
Friend, father, lover, guardian!—Thou art all!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. III.

SCENE I.—*Caled's Tent.*

Enter CALED *and Attendants.* SERGIUS *brought in bound with cords.*

Cal. MERCY! What's that?—Look yonder, on the field
Of our late fight!—Go, talk of mercy there.
Will the dead hear thy voice?
Serg. O spare me yet!
Cal. Thou wretch!—Spare thee! to what? To live in torture?
Are not thy limbs all bruised, thy bones disjointed,
To force thee to confess? and wouldst thou drag,
Like a crushed serpent, a vile mangled being?
My eyes abhor a coward—Hence, and die!
Serg. Oh! I have told thee all——When first pursued,
I fixed my letters on an arrow's point,
And shot them o'er the walls——
Cal. Hast thou told all?
Well, then, thou shalt have mercy to requite thee;
Behold, I'll send thee forward on thy errand.
Strike off his head; then cast it o'er the gates;
There let thy tongue tell o'er its tale again.
Serg. O, bloody Saracens!
[*Exit Serg. dragged away by the Guards.*

Enter ABUDAH.

Cal. Abudah, welcome!
Abu. O Caled, what an evening was the last!
Cal. Name it no more; remembrance sickens with it,
And therefore sleep is banished from this night;
Nor shall to-morrow's sun open his eyes
Upon our shame, ere doubly we've redeemed it.
Have all the captains notice?
Abu. I have walked
The rounds to-night, ere the last hour of prayer,
From tent to tent, and warned them to be ready.
What must be done?
Cal. Thou know'st the important news,
Which we have intercepted by this slave,
Of a new army's march. The time now calls,
While these soft Syrians are dissolved in riot,
Fooled with success, and not suspecting danger,
Neglectful of their watch, or else fast bound
In chains of sleep, companion of debauches,
To form a new attack ere break of day;
So, like the wounded leopard, shall we rush
From out our covers on these drowsy hunters,
And seize them, unprepared to 'scape our vengeance.
Abu. Great captain of the armies of the faithful!
I know thy mighty and unconquered spirit;
Yet hear me, Caled, hear and weigh my doubts.
Our angry prophet frowns upon our vices,
And visits us in blood. Why else did terror,
Unknown before, seize all our stoutest bands?
The angel of destruction was abroad;
The archers of the tribe of Thoal fled,
So long renowned, or spent their shafts in vain;
The feathered flight erred through the boundless air,
Or the death turned on him that drew the bow!
What can this bode?—Let me speak plainer yet;
Is it to propagate the unspotted law
We fight? 'Tis well; it is a noble cause;
But much, I fear, infection is among us;
A boundless lust of rapine guides our troops.
We learn the christian vices we chastise,
And, tempted with the pleasures of the soil,
More than with distant hopes of paradise,

I fear, may soon—but, oh, avert it, Heaven!
Fall even a prey to our own spoils and conquests.
Cal. No—thou mistakest; thy pious zeal deceives thee.
Our prophet only chides our sluggard valour.
Thou sawest how, in the vale of Honan, once
The troops, as now defeated, fled confused,
Even to the gates of Mecca's holy city:
Till Mahomet himself there stopped their entrance,
A javelin in his hand, and turned them back
Upon the foe; they fought again, and conquered.
Behold how we may best appease his wrath!
His own example points us out the way.
Abu. Well—be it then resolved. The indulgent hour
Of better fortune is, I hope, at hand.
And yet, since Phocyas has appeared its champion,
How has this city raised its drooping head!
As if some charm prevailed where'er he fought,
Our strength seems withered, and our feeble weapons
Forget their wonted triumph—were he absent—
Cal. I would have sought him out in the last action
To single fight, and put that charm to proof,
Had not a foul and sudden mist arose
Ere I arrived, to have restored the combat.
But let it be—'tis past. We yet may meet,
And 'twill be known whose arm is then the stronger.

Enter DARAN.

Dar. Health to the race of Ismael! and days
More prosperous than the last—a christian captive
Is fallen within my watch, and waits his doom.
Cal. Bring forth the slave!—O thou keen vulture, Death!
Do we then feed thee only thus by morsels!
Whole armies never can suffice thy anger.

DARAN *goes out, and re-enters with* PHOCYAS.

Whence, and what art thou?—Of Damascus?—Daran,
Where didst thou find this dumb and sullen thing,
That seems to lour defiance on our anger?
Dar. Marching in circuit, with the horse thou gavest me,
To observe the city gates, I saw from far
Two persons issue forth; the one advanced,
And, ere he could retreat, my horsemen seized him;
The other was a woman, and had fled,
Upon a signal given at our approach,
And got within the gates. Wouldst thou know more,
Himself, if he will speak, can best inform thee.
Cal. Have I not seen thy face?
Abu. [*To Caled*] He hears thee not:
His eyes are fixed on earth; some deep distress
Is at his heart. This is no common captive.
Cal. A lion in the toils! We soon shall tame him.
Still art thou dumb?—Nay, 'tis in vain to cast
Thy gloomy looks so oft around this place,
Or frown upon thy bonds—thou canst not 'scape.
Pho. Then be it so—the worst is past already,
And life is now not worth a moment's pause.
Do you not know me yet——think of the man
You have most cause to curse, and I am he.
Cal. Ha! Phocyas?
Abu. Phocyas!—Mahomet, we thank thee!
Now dost thou smile again.
Dar. [*Aside.*] O devil, devil!
And I not know him!—'twas but yesterday
He killed my horse, and drove me from the field.
Now I'm revenged! No; hold you there, not yet,
Not while he lives.
Cal. [*Aside.*] This is indeed a prize!
Is it because thou know'st what slaughtered heaps
There, yet unburied, lie without the camp,
Whose ghosts have all this night, passing the Zorat,
Called, from the bridge of death, to thee to follow,
That now thou'rt here to answer to their cry?
Howe'er it be, thou know'st thy welcome——
Pho. Yes,
Thou proud, blood-thirsty Arab!—Well I know
What to expect from thee: I know ye all.
How should the author of distress and ruin
Be moved to pity? That's a human passion.
No—in your hungry eyes, that look revenge,
I read my doom. Where are your racks, your tortures?
I'm ready——lead me to them; I can bear
The worst of ills from you. You're not my friends,
My countrymen.—Yet, were you men, I could
Unfold a story—But no more—Eumenes,
Thou hast thy wish, and I am now—a worm!
Abu. [*To* Cal. *aside.*] Leader of armies, hear him! for my mind
Presages good accruing to our cause
By this event.
Cal. I tell thee, then, thou wrong'st us,
To think our hearts thus steeled, or our ears deaf
To all that thou mayest utter. Speak, disclose
The secret woes that throb within thy breast.
Now, by the silent hours of night, we'll hear thee,
And mute attention shall await thy words.
Pho. This is not, then, the palace in Damascus!
If you will hear, then I, indeed, have wronged you.
How can this be?—when he, for whom I've fought,
Fought against you, has yet refused to hear me!
You seem surprised.—It was ingratitude

That drove me out an exile from those walls,
Which I so late defended.
Abu. Can it be?
Are these thy Christian friends?
Cal. 'Tis well—we thank them:
They help us to subdue themselves—But who
Was the companion of thy flight?—A woman?
So Daran said——
Pho. 'Tis there I am most wretched——
Oh! I am torn from all my soul held dear,
And my life's blood flows out upon the wound!
That woman—'twas for her—How shall I speak it?
Eudocia, Oh farewell!—I'll tell you, then,
As fast as these heart-rending sighs will let me;
I loved the daughter of the proud Emmenes,
And long in secret wooed her; not unwelcome
To her my visits; but I feared her father,
Who oft had pressed her to detested nuptials,
And therefore durst not, till this night of joy,
Avow to him my courtship. Now, I thought her
Mine, by a double claim, of mutual vows,
And service yielded at his greatest need:
When, as I moved my suit, with sour disdain,
He mocked my service, and forbade my love;
Degraded me from the command I bore,
And with defiance bade me seek the foe.
How has his curse prevailed!—The generous maid
Was won, by my distress, to leave the city;
And cruel fortune made me thus your prey.
Abu. [*Aside.*] My soul is moved—Thou wert a man, O prophet!
Forgive, if 'tis a crime, a human sorrow,
For injured worth, though in an enemy!
Pho. Now——since you have heard my story, set me free,
That I may save her yet, dearer than life,
From a tyrannic father's threatened force;
Gold, gems, and purple vests, shall pay my ransom;
Nor shall my peaceful sword henceforth be drawn
In fight, nor break its truce with you for ever.
Cal. No—there's one way, a better, and but one,
To save thyself, and make some reparation
For all the numbers thy bold hand has slain.
Pho. O, name it quickly, and my soul will bless thee!
Cal. Embrace our faith, and share with us our fortunes.
Pho. Then I am lost again!
Cal. What! when we offer
Not freedom only, but to raise thee high
To greatness, conquest, glory, heavenly bliss!
Pho. To sink me down to infamy, perdition,
Here and hereafter! Make my name a curse
To present times, to every future age
A proverb and a scorn!—take back thy mercy,
And know I now disdain it.
Cal. As thou wilt.
The time's too precious to be wasted longer
In words with thee. Thou know'st thy doom—farewell.
Abu. [*To Cal. Aside.*] Hear me, Calad! grant him some short space;
Perhaps he will at length accept thy bounty.
Try him, at least——
Cal. Well—be it so, then. Daran,
Guard well thy charge—Thou hast an hour to live;
If thou art wise, thou may'st prolong that term;
If not—why—Fare thee well, and think of death.
[*Exeunt Cal. and Abu.*
Pho. [*Dar. waiting at a distance.*] Farewell, and think of death! Was it not so?
Do murderers then preach morality?——
But how to think of what the living know not,
And the dead cannot, or else may not tell?——
What art thou, O thou great mysterious terror!
The way to thee we know! disease, famine,
Sword, fire, and all thy ever-open gates,
That day and night stand ready to receive us.
But what's beyond them?—Who will draw that veil?
Yet death's not there—No; it is a point of time,
The verge 'twixt mortal and immortal beings.
It mocks our thoughts! On this side all is life;
And when we have reached it, in that very instant
'Tis past the thinking of! Oh! if it be
The pangs, the throes, the agonizing struggles
When soul and body part, sure I have felt it,
And there's no more to fear.
Dar. [*Aside.*] Suppose I now
Dispatch him!—Right—What need to stay for orders?
I wish I durst!—Yet what I dare I'll do.
Your jewels, christian—You'll not need these trifles—
[*Searching him.*
Pho. I pray thee, slave, stand off—My soul's too busy
To lose a thought on thee.

Enter ABUDAH.

Abu. What's this?——forbear!
Who gave thee leave to use this violence?
[*Takes the jewels from him, and lays them on a table.*
Dar. [*Aside.*] Denied my booty? Curses on his head!
Was not the founder of our law a robber?
Why 'twas for that I left my country's gods,
Menaph and Uzza. Better still be pagan,
Than starve with a new faith.
Abu. What, dost thou mutter?
Daran, withdraw, and better learn thy duty.
[*Exit Dar.*
Phocyas, perhaps thou knowest me not——
Pho. I know
Thy name Abudah, and thy office here,
The second in command. What more thou art
Indeed I cannot tell.
Abu. True, for thou yet
Knowest not I am thy friend.

Pho. Is it possible?——
Thou speakest me fair.
Abu. What dost thou think of life?
Pho. I think not of it; death was in my thoughts.
On hard conditions, life were but a load,
And I will lay it down.
Abu. Art thou resolved?
Pho. I am, unless thou bringest me better terms
Than those I have rejected.
Abu. Think again.
Caled, by me, once more renews that offer.
Pho. Thou sayest thou art my friend? Why dost thou try
To shake the settled temper of my breast?
My soul hath just discharged her cumberous train
Of hopes and fears, prepared to take her voyage
To other seats, where she may rest in peace;
And now thou callest me back, to beat again
The painful road of life—Tempt me no more
To be a wretch, for I despise the offer.
Abu. The general knows thee brave, and 'tis for that
He seeks alliance with thy noble virtues.
Pho. He knows me brave!——Why does he then thus treat me?
No; he believes I am so poor of soul,
That barely for the privilege to live,
I would be bought his slave. But go tell him,
The little space of life, his scorn bequeathed me,
Was lent in vain, and he may take the forfeit.
Abu. Why wilt thou wed thyself to misery,
When our faith courts thee to eternal blessings?
When truth itself is, like a seraph, come
To loose thy bands?—The light divine, whose beams
Pierced through the gloom of Hera's sacred cave,
And there illumined the great Mahomet,
Arabia's morning star, now shines on thee.
Arise, salute with joy the guest from Heaven,
Follow her steps, and be no more a captive.
Pho. But whither must I follow? answer that.
Is she a guest from heaven? What marks divine,
What signs, what wonders, vouch her boasted mission?
Abu. What wonders—turn thy eye to Mecca! mark
How far from Caaba first, that hallowed temple,
Her glory dawned! then look how swift it's course,
As when the sunbeams, shooting through a cloud,
Drive o'er the meadows' face the flying shades!
Have not the nations bent before our swords,
Like ripened corn before the reaper's steel?
Why is all this? Why does success still wait
Upon our laws, if not to show that heaven
First sent it forth, and owns it still by conquest?
Pho. Dost thou ask why this is? O why, indeed?
Where is the man can read heaven's secret counsels?
Why did I conquer in another cause,
Yet now am here?
Abu. I'll tell thee—thy good angel
Has seized thy hand unseen, and snatched thee out
From swift destruction; know, ere day shall dawn,
Damascus will in blood lament it's fall!
We've heard what army is designed to march
Too late to save her. Now, e'en now, our force
Is just preparing for a fresh assault.
Now too thou might'st revenge thy wrongs—so Caled
Charged me to say, and more—that he invites thee;
Thou knowest the terms——to share with him the conquest.
Pho. Conquest?——Revenge—Hold, let me think—O horror!
Revenge!——O what revenge? Bleed on, my wounds,
For thus to be revenged, were it not worse
Than all that I can suffer?——But Eudocia——
Where will she then—Shield her, ye pitying powers,
And let me die in peace!
Abu. Hear me once more,
'Tis all I have to offer; mark me now!
Caled has sworn Eudocia shall be safe.
Pho. Ha! safe—but how! a wretched captive too!
Abu. He swears she shall be free, she shall be thine.
Pho. Then I am lost indeed——O cruel bounty!
How can I be at once both curst and happy!
Abu. The time draws near, and I must quickly leave thee;
But first reflect, that in this fatal night
Slaughter and rapine may be loosed abroad,
And while they roam with unextinguished rage,
Should she thou lovest—well may'st thou start, —be made,
Perhaps unknown, some barbarous soldier's prey;
Should she then fall a sacrifice to lust—
Or brutal fury!
Pho. O——this pulls my heart strings! [*Falls.*
Earth open——save me, save me from that thought!
There's ruin in it, 'twill, it will undo me!
Abu. Nay, do not plunge thyself in black despair;
Look up, poor wretch, thou art not shipwrecked yet;
Behold an anchor; am not I thy friend?
Yet hear me, and be blest.
Pho. [*Rising.*] Ha! Who, what art thou? [*Raving.*
My friend? that's well; but hold——are all friends honest?
What's to be done? Hush, hark! what noise is that?

Abu. There is no voice; it is yet the dead of night;
The guards, without, keep silent watch around us.
Pho. Again—it calls—'tis she—O lead me to her——
Abu. Thy passion mocks thee with imagined sounds.
Pho. Sure it was Eudocia's voice cried out, 'Forbear!'
What shall I do?—Oh Heaven!
Abu. Heaven shows thee what.
Nay, now it is too late; see, Caled comes
With anger on his brow. Quickly withdraw
To the next tent, and there——
Pho. [*Rising.*] What do I see?
Damascus! conquest! ruin! rapes and murder!
Villains! Is there no more—O save her, save her! [*Exeunt Pho. and Abu.*

Enter CALED *and* DARAN.

Dar. Behold, on thy approach, they shift their ground.
Cal. 'Tis as thou sayest, he trifles with my mercy.
Dar. Speak, shall I fetch his head?
Cal. No, stay you here,
I cannot spare thee yet. Raphan, go thou. [*To an Officer.*
But hold—I've thought again—he shall not die.
Go, tell him he shall live, 'till he has seen
Damascus sink in flames, 'till he behold
That slave, that woman-idol he adores,
Or given a prize to some brave Mussulman,
Or slain before his face; then if he sue
For death as for a boon——perhaps we'll grant it. [*Exit Raphan.*
Dar. The captains wait thy orders.
Cal. Are the troops
Ready to march?
Dar. They are.
[*The Captains pass by as they are named.*
Cal. Where's Abu-Taleb?
Alcorash?—O your valiant tribes, I thank them,
Fled from their standard! Will they now redeem it?
Omar and Serjabil? it is well, I see them.
You know your duty. You, Abdorraman,
Must charge with Raphan. Mourn, thou haughty city!
The bow is bent, nor canst thou 'scape thy doom.
Who turns his back henceforth, our prophet curse him!
Dar. But who commands the trusty bands of Mecca?
Thou knowest their leader fell in the last fight.
Cal. 'Tis true; thou, Daran, well deservest that charge;
I've marked what a keen hatred, like my own,
Dwells in thy breast against these christian dogs.
Dar. Thou dost me right.
Cal. And therefore I'll reward it.
Be that command now thine. And here—this sabre,
Blessed in the field by Mahomet himself,
At Chaibar's prosperous fight, shall aid thy arm.
Dar. Thanks, my good chief; with this I'll better thank thee. [*Taking the scimitar.*
Cal. Myself will lead the troops of the black standard,
And at the eastern gate begin the storm.
Dar. But why do we not move? 'twill soon be day;
Methinks I am cold, and would grow warm with action.
Cal. Then haste and call Abudah—O thou art welcome.

Enter ABUDAH.

Thy charge awaits thee. Where's the stubborn captive?
Abu. Indeed he's brave. I left him for a moment
In the next tent. He's scarcely yet himself.
Cal. But he is ours?
Abu. The threats of death are nothing;
Though thy last message shook his soul, as winds
On the bleak hills bend down some lofty pine;
Yet still he holds his root, 'till I found means,
Abating somewhat of thy first demand,
If not to make him wholly ours, at least
To gain sufficient to our end.
Cal. Say how?
Abu. Oft he inclined, oft started back; at 'last,
When just consenting, for a while he paused,
Stood fixed in thought, and lift his eyes to Heaven;
Then, as with fresh recovered force, cried out,
'Renounce my faith! Never'—I answered, No,
That now he should not do it.
Cal. How!
Abu. Yet hear!
For since I saw him now so lost in passion,
That must be left to his more temperate thoughts.
Meantime I urged, conjured, at last constrained him,
By all he held most dear, nay, by the voice
Of Providence, that called him now to save,
With her he loved, perhaps the lives of thousands,
No longer to resist his better fate,
But join his arms in present action with us,
And swear he would be faithful.
Cal. What, no more?
Than he's a christian still!
Abu. Have patience yet:
For if by him we can surprize the city——
Cal. Sayst thou?
Abu. Hear what's agreed; but on the terms
That every unresisting life be spared.
I shall command some chosen faithful bands,
Phocyas will guide us to the gate, from whence
He late escaped, nor do we doubt but there
With ease to gain admittance.

Cal. This is something.
And yet I do not like this half-ally—
Is he not still a christian?——But no matter—
Mean time I will attack the eastern gate;
Who first succeeds gives entrance to the rest.
Hear, all!——Prepare ye now for boldest deeds,
And know, the prophet will reward your valour.
Think that we all to certain triumph move;
Who falls in fight yet meets the prize above.
There, in the gardens of eternal spring,
While birds of paradise around you sing,
Each, with his blooming beauty by his side,
Shall drink rich wines that in full rivers glide,
Breathe fragrant gales o'er fields of spice that blow,
And gather fruits immortal as they grow;
Ecstatic bliss shall your whole powers employ,
And every sense be lost in every joy. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A great square in the city before the governor's palace.*

Enter ABUDAH, *Saracen captains, and soldiers; with* EUMENES, HERBIS, *and other Christians, unarmed.*

Eum. It must be so——farewell, devoted walls!
To be surprised thus!——Hell, and all ye fiends,
How did ye watch this minute for destruction!
Herb. We've been betrayed by riot and debauch;
Curse on the traitor guard!
Eum. The guard above,
Did that sleep too?
Abu. Christians, complain no more;
What you have asked is granted. Are ye men,
And dare ye question thus, with bold impatience,
Eternal justice!——Know, the doom from Heaven
Falls on your towers, resistless as the bolt
That fires the cedars on your mountain tops.
Be meek, and learn with humble awe to bear
The mitigated ruin. Worse had followed,
Had ye opposed our numbers. Now you're safe;
Quarter and liberty are given to all;
And little do ye think how much ye owe
To one brave enemy, whom yet ye know not.

Enter ARTAMON *hastily.*

Art. All's lost!——Ha!——Who are these?
Eum. All's lost, indeed.
Yield up thy sword, if thou wouldst share our safety.
Thou com'st too late to bring us news.
Art. Oh!——no,
The news I bring is from the eastern guard.
Caled has forced the gate, and——but he's here.
[*A cry without.*] Fly, fly; they follow——
Quarter, mercy, quarter!
[*Several persons, as pursued, run over the stage.*
Caled. [*Without.*] No quarter! Kill, I say.
Are they not Christians?
More blood! our prophet asks it.

He enters with DARAN, *&c.*

What, Abudah!
Well met!——but wherefore are the looks of peace?
Why sleeps thy sword?
Abu. Caled, our task is over.
Behold the chiefs; they have resigned the palace.
Cal. And sworn to obey our law?
Abu. No.
Cal. Then fall on.
Abu. Hold yet, and hear me—Heaven, by me, has spared
The sword its cruel task. On easy terms
We've gained a bloodless conquest.
Cal. I renounce it.
Curse on those terms! The city's mine by storm.
Fall on, I say——
Abu. Nay then, I swear ye shall not.
Cal. Ha!——Who am I?
Abu. The general—and I know
What reverence is your due.
[*Caled gives signs to his men to fall on.*
——Nay, he who stirs,
First makes his way through me. My honour's pledged;
Rob me of that who dares. [*They stop.*] I know thee, Caled,
Chief in command; bold, valiant, wise, and faithful;
But yet, remember, I'm a Mussulman;
Nay, more, thou know'st, companion of the prophet,
And what we vow is sacred.
Cal. Thou art a Christian,
I swear thou art, and hast betrayed the faith.
Curse on thy new allies!
Abu. No more—this strife
But ill beseems the servants of the caliph,
And casts reproach——Christians, withdraw a while;
I pledge my life to answer the conditions——
[*Exeunt Eumenes, Herbis, &c.*
Why, Caled, do we thus expose ourselves
A scorn to nations that despise our law?
Thou call'st me Christian—What! Is it because
I prize my plighted faith, that I'm a Christian?
Come, 'tis not well, and if——
Cal. What terms are yielded?
Abu. Leave to depart, to all that will; an oath
First given, no more to aid the war against us;
An unmolested march; each citizen
To take his goods, not more than a mule's burden;
The chiefs six mules, and ten the governor;

Beside some few slight arms for their defence
Against the mountain robbers.
Cal. Now, by Mahomet,
Thou hast equipped an army!
Abu. Canst thou doubt
The greatest part by far will chuse to stay,
Receive our law, or pay the accustomed tribute?
What fear we then from a few wretched bands
Of scattered fugitives?——Besides, thou know'st
What towns of strength remain yet unsubdued.
Let us appear this once like generous victors,
So future conquests shall repay this bounty,
And willing provinces even court subjection.
Cal. Well—be it on thy head, if worse befall!
This once I yield——but see it thus proclaimed
Through all Damascus, that who will depart
Must leave the place this instant———Pass, move on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The outside of a nunnery.*

Enter Eudocia.

Eud. Darkness is fled; and yet the morning light
Gives me more fears than did night's deadly gloom.
Within, without, all, all are foes——Oh, Phocyas,
Thou art perhaps at rest! would I were too!
[*After a pause.*
This place has holy charms; rapine and murder
Dare not approach it, but are awed to distance.
I've heard that even these infidels have spared
Walls sacred to devotion——World, farewell!
Here will I hide me, till the friendly grave
Opens its arms and shelters me for ever! [*Exit.*

Enter Phocyas.

Pho. Did not I hear the murmurs of a voice,
This way?——a woman's too?——and seemed complaining?
Hark!—No—O torture! Whither shall I turn me?
I've searched the palace rooms in vain; and now,
I know not why, some instinct brought me hither;
'Twas here last night we met. Dear, dear Eudocia!
Might I once more—— [*Going out he meets her.*
Eud. Who calls the lost Eudocia?
Sure 'tis a friendly voice.
Pho. 'Tis she——O rapture!
Eud. Is't possible—my Phocyas!
Pho. My Eudocia!
Do I yet call thee mine?
Eud. Do I yet see thee?
Yet hear thee speak?—O how hast thou escaped
From barbarous swords, and men that know not mercy?
Pho. I've borne a thousand deaths since our last parting.
But wherefore do I talk of death?—for now,
Methinks, I'm raised to life immortal,
And feel I'm blest beyond the power of change.
Eud. O, yet beware—lest some event unknown
Again should part us.
Pho. [*Aside.*] Heaven avert the omen!
None can, my fair, none shall.
Eud. Alas! thy transports
Make thee forget; is not the city taken?
Pho. It is.
Eud. And are we not beset with foes?
Pho. There are no foes—or none to thee——No danger.
Eud. No foes?
Pho. I know not how to tell thee yet;—
But think, Eudocia, that my matchless love,
And wondrous causes pre-ordained conspiring,
For thee have triumphed o'er the fiercest foes,
And turned them friends.
Eud. Amazement! Friends!——
O all ye guardian powers!—Say on—O lead me,
Lead me through this dark maze of Providence,
Which thou hast trod, that I may trace thy steps,
With silent awe, and worship as I pass.
Pho. Enquire no more—thou shalt know all hereafter———
Let me conduct thee hence—
Eud. O, whither next?
To what far distant home?——But 'tis enough,
That, favoured thus of Heaven, thou art my guide.
And as we journey on the painful way,
Say, wilt thou then beguile the passing hours,
And open all the wonders of the story?
Pho. Indulge no more thy melancholy thoughts!
Damascus is thy home.
Eud. And yet thou sayest
It is no longer ours!——Where is my father?
Pho. To show thee, too, how Fate seems every way
To guard thy safety, e'en thy father now,
Wert thou within his power, would stand defeated
Of his tyrannic vow. Thou know'st last night
What hope of aid flattered this foolish city.
At break of day, the Arabian scouts had seized
A second courier, and, from him, 'tis learned
That on their march the army mutinied,
And Eutyches was slain.
Eud. And yet, that now
Is of the least importance to my peace.
But answer me; say, where is now my father?
Pho. Or gone, or just preparing to depart.
Eud. What! Is our doom reversed? And is he then
The wretched fugitive?
Pho. Thou heavenly maid!
To free thee, then, from every anxious thought.
Know, I've once more, wronged as I am, even saved
Thy father's threatened life; nay, saved Damascus
From blood and slaughter, and from total ruin.
Terms are obtained, and general freedom granted
To all that will, to leave in peace the city.

Eud. Is't possible—now trust me I could chide thee:
'Tis much unkind to hold me thus in doubt;
I pray thee clear these wonders.
Pho. 'Twill surprise thee,
When thou shalt know———
Eud. What?
Pho. To what deadly gulphs
Of horror and despair, what cruel straits
Of agonizing thought I have been driven.
This night, ere my perplexed, bewildered soul,
Could find its way—thou saidst that thou wouldst chide;
I fear thou wilt; indeed, I have done that
I could have wished to avoid——but for a cause
So lovely, so beloved——
Eud. What dost thou mean?
I'll not indulge a thought, that thou couldst do
One act unworthy of thyself, thy honour,
And that firm zeal against these foes of heaven,
Which won my heart, at first, to share in all
Thy dangers and thy fame, and wish thee mine.
Thou couldst not save thy life by means inglorious.
Pho. Alas! thou know'st me not—I'm man, frail man,
To error born; and who, that's man, is perfect?
To save my life? O no, well was it risked
For thee! had it been lost, it were not too much,
And thou wert safe;—O, what wouldst thou have said,
If I had risked my soul to save Eudocia?
Eud. Ha! speak—Oh, no, be dumb—it cannot be!
And yet thy looks are changed, thy lips grow pale.
Why dost thou shake?——Alas! I tremble too!
Thou couldst not, hast not, sworn to Mahomet?
Pho. No—I should first have died—nay, given up thee.
Eud. O Phocyas! was it well to try me thus!
And yet another deadly fear succeeds.——
How came these wretches hither? Who revived
Their fainting arms to unexpected triumph?
For while thou fought'st, and fought'st the christian cause,
These battered walls were rocks impregnable,
Their towers of adamant. But, oh! I fear
Some act of thine——
Pho. Oh, I must tell thee all;
But prithee do not frown on me, Eudocia!
I found the wakeful foe, in midnight council,
Resolved, ere day, to make a fresh attack,
Keen for revenge, and hungry after slaughter—
Could my racked soul bear that, and think of thee!
Nay, think of thee exposed, a helpless prey,
To some fierce ruffian's violating arms!
O, had the world been mine, in that extreme
I should have given whole provinces away,
Nay, all—and thought it little for thy ransom!
Eud. For this, then—Oh—thou hast betrayed the city!
Distrustful of the righteous powers above,
That still protect the chaste and innocent:
And to avert a feigned, uncertain danger,
Thou hast brought certain ruin on thy country!
Pho. No, thou forgetst the friendly terms—the sword,
Which threatened to have filled the streets with blood,
I sheathed in peace; thy father, thou, and all
The citizens, are safe, uncaptived, free.
Eud. Safe! free! O no——life, freedom, every good,
Turns to a curse, if sought by wicked means.
Yet sure it cannot be! Are these the terms
On which we meet?—No; we can never meet
On terms like these; the hand of death itself
Could not have torn us from each other's arms
Like this dire act, this more than fatal blow!
In death, the soul and body only part,
To meet again, and be divorced no more;
But now——
Pho. Ha! lightning blast me! strike me,
Ye vengeful bolts, if this is my reward!
Are these my hoped for joys! Is this the welcome
The wretched Phocyas meets, from her he loved
More than life, fame—even to his soul's distraction!
Eud. Hast thou not helped the slaves of Mahomet
To spread their impious conquest o'er thy country!
What welcome was there in Eudocia's power
She has withheld from Phocyas? But, alas!
'Tis thou hast blasted all our joys for ever,
And cut down hope, like a poor short-lived flower,
Never to grow again!
Pho. Cruel Eudocia!
If, in my heart's deep anguish, I've been forced
Awhile from what I was—dost thou reject me?
Think of the cause——
Eud. The cause? There is no cause——
Not universal nature could afford
A cause for this. What were dominion, pomp,
The wealth of nations, nay, of all the world,
The world itself, or what a thousand worlds,
If weighed with faith unspotted, heavenly truth,
Thoughts free from guilt, the empire of the mind,
And all the triumphs of a godlike breast,
Firm and unmoved in the great cause of virtue?
Pho. How shall I answer thee?—My soul is awed,
And, trembling, owns the eternal force of reason.
But, oh! can nothing then atone, or plead
For pity from thee?
Eud. Can'st thou yet undo
The deed that's done; recal the time that's past?
O, call back yesterday; call back last night,
Though with its fears, its dangers, its distress:
Bid the fair hours of innocence return,
When, in the lowest ebb of changeful fortune,
Thou wert more glorious in Eudocia's eyes,

Than all the pride of monarchs! But that deed—
Pho. No more——thou waken'st in my tortured heart
The cruel, conscious worm, that stings to madness.
Oh, I'm undone!——I know it, and can bear
To be undone for thee, but not to lose thee.
Eud. Poor wretch!—I pity thee!——but art thou Phocyas,
The man I loved!—I could have died with thee
Ere thou didst this; then we had gone together,
A glorious pair, and soared above the stars,
Bright as the stars themselves; and as we passed
The heavenly roads, and milky ways of light,
Had heard the blest inhabitants, with wonder,
Applaud our spotless love. But never, never
Will I be made the curst reward of treason,
To seal thy doom, to bind a hellish league,
And to ensure thy everlasting woe.
Pho. What league?—'tis ended—I renounce it—thus—— [*Kneels.*
I bend to heaven and thee——O thou divine,
Thou matchless image of all perfect goodness!
Do thou but pity yet the wretched Phocyas,
Heaven will relent, and all may yet be well.
Eud. No—we must part. 'Twill ask whole years of sorrow
To purge away this guilt. Then do not think
Thy loss in me is worth one dropping tear:
But if thou wouldst be reconciled to Heaven,
First sacrifice to Heaven that fatal passion
Which caused thy fall—Farewell: forget the lost
—But how shall I ask that?—I would have said,
For my soul's peace, forget the lost Eudocia.
Can'st thou forget her?—Oh! the killing torture
To think it was love, excess of love, divorced us!
Farewell for——still I cannot speak that word,
These tears speak for me—O farewell—— [*Exit.*
Pho. [*Raving*] For ever!
Return, return and speak it; say, for ever!
She's gone—and now she joins the fugitives.
And yet she did not quite pronounce my doom—
O hear, all gracious Heaven! wilt thou at once
Forgive, and O inspire me to some act
This day, that may in part redeem what's past!
Prosper this day, or let it be my last! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An open Place in the City.*

Enter CALED *and* DARAN *meeting.*

Cal. SOLDIER, what news? thou look'st as thou wert angry.
Dar. And durst I say it, so, my chief, I am.
I've spoke——if it offends, my head is thine;
Take it, and I am silent.
Cal. No; say on.
I know thee honest, and perhaps I guess
What knits thy brows in frowns——
Dar. Is this, my leader,
A conquered city?——View yon vale of palms:
Behold the vanquished Christian triumph still,
Rich in his flight, and mock thy barren war!
Cal. The vale of palms!
Dar. Beyond those hills, the place
Where they agreed this day to meet and halt,
To gather all their forces; there disguised,
Just now I've viewed their camp—O, I could curse
My eyes for what they've seen.
Cal. What hast thou seen?
Dar. Why, all Damascus—all its soul, its life,
Its heart blood, all its treasure, piles of plate,
Crosses enriched with gems, arras and silks,
And vests of gold, unfolded to the sun,
That rival all his lustre.
Cal. How!
Dar. 'Tis true.
The bees are wisely bearing off their honey,
And soon the empty hive will be our own.
Cal. So forward too! Curse on this foolish treaty!
Dar. Forward——it looks as they had been forewarned.
By Mahomet, the land wears not the face
Of war, but trade! and thou wouldst swear its merchants
Were sending forth their loaded caravans
To all the neighbouring countries.
Cal. [*Aside.*] Ha! this starts
A lucky thought of Mahomet's first exploit,
When he pursued the caravan of Corash,
And from a thousand misbelieving slaves
Wrested their ill-heaped goods, transferred to thrive
In holier hands, and propagate the faith.——
'Tis said, [*To Dar.*] the emperor had a wardrobe here
Of costly silks.
Dar. That too they have removed.
Cal. Dogs! infidels! 'tis more than was allowed.
Dar. And shall we not pursue them——Robbers! thieves!
That steal away themselves, and all they're worth,
And wrong the valiant soldier of his due!
Cal. [*Aside.*] The caliph shall know this—he shall, Abudah;
This is thy coward bargain—I renounce it.
Daran, we'll stop their march, and search.
Dar. And strip——
Cal. And kill.
Dar. That's well, And yet I fear
Abudah's Christian friend——
Cal. If possible,
He should not know of this, No,—nor Abudah.

By the seven heavens! his soul's a Christian too,
And 'tis by kindred instinct he thus saves
Their cursed lives, and taints our cause with mercy.
Dar. I knew my general would not suffer this;
Therefore I've troops prepared without the gate,
Just mounted for pursuit. Our Arab horse
Will in few minutes reach the place; yet still
I must repeat my doubts—that devil Phocyas
Will know it soon—I met him near the gate;
My nature sickens at him, and forebodes
I know not what of ill.
Cal. No more, away
With thy cold fears—we'll march this very instant,
And quickly make his thriftless conquest good:
The sword too has been wronged, and thirsts for blood. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A valley full of tents; baggage and harness lying up and down amongst them. The prospect terminating with palm trees and hills at a distance.*

Enter EUMENES, *with Officers, Attendants, and crowds of the people of Damascus.*

Eum. [*Entering*] Sleep on—and angels be thy guard!—soft slumber
Has gently stole her from her griefs awhile;
Let none approach the tent—Are out-guards placed
On yonder hills? [*To an Officer.*
Offi. They are.
Eum. [*Striking his breast.*] Damascus, O—
Still art thou here!—Let me intreat you, friends,
To keep strict order: I have no command,
And can but now advise you.
1st. Cit. You are still
Our head and leader.
2d. Cit. We resolve to obey you.
3d. Cit. We are all prepared to follow you.
Eum. I thank you.
The sun will soon go down upon our sorrows,
And 'till to-morrow's dawn this is our home:
Meanwhile, each as he can, forget his loss,
And bear the present lot—
Offi. Sir, I have marked
The camp's extent: it is stretched quite through the valley.
I think that more than half the city's here.
Eum. The prospect gives me much relief. I'm pleased,
My honest countrymen, to observe your numbers;
And yet it fills my eyes with tears—'Tis said
The mighty Persian wept, when he surveyed
His numerous army, but to think them mortal;
Yet he then flourished in prosperity.
Alas! what's that?—Prosperity!—a harlot,
That smiles but to betray! O shining ruin!
Thou nurse of passions, and thou bane of virtue!
O self-destroying monster! that art blind,
Yet putst out reason's eye, that still should guide thee—
Then plungeth down some precipice unseen,
And art no more!—Hear me, all-gracious Heaven!
Let me wear out my small remains of life,
Obscure, content with humble poverty,
Or in affliction's hard but wholesome school,
If it must be—I'll learn to know myself,
And that's more worth than empire. But, O Heaven,
Curse me no more with proud prosperity!
It has undone me!—Herbis! where, my friend,
Hast thou been this long hour?

Enter HERBIS.

Herb. On yonder summit,
To take a farewell prospect of Damascus.
Eum. And is it worth a look?
Herb. No—I've forgot it.
All our possessions are a grasp of air:
We're cheated whilst we think we hold them fast:
And when they're gone, we know that they were nothing.—
But I've a deeper wound.
Eum. Poor, good old man!
'Tis true—thy son—there thou'rt indeed unhappy.

Enter ARTAMON.

What Artamon!—art thou here, too?
Art. Yes, sir.
I never boasted much of my religion,
Yet I've some honour and a soldier's pride;
I like not these new lords.
Eum. Thou'rt brave and honest.
Nay, we'll not yet despair. A time may come,
When from these brute barbarians we may wrest
Once more our pleasant seats.—Alas! how soon
The flatterer, Hope, is ready with his song
To charm us to forgetfulness!—No more—
Let that be left to Heaven—See, Herbis, see,
Methinks we've here a goodly city yet.
Was it not thus our great forefathers lived,
In better times—in humble fields and tents,
With all their flocks and herds, their moving wealth?
See too, where our own Pharphar winds his stream
Through the long vale, as if to follow us,
And kindly offers his cool, wholesome draughts,
To ease us in our march!—Why this is plenty.

Enter EUDOCIA.

My daughter!—wherefore hast thou left thy tent?
What breaks so soon thy rest?
Eud. Rest is not there,
Or I have sought in vain, and cannot find it.
Oh no—we're wanderers, it is our doom;
There is no rest for us.

Eum. Thou art not well.
Eud. I would, if possible, avoid myself.
I'm better now, near you.
Eum. Near me! alas,
The tender vine so wreathes its folded arms
Around some falling elm—It wounds my heart
To think thou followest but to share my ruin.
I have lost all but thee.
Eud. O say not so.
You have lost nothing; no—you have preserved
Immortal wealth, your faith inviolate
To Heaven and to your country. Have you not
Refused to join with prosperous wicked men,
And hold from them a false inglorious greatness?
Ruin is yonder, in Damascus; now
The seat abhorred of cursed infidels.
Infernal error, like a plague, has spread
Contagion through its guilty palaces,
And we are fled from death.
Eum. Heroic maid!
Thy words are balsam to my griefs. Eudocia,
I never knew thee 'till this day; I knew not
How many virtues I had wronged in thee!
Eud. If you talk thus, you have not yet forgiven me.
Eum. Forgiven thee!—Why, for thee it is, thee only,
I think, heaven yet may look with pity on us;
Yes, we must all forgive each other now.
Poor Herbis too—we both have been to blame.
O, Phocyas!—but it cannot be recalled.
Yet were he here, we'd ask him pardon too.
My child!—I meant not to provoke thy tears.
Eud. [*Aside.*] O why is he not here? Why do I see
Thousands of happy wretches, that but seem
Undone, yet still are blest in innocence,
And why is he not one?

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Where is Eumenes?
Eum. What means thy breathless haste?
Offi. I fear there's danger:
For as I kept my watch, I spied afar
Thick clouds of dust, and on a nearer view
Perceived a body of Arabian horse
Moving this way. I saw them wind the hill,
And then lost sight of them.
Herb. I saw them too,
Where the roads meet on the other side these hills,
But took them for some band of Christian Arabs
Crossing the country.—This way did they move?
Offi. With utmost speed.
Eum. If they are Christian Arabs,
They come as friends; if other, we're secure
By the late terms. Retire a while, Eudocia,
Till I return. [*Exit Eudocia.*
I'll to the guard myself.
Soldier, lead on the way.

Enter another Officer.

2 *Offi.* Arm, arm! we're ruined?
The foe is in the camp.
Eum. So soon!
2 *Offi.* They've quitted
Their horses, and with sword in hand have forced
Our guard; they say they come for plunder.
Eum. Villains!
Sure Caled knows not of this treachery.
Come on—we can fight still. We'll make them know
What 'tis to urge the wretched to despair.
[*A noise of fighting is heard for some time.*

Enter DARAN, *with a party of Saracen Soldiers.*

Dar. Let the fools fight at distance——Here's the harvest.
Reap, reap, my countrymen!—Ay, there—first clear
Those further tents——
[*Looking between the Tents.*] What's here, a woman—fair
She seems, and well attired!——It shall be so,
I'll strip her first, and then——
[*Exit and returns with Eudocia.*
Eud. [*Struggling.*] Mercy! O spare me!
Help, save me!——What, no help!——Barbarian! Monster!
Heaven hear my cries!
Dar. Woman, thy cries are vain.
No help is near.

Enter PHOCYAS.

Pho. Villain, thou lyest! take that
To loose thy hold——
[*Pushing at him with his spear.*
Dar. What, thou? my evil spirit!
Is't thou that hauntest me still?—but thus I thrust thee,
[*Offering to strike him with his scimitar.*
It will not be——Lightning for ever blast
This coward arm that fails me!—O, vile Syrian,
[*Falls.*
I'm killed——O curse—— [*Dies.*
Pho. Die then; thy curses choak thee!——
Eudocia!
Eud. Phocyas!——O, astonishment!
Then is it thus that Heaven has heard my prayers?
I tremble still—and scarce have power to ask thee
How thou art here, or whence this sudden outrage?
Pho. [*Walking aside.*] The blood ebbs back that filled my heart, and now
Again her parting farewell awes my soul,
As it were fate, and not to be revoked.
Will she not now upbraid me? See thy friends!
Are these, are these the villains thou hast trusted?
Eud. What means this murmured sorrow to thyself?
Is it in vain that thou hast rescued me

From savage hands?—Say, what's the approaching danger?
Pho. Sure every angel watches o'er thy safety!
Thou see'st 'tis death to approach thee without awe,
And barbarism itself cannot profane thee.
Eud. Thou dost not answer; whence are these alarms?
Pho. Some stores removed, and not allowed by treaty,
Have drawn the Saracens to make a search.
Perhaps 'twill quickly be agreed——But, Oh!
Thou knowest, Eudocia, I'm a banished man,
And 'tis a crime I'm here once more before thee;
Else might I speak; 'twere better for the present
If thou would'st leave this place.
Eud. No——I have a father,
(And shall I leave him?) whom we both have wronged,
Or he had not been thus driven out, exposed
The humble tenant of this sheltering vale,
For one poor night's repose.——And yet, alas!
For this last act, how would I thank thee, Phocyas!—
I've nothing, now, but prayers and tears to give,
Cold, fruitless thanks!——But, 'tis some comfort yet,
That fate allows this short reprieve, that thus
We may behold each other, and once more
May mourn our woes, ere yet again we part——
Pho. For ever!
'Tis then resolved——It was thy cruel sentence,
And I am here to execute that doom.
Eud. What dost thou mean?
Pho. [*Kneeling.*] Thus at thy feet——
Eud. O rise!
Pho. Never——No, here I'll lay my burthen down;
I've tried it's weight, nor can support it longer.
Take thy last look; if yet thy eyes can bear
To look upon a wretch accurst, cast off
By Heaven and thee——A little longer yet,
And I am mingled with my kindred dust,
By thee forgotten, and the world——
Eud. Forbear,
O cruel man! Why wilt thou rack me thus?
Didst thou not mark—thou didst, when last we parted,
The pangs, the strugglings of my suffering soul;
That nothing but the hand of Heaven itself
Could ever drive me from thee!——Dost thou now
Reproach me thus? or canst thou have a thought
That I can e'er forgive thee?
Pho. [*Rising.*] Have a care!
I'll not be tortured more with thy false pity!
No, I renounce it. See, I am prepared.
[*Shewing a dagger.*
Thy cruelty is mercy now——Farewell!
And death is now but a release from torment!
Eud. Hold—Stay thee yet.—O madness of despair!
And wouldst thou die? Think, ere thou leap'st the gulph,
When thou hast trod that dark, that unknown way,
Canst thou return! What if the change prove worse?
O think, if then——
Pho. No——thought's my deadliest foe;
'Tis lingering racks, and slow consuming fires,
And therefore to the grave I'd fly to shun it!
Eud. O fatal error!——Like a restless ghost,
It will pursue and haunt thee still; even there,
Perhaps, in forms more frightful. Death's a name
By which poor guessing mortals are deceived;
'Tis no where to be found. Thou flyest in vain
From life, to meet again with that thou flyest.
How wilt thou curse thy rashness then? How start,
And shudder, and shrink back? yet how avoid
To put on thy new being?
Pho. I thank thee!
For now I'm quite undone——I gave up all
For thee before, but this; this bosom friend,
My last reserve—There——
[*Throws away the dagger.*
Tell me now, Eudocia,
Cut off from hope, denied the food of life,
And yet forbid to die, what am I now?
Or what will fate do with me?
Eud. Oh—— [*Turns away weeping.*
Pho. Thou weepest!
Canst thou shed tears, and yet not melt to mercy?
O say, ere yet returning madness seize me,
Is there in all futurity no prospect,
No distant comfort? Not a glimmering light
To guide me through this maze? Or must I now
Sit down in darkness and despair for ever?
[*Here they both continue silent for some time.*
Still thou art silent?—Speak, disclose my doom,
That's now suspended in this awful moment!
O speak——for now my passions wait thy voice:
My beating heart grows calm, my blood stands still.
Scarcely I live, or only live to hear thee.
Eud. If yet—but can it be!—I fear—O, Phocyas,
Let me be silent still!
Pho. Hear then this last,
This only prayer!—Heaven will consent to this.
Let me but follow thee, where'er thou goest,
But see thee, hear thy voice; be thou my angel,
To guide and govern my returning steps,
'Till long contrition and unwearied duty,
Shall expiate my guilt. Then say, Eudocia,
If, like a soul annealed in purging fires,
After whole years thou see'st me white again,
When thou, even thou shalt think——
Eud. No more——This shakes
My firmest thoughts, and if——
[*Here a cry is heard of persons slaughtered in the camp.*
——What shrieks of death!

I fear a treacherous foe have now
Begun a fatal harvest! Haste,
Prevent—O wouldst thou see me more with comfort,
Fly, save them, save the threatened lives of Christians,
My father and his friends! I dare not stay——
Heaven be my guide to shun this gathering ruin!
[*Exit Eudocia.*

Enter CALED.

Cal. [*Entering.*] So—slaughter, do thy work!
——These hands look well.
[*Looking on his hands.*
The jovial hunter, ere he quits the field,
First signs him in the stag's warm vital stream,
With stains like these, to show 'twas gallant sport.
Phocyas! Thou art met—But whether thou art here [*Comes forward.*
A friend or foe I know not; if a friend,
Which is Eumenes' tent?

Pho. Hold——pass no further.

Cal. Say'st thou, not pass?

Pho. No——on thy life no further.

Cal. What, dost thou frown too! sure thou knowest me not!

Pho. Not know thee! Yes, too well I know thee now,
O murderous fiend! Why all this waste of blood?
Didst thou not promise——

Cal. Promise! Insolence!
'Tis well, 'tis well—for now I know thee too.
Perfidious mongrel slave! Thou double traitor!
False to thy first and to thy latter vows!
Villain!

Pho. That's well—go on—I swear I thank thee.
Speak it again, and strike it through my ear!
A villain!—Yes, thou mad'st me so, thou devil!
And mind'st me now what to demand from thee.
Give, give me back my former self, my honour,
My country's fair esteem, my friends, my all—
Thou canst not—O thou robber!——Give me then
Revenge, or death! The last I well deserve,
That yielded up my soul's best wealth to thee,
For which accurst be thou, and cursed thy prophet!

Cal. Hearest thou this, Mahomet?——Blaspheming mouth!
For this thou soon shalt chew the bitter fruit
Of Zacon's tree, the food of fiends below.
Go—speed thee thither——
[*Pushing at him with his lance, which Phocias puts by, and kills him.*

Pho. Go thou first thyself.

Cal. [*Falling.*] O dog! thou gnawest my heart!
——False Mahomet!
Is this then my reward—O—— [*Dies.*

Pho. Thanks to the gods, I have revenged my country! [*Exit Phocyas.*

Several parties of Christians and Saracens pass over the farther end of the stage fighting.—The former are beaten. At last EUMENES *rallies them, and makes a stand. Then enters* ABUDAH *attended.*

Abu. Forbear, forbear, and sheath the bloody sword!

Eum. Abudah! Is this well?

Abu. No——I must own
You have cause—O Mussulmans, look here!
Behold
Where, like a broken spear, your arm of war
Is thrown to earth!

Eum. Ha! Caled?

Abu. Dumb and breathless.
Then thus has Heaven chastised us in thy fall,
And thee, for violated faith. Farewell,
Thou great, but cruel man!

Eum. His thirst of blood
In his own blood is quenched.

Abu. Bear hence his clay
Back to Damascus. Cast a mantle first
O'er this sad sight: so should we hide his faults.
Now hear, ye servants of the prophet, hear!
A greater death than this demands your tears,
For know, your lord the caliph is no more!
Good Abubeker has breathed out his spirit
To him that gave it. Yet your caliph lives,
Lives now in Omar. See, behold his signet,
Appointing me, such is his will, to lead
His faithful armies warring here in Syria.
Alas! foreknowledge sure of this event
Guided his choice! Obey me, then, your chief.
For you, O Christians! know, with speed I came,
On the first notice of this foul design,
Or to prevent it, or repair your wrongs.
Your goods shall be untouched, your persons safe.
Nor shall our troops, henceforth, on pain of death,
Molest your march. If more you ask, 'tis granted.

Eum. Still just and brave! thy virtues would adorn
A purer faith! Thou, better than thy sect,
That dar'st decline from that to acts of mercy!
Pardon, Abudah, if thy honest heart
Makes us even wish thee ours.

Abu. [*Aside.*] O, Power Supreme!
That mad'st my heart, and know'st its inmost frame!
If yet I err, O lead me into truth,
Or pardon unknown error!—Now, Eumenes,
Friends as we may be, let us part in peace.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

Enter ARTAMON *and* EUDOCIA.

Eud. Alas! but is my father safe?

Art. Heaven knows.
I left him just preparing to engage;
When doubtful of the event he bade me haste
To warn his dearest daughter of the danger,
And aid your speedy flight.

Eud. My flight! but whither?
O no—if he is lost——
Art. I hope not so.
The noise is ceased. Perhaps they are beaten off.
We soon shall know; here's one that can inform us.

Enter first Officer.

Soldier, thy looks speak well. What says thy tongue?
1 *Offi.* The foe's withdrawn; Abudah has been here,
And has renewed the terms. Caled is killed—
Art. Hold—first thank Heaven for that!
Eud. Where is Eumenes?
1 *Offi.* I left him well; by his command I came
To search you out; and let you know this news.
I've more; but that——
Art. Is bad, perhaps; so says
This sudden pause. Well, be it so; let us know it,
'Tis but life's chequered lot.
1 *Offi.* Eumenes mourns
[*They withdraw to one side of the stage.*
A friend's unhappy fall; Herbis is slain;
A settled gloom seemed to hang heavy on him,
The effect of grief, 'tis thought, for his lost son.
When, on the first attack, like one that sought
The welcome means of death, with desperate valour
He pressed the foe, and met the fate he wished.
Art. See, where Eumenes comes!——What's this? He seems
To lead some wounded friend——Alas! 'tis—

Enter Eumenes *leading in* Phocyas, *with an arrow in his breast.*

Eum. Give me thy wound! O I could bear it for thee!
This goodness melts my heart. What! in a moment
Forgetting all thy wrongs, in kind embraces
To exchange forgiveness thus!
Pho. Moments are few,
And must not now be wasted. O, Eumenes,
Lend me thy helping hand a little farther;
O where, where is she? [*They advance.*
Eum. Look, look here, Eudocia!
Behold a sight that calls for all our tears!
Eud. Phocyas, and wounded!—O what cruel hand—
Pho. No, 'twas a kind one——Spare thy tears, Eudocia!
For mine are tears of joy.
Eud. Is't possible?
Pho. 'Tis done——the powers supreme have heard my prayer,
And prospered me with one fair deed this day.
I've fought once more, and for my friends, my country.
By me the treacherous chiefs are slain; a while
I stopped the foe, till, warned by me before
Of this their sudden march, Abudah came;
But first this random shaft had reached my breast.
Life's mingled scene is o'er——'tis thus that Heaven
At once chastises, and, I hope, accepts me;
And now I wake as from the sleep of death.
Eud. What shall I say to thee to give thee comfort?
Pho. Say only thou forgiv'st me——O, Eudocia!
No longer now my dazzled eyes behold thee
Through passion's mists; my soul now gazes on thee,
And sees thee lovelier in unfading charms!
Bright as the shining angel host that stood—
Whilst I——but there it smarts——
Eud. Look down, look down,
Ye pitying powers, and help his pious sorrow!
Eum. 'Tis not too late, we hope, to give thee help.
See! yonder is my tent: we'll lead thee thither;
Come, enter there, and let thy wound be dressed.
Perhaps it is not mortal.
Pho. No! not mortal!
No flattery now. By all my hopes hereafter,
For the world's empire I'd not lose this death!
Alas! I but keep in my fleeting breath
A few short moments, till I have conjured you
That to the world you witness my remorse
For my past errors, and defend my fame.
For know——soon as this pointed steel's drawn out,
Life follows through the wound.
Eud. What dost thou say?
O touch not yet the broken springs of life!
A thousand tender thoughts rise in my soul.
How shall I give them words! Oh, till this hour
I scarce have tasted woe!——this is indeed
To part——but, oh!——
Pho. No more——death is now painful!
But say, my friends, whilst I have breath to ask,
(For still methinks all your concerns are mine)
Whither have you designed to bend your journey?
Eum. Constantinople is my last retreat,
If Heaven indulge my wish; there I've resolved
To wear out the dark winter of my life,
An old man's stock of days.—I hope not many.
Eud. There will I dedicate myself to Heaven.
O, Phocyas, for thy sake, no rival else
Shall e'er possess my heart. My father too
Consents to this my vow. My vital flame
There, like a taper on the holy altar,
Shall waste away; till Heaven relenting hears
Incessant prayers for thee and for myself,
And wing my soul to meet with thine in bliss.
For in that thought I find a sudden hope,
As if inspired, springs in my breast, and tells me,
That thy repenting frailty is forgiven,
And we shall meet again, to part no more.
Pho. [*Plucking out the arrow.*] Then all is done
——'twas the last pang——at length——
I've given up thee, and the world now is—nothing.

Eum. Alas! he falls. Help, Artamon, support him.
Look how he bleeds! Let's lay him gently down.
Night gathers fast upon him——so——look up,
Or speak, if thou hast life—Nay then—my daughter!
She faints—Help there, and bear her to her tent.
[*Eudocia faints away.*
Art. [*Weeping aside.*] I thank ye, eyes! This is but decent tribute.
My heart was full before.
Eum. O Phocyas, Phocyas!
Alas! he hears not now, nor sees my sorrows!
Yet will I mourn for thee, thou gallant youth!
As for a son——so let me call thee now—
A much-wronged friend, and an unhappy hero!
A fruitless zeal, yet all I now can show;
Tears vainly flow for errors learnt too late,
When timely caution should prevent our fate.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

REVENGE.

BY

YOUNG.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DON ALONZO, *the Spanish General.*
DON CARLOS, *his friend.*
DON ALVAREZ, a courtier.
DON MANUEL, *attendant of Don Carlos.*
ZANGA, *a captive Moor.*

WOMEN.

LEONORA, *Alvarez's daughter.*
ISABELLA, *the Moor's mistress.*

Scene—Spain.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Battlements, with a Sea Prospect.*

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. WHETHER first nature, or long want of peace,
Has wrought my mind to this, I cannot tell:
But horrors now are not displeasing to me:
[*Thunder.*
I like this rocking of the battlements.
Rage on, ye winds! burst, clouds, and waters roar!
You bear a just resemblance of my fortune,
And suit the gloomy habit of my soul.

Enter ISABELLA.

Who's there? My love!
Isa. Why have you left my bed?
Your absence more affrights me than the storm.
Zan. The dead alone, in such a night, can rest,
And I indulge my meditation here.
Woman, away. I chuse to be alone.
Isa. I know you do, and therefore will not leave you;
Excuse me, Zanga, therefore dare not leave you.
Is this a night for walks of contemplation?
Something unusual hangs upon your heart,
And I will know it; by our loves I will.
To you I sacrificed my virgin fame;
Ask I too much to share in your distress?
Zan. In tears? Thou fool! then hear me, and be plunged
In hell's abyss, if ever it escape thee.
To strike thee with astonishment at once,
I hate Alonzo. First recover that,
And then thou shalt hear farther.
Isa. Hate Alonzo!
I own, I thought Alonzo most your friend,
And that he lost the master in that name.
Zan. Hear then. 'Tis twice three years since that great man
(Great let me call him, for he conquered me)
Made me the captive of his arm in fight.
He slew my father, and threw chains o'er me,
While I, with pious rage, pursued revenge.
I then was young; he placed me near his person,
And thought me not dishonoured by his service.
One day, (may that returning day be night,

The stain, the curse, of each succeeding year!)
For something, or for nothing, in his pride
He struck me—While I tell it, do I live?
He smote me on the cheek—I did not stab him,
For that were poor revenge——E'er since, his folly
Has strove to bury it beneath a heap
Of kindnesses, and thinks it is forgot.
Insolent thought! and like a second blow!
Affronts are innocent, where men are worthless;
And such alone can wisely drop revenge.
Isa. But with more temper, Zanga, tell your story;
To see your strong emotions startles me.
Zan. Yes, woman, with the temper that befits it.
Has the dark adder venom? So have I,
When trod upon. Proud Spaniard, thou shalt feel me!
For from that day, that day of my dishonour,
I from that day have cursed the rising sun,
Which never failed to tell me of my shame.
I from that day have blessed the coming night,
Which promised to conceal it; but in vain;
The blow returned for ever in my dream.
Yet on I toiled, and groaned for an occasion
Of ample vengeance; none is yet arrived.
Howe'er, at present I conceive warm hopes
Of what may wound him sore in his ambition,
Life of his life, and dearer than his soul.
By nightly march he purposed to surprise
The Moorish camp; but I have taken care
They shall be ready to receive his favour.
Failing in this, a cast of utmost moment,
Would darken all the conquests he has won.
Isa. Just as I entered, an express arrived.
Zan. To whom?
Isa. His friend, Don Carlos.
Zan. Be propitious,
Oh! Mahomet, on this important hour,
And give, at length, my famished soul revenge!
What is revenge, but courage to call in
Our honour's debts, and wisdom to convert
Others' self-love into our own protection?
But see, the morning dawns;
I'll seek Don Carlos, and enquire my fate.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Palace.*

Enter Don MANUEL *and Don* CARLOS.

Man. My lord don Carlos, what brings your express?
Car. Alonzo's glory, and the Moors' defeat.
The field is strewed with twice ten thousand slain,
Though he suspects his measures were betrayed.
He'll soon arrive. Oh, how I long to embrace
The first of heroes, and the best of friends!
I loved fair Leonora long before
The chance of battle gave me to the Moors,
From whom so late Alonzo set me free;
And while I groaned in bondage, I deputed
This great Alonzo, whom her father honours,
To be my gentle advocate in love,
To stir her heart, and fan its fires for me.
Man. And what success?
Car. Alas, the cruel maid——
Indeed her father, who, though high at court,
And powerful with the king, has wealth at heart,
To heal his devastation from the Moors,
Knowing I am richly freighted from the east,
My fleet now sailing in the sight of Spain,
(Heaven guard it safe through such a dreadful storm!)
Caresses me, and urges her to wed.
Man. Her aged father, see,
Leads her this way.
Car. She looks like radiant Truth,
Brought forward by the hand of hoary Time——
You to the port with speed, 'tis possible
Some vessel is arrived. Heaven grant it bring
Tidings, which Carlos may receive with joy!

Enter Don ALVAREZ *and* LEONORA.

Alv. Don Carlos, I am labouring in your favour,
With all a parent's soft authority,
And earnest counsel.
Car. Angels second you!
For all my bliss or misery hangs on it.
Alv. Daughter, the happiness of life depends
On our discretion, and a prudent choice;
Look into those they call unfortunate,
And, closer viewed, you will find they are unwise:
Some flaw in their own conduct lies beneath,
And 'tis the trick of fools, to save their credit,
Which brought another language into use.
Don Carlos is of ancient, noble blood,
And then his wealth might mend a prince's fortune.
For him the sun is labouring in the mines,
A faithful slave, and turning earth to gold.
His keels are freighted with that sacred power,
By which even kings and emperors are made.
Sir, you have my good wishes, and I hope
[*To Carlos.*
My daughter is not indisposed to hear you. [*Exit.*
Car. Oh, Leonora! why art thou in tears?
Because I am less wretched than I was?
Before your father gave me leave to woo you,
Hushed was your bosom, and your eyes serene.
Will you for ever help me to new pains,
And keep reserves of torment in your hand,
To let them loose on every dawn of joy?
Leon. Think you my father too indulgent to me,
That he claims no dominion o'er my tears?
A daughter sure may be right dutiful,
Whose tears alone are free from a restraint.
Car. Ah, my torn heart!
Leon. Regard not me, my lord;
I shall obey my father.
Car. Disobey him,

Rather than come thus coldly, than come thus
With absent eyes, and alienated mien,
Suffering address, the victim of my love.
Oh, let me be undone the common way,
And have the common comfort to be pitied,
And not be ruined in the mask of bliss,
And so be envied, and be wretched too!
Love calls for love. Not all the pride of beauty,
Those eyes that tell us what the sun is made of,
Those lips, whose touch is to be bought with life,
Those hills of driven snow, which seen are felt;
All these, possessed, are nought, but as they are
The proof, the substance of an inward passion,
And the rich plunder of a taken heart.

Leon. Alas, my lord, we are too delicate:
And when we grasp the happiness we wished,
We call on wit to argue it away:
A plainer man would not feel half your pains:
But some have too much wisdom to be happy.

Car. Had I known this before, it had been well:
I had not then solicited your father
To add to my distress; as you behave,
Your father's kindness stabs me to the heart.
Give me your hand—nay, give it, Leonora:
You give it not—nay, yet you give it not—
I ravish it.

Leon. I pray, my lord, no more.

Car. Ah, why so sad? You know each sigh does shake me:
Sighs there, are tempests here.
I have heard, bad men would be unblest in Heaven:
What is my guilt, that makes me so with you?
Have I not languished prostrate at thy feet?
Have I not lived whole days upon thy sight?
Have I not seen thee where thou hast not been?
And, mad with the idea, clasped the wind,
And doated upon nothing?

Leon. Court me not,
Good Carlos, by recounting of my faults,
And telling how ungrateful I have been.
Alas, my lord, if talking would prevail,
I could suggest much better arguments
Than those regards you threw away on me;
Your valour, honour, wisdom, praised by all.
But bid physicians talk our veins to temper,
And with an argument new-set a pulse;
Then think, my lord, of reasoning into love.

Car. Must I despair then? Do not shake me thus:
My tempest-beaten heart is cold to death;
Ah, turn, and let me warm me in thy beauties!
Heavens! what a proof I gave, but two nights past,
Of matchless love! To fling me at thy feet,
Slighted friendship, and I flew from fame,
Nor heard the summons of the next day's battle:
But darting headlong to thy arms, I left
The promised fight, I left Alonzo too,
To stand the war, and quell a world alone.
[*Trumpets.*

Leon. The victor comes. My lord, I must withdraw.

Car. And must you go?

Leon. Why should you wish me stay?
Your friend's arrival will bring comfort to you,
My presence none; it pains you and myself;
For both our sakes, permit me to withdraw.
[*Exit.*

Car. Sure, there is no peril but in love. Oh, how
My foes would boast to see me look so pale!

Enter Don ALONZO.

Car. Alonzo!

Alon. Carlos! I am whole again;
Clasped in thy arms, it makes my heart entire.

Car. Whom dare I thus embrace? The conqueror
Of Afric?

Alon. Yes, much more—Don Carlos' friend.
The conquest of the world would cost me dear,
Should it beget one thought of distance in thee.
I rise in virtues to come nearer to thee,
I conquer with Don Carlos in my eye,
And thus I claim my victory's reward.
[*Embracing him.*

Car. A victory indeed! your godlike arm
Has made one spot the grave of Africa;
Such numbers fell! and the survivors fled,
As frighted passengers from off the strand,
When the tempestuous sea comes roaring on them.

Alon. 'Twas Carlos conquered, 'twas his cruel chains
Inflamed me to a rage unknown before,
And threw my former actions far behind.

Car. I love fair Leonora. How I love her!
Yet still I find (I know not how it is)
Another heart, another soul for thee.
Thy friendship warms, it raises, it transports
Like music, pure the joy, without allay,
Whose very rapture is tranquillity:
But love, like wine, gives a tumultuous bliss,
Heightened, indeed, beyond all mortal pleasures,
But mingles pangs and madness in the bowl.

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. Manuel, my lord, returning from the port,
On business both of moment and of haste,
Humbly begs leave to speak in private with you.

Car. In private! Ha! Alonzo, I will return;
No business can detain me long from thee. [*Exit.*

Zan. My lord Alonzo, I obeyed your orders.

Alon. Will the fair Leonora pass this way?

Zan. She will, my lord, and soon.

Alon. Come near me, Zanga;
For I dare open all my heart to thee.
Never was such a day of triumph known!
There's not a wounded captive in my train,
That slowly followed my proud chariot wheels,
With half a life, and beggary, and chains,

But is a god to me: I am most wretched.
In his captivity thou know'st, Don Carlos,
My friend, (and never was a friend more dear)
Deputed me his advocate in love,
To talk to Leonora's heart, and make
A tender party in her thoughts for him.
What did I do? I loved myself. Indeed,
One thing there is might lessen my offence,
(If such offence admits of being lessened)
I thought him dead; for (by what fate I know not)
His letters never reached me.
Zan. Thanks to Zanga,
Who thence contrived that evil which has happened. [*Aside.*
Alon. Yes, cursed of Heaven! I loved myself, and now,
In a late action, rescued from the Moors,
I have brought home my rival in my friend.
Zan. We hear, my lord, that in that action too,
Your interposing arm preserved his life.
Alon. It did—with more than the expence of mine;
For, Oh, this day is mentioned for their nuptials.
But see, she comes—I will take my leave, and die.
Zan. Hadst thou a thousand lives, thy death would please me.
Unhappy fate! My country overcome!
My six years hope of vengeance quite expired!
Would nature were——I will not fall alone:
But others' groans shall tell the world my death.
[*Aside, and exit.*

Enter LEONORA.

Alon. When nature ends with anguish like to this,
Sinners shall take their last leave of the sun,
And bid his light adieu.
Leon. The mighty conqueror
Dismayed! I thought you gave the foe your sorrows.
Alon. Oh, cruel insult! Are those tears your sport,
Which nothing but a love for you could draw?
Afric I quelled, in hope by that to purchase
Your leave to sigh unscorned; but I complain not;
'Twas but a world, and you are—Leonora.
Leon. That passion, which you boast of, is your guilt,
A treason to your friend. You think mean of me,
To plead your crimes as motives of my love.
Alon. You, madam, ought to thank those crimes you blame;
'Tis they permit you to be thus inhuman,
Without the censure both of earth and heaven—
I fondly thought a last look might be kind.
Farewell for ever. This severe behaviour
Has, to my comfort, made it sweet to die.
Leon. Farewell for ever! Sweet to die! Oh, Heaven! [*Aside.*

Alonzo, stay; you must not thus escape me;
But hear your guilt at large.
Alon. Oh, Leonora!
What could I do! In duty to my friend,
I saw you; and to see is to admire.
For Carlos did I plead, and most sincerely.
Witness the thousand agonies it cost me!
You know I did. I sought but your esteem;
If that is guilt, an angel had been guilty.
I often sighed, nay, wept, but could not help it:
And sure it is no crime to be in pain.
But grant my crime was great; I am greatly cursed;
What would you more? Am I not most undone?
This usage is like stamping on the murdered,
When life is fled; most barbarous and unjust.
Leon. If from your guilt none suffered but yourself,
It might be so——Farewell. [*Going.*
Alon. Who suffers with me?
Leon. Enjoy your ignorance, and let me go.
Alon. Alas! what is there I can fear to know,
Since I already know your hate? Your actions
Have long since told me that.
Leon. They flattered you.
Alon. How! flattered me!
Leon. Oh, search in fate no farther!
I hate thee—Oh, Alonzo, how I hate thee!
Alon. Indeed! and do you weep for hatred too!
Oh, what a doubtful torment heaves my heart!
I hope it most, and yet I dread it more.
Should it be so—should her tears flow from thence,
How would my soul blaze up in ecstacy!
Ah no! how sink into the depth of horrors!
Leon. Why would you force my stay?
Alon. What mean these tears?
Leon. I weep by chance; nor have my tears a meaning.
But Oh! when first I saw Alonzo's tears,
I knew their meaning well!
[Alon. *falls passionately on his knees, and takes her hand.*
Alon. Heavens! what is this? That excellence, for which
Desire was planted in the heart of man;
Virtue's supreme reward on this side Heaven;
The cordial of my soul—and this destroys me—
Indeed, I flattered me that thou didst hate.
Leon. Alonzo, pardon me the injury
Of loving you. I struggled with my passion,
And struggled long: let that be some excuse.
Alon. Unkind, you know I think your love a blessing
Beyond all human blessings! 'tis the price
Of sigh and groans, and a whole year of dying.
But Oh! the curse of curses!——Oh, my friend!——
Leon. Alas!
Alon. What says my love? Speak, Leonora.
Leon. Was it for you, my lord, to be so quick

In finding out objections to our love?
Think you so strong my love, or weak my virtue,
It was unsafe to leave that part to me?

Alon. Is not the day, then, fixed for your espousals?

Leon. Indeed, my father once had thoughts that way;
But, marking how the marriage pained my heart,
Long he stood doubtful; but at last resolved,
Your counsel, which determines him in all,
Should finish the debate.

Alon. Oh, agony!
Must I not only lose her, but be made
Myself the instrument? Not only die,
But plunge the dagger in my heart myself?
This is refining on calamity.

Leon. What! do you tremble lest you should be mine?
For what else can you tremble? Not for that
My father places in your power to alter.

Alon. What's in my power? Oh, yes; to stab my friend!

Leon. To stab your friend were barbarous indeed!
Spare him—and murder me. I own, Alonzo,
You well may wonder at such words as these.
I start at them myself; they fright my nature.
Great is my fault; but blame me not alone:
Give him a little blame who took such pains
To make me guilty.

Alon. Torment! [*After a pause, Leon. speaks.*

Leon. Oh, my shame!
I sue, and sue in vain: it is most just,
When women sue, they sue to be denied.
You hate me, you despise me! you do well;
For what I've done I hate and scorn myself.
Oh, night, fall on me! I shall blush to death.

Alon. First perish all!

Leon. Say, what have you resolved?
My father comes; what answer will you give him?

Alon. What answer! let me look upon that face,
And read it there.—Devote thee to another!
Not to be borne! a second look undoes me.

Leon. And why undo you? Is it then, my lord,
So terrible to yield to your own wishes,
Because they happen to concur with mine?
Cruel! to take such pains to win a heart,
Which you was conscious you must break with parting.

Alon. No, Leonora, I am thine for ever,
[*Runs and embraces her.*
In spite of Carlos—Ha! who's that? My friend?
[*Starts wide from her.*

Alas, I see him pale! I hear him groan!
He foams, he tears his hair, he raves, he bleeds,
(I know him by myself) he dies distracted!

Leon. How dreadful to be cut from what we love!

Alon. Ah, speak no more!

Leon. And tied to what we hate!

Alon. Oh!

Leon. Is it possible?

Alon. Death!

Leon. Can you?

Alon. Oh——
Yes, take a limb; but let my virtue 'scape.
Alas, my soul, this moment I die for thee!
[*Breaks away.*

Leon. And are you perjured then for virtue's sake?
How often have you sworn!—but go, for ever.
[*Swoons.*

Alon. Heart of my heart, and essence of my joy!
Where art thou!—Oh, I'm thine, and thine for ever!
The groans of friendship shall be heard no more.
For whatsoever crime I can commit,
I've felt the pains already.

Leon. Hold, Alonzo,
And hear a maid whom doubly thou hast conquered.
I love thy virtue as I love thy person,
And I adore thee for the pains it gave me;
But as I felt the pains, I'll reap the fruit;
I'll shine out in my turn, and shew the world
Thy great example was not lost upon me.
Be it enough that I have once been guilty;
In sight of such a pattern, to persist,
Ill suits a person honoured with your love.
My other titles to that bliss are weak;
I must deserve it by refusing it.
Thus then I tear me from thy hopes for ever.
Shall I contribute to Alonzo's crimes?
No, though the life-blood gushes from my heart,
You shall not be ashamed of Leonora;
Or that late time may put our names together.
Nay, never shrink; take back the bright example
You lately lent; Oh, take it while you may,
While I can give it you, and be immortal!
[*Exit.*

Alon. She's gone, and I shall see that face no more;
But pine in absence, and till death adore.
When with cold dew my fainting brow is hung,
And my eyes darken, from my faultering tongue
Her name will tremble with a feeble moan,
And love with fate divide my dying groan.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter Don MANUEL *and* ZANGA.

Zan. IF this be true, I cannot blame your pain
For wretched Carlos; 'tis but human in you.
But when arrived your dismal news?
Man. This hour.
Zan. What, not a vessel saved?
Man. All, all the storm
Devoured; and now o'er his late envied fortune
The dolphins bound, and watery mountains roar,
Triumphant in his ruin.
Zan. Is Alvarez
Determined to deny his daughter to him?
That treasure was on shore; must that too join
The common wreck?
Man. Alvarez pleads, indeed,
That Leonora's heart is disinclined,
And pleads that only; so it was this morning,
When he concurred: the tempest broke the match,
And sunk his favour, when it sunk the gold.
The love of gold is double in his heart,
The vice of age, and of Alvarez too.
Zan. How does Don Carlos bear it?
Man. Like a man,
Whose heart feels most a human heart can feel,
And reasons best a human heart can reason.
Zan. But is he then in absolute despair?
Man. Never to see his Leonora more.
And, quite to quench all future hope, Alvarez
Urges Alonzo to espouse his daughter
This very day; for he has learnt their loves.
Zan. Ha! was not that received with ecstacy
By Don Alonzo?
Man. Yes, at first; but soon
A damp came o'er him, it would kill his friend.
Zan. Not if his friend consented: and since now
He cannot himself espouse her——
Man. Yet, to ask it
Has something shocking to a generous mind;
At least, Alonzo's spirit startles at it.
Wide is the distance between our despair,
And giving up a mistress to another.
But I must leave you. Carlos wants support
In his severe affliction. [*Exit.*
Zan. Ha, it dawns!——
It rises to me, like a new-found world
To mariners long time distressed at sea,
Sore from a storm, and all their viands spent;
Or like the sun just rising out of chaos,
Some dregs of ancient night not quite purged off.
But I shall finish it.——Hoa, Isabella!

Enter ISABELLA.

I thought of dying; better things come forward;
Vengeance is still alive; from her dark covert,
With all her snakes erect upon her crest,
She stalks in view, and fires me with her charms.
When, Isabella, arrived Don Carlos here?
Isa. Two nights ago.
Zan. That was the very night
Before the battle—Memory, set down that;
It has the essence of the crocodile,
Though yet but in the shell—I'll give it birth——
What time did he return?
Isa. At midnight.
Zan. So———
Say, did he see that night his Leonora?
Isa. No, my good lord.
Zan. No matter—tell me, woman,
Is not Alonzo rather brave than cautious,
Honest than subtle, above fraud himself,
Slow, therefore, to suspect it in another?
Isa. You best can judge; but so the world thinks of him.
Zan. Why, that was well—go, fetch my tablets hither. [*Exit Isa.*
Two nights ago my father's sacred shade
Thrice stalked around my bed, and smiled upon me;
He smiled a joy then little understood——
It must be so—and if so, it is vengeance
Worth waking of the dead for.

Re-enter ISABELLA *with the tablets;* ZANGA *writes, then reads as to himself.*

Thus it stands———
The father's fixed—Don Carlos cannot wed——
Alonzo may——but that will hurt his friend——
Nor can he ask his leave—or, if he did,
He might not gain it—It is hard to give
Our own consent to ills, though we must bear them.
Were it not then a master-piece, worth all
The wisdom I can boast, first to persuade
Alonzo to request it of his friend,
His friend to grant—then from that very grant,
The strongest proof of friendship man can give,
(And other motives) to work out a cause
Of jealousy, to rack Alonzo's peace?——
I have turned o'er the catalogue of human woes,
Which sting the heart of man, and find none equal.
It is the Hydra of calamities,
The seven-fold death; the jealous are the damned
Oh, jealousy, each other passion's calm
To thee, thou conflagration of the soul!
Thou king of torments, thou grand counterpoise
For all the transports beauty can inspire!
Isa. Alonzo comes this way.
Zan. Most opportunely.
Withdraw—Ye subtle dæmons, which reside
In courts, and do your work with bows and smiles,
That little enginery, more mischievous
[*Exit Isa.*

Than fleets and armies, and the cannon's murder,
Teach me to look a lie; give me your maze
Of gloomy thought and intricate design,
To catch the man I hate, and then devour.

Enter Don ALONZO.

My lord, I give you joy.
Alon. Of what, good Zanga?
Zan. Is not the lovely Leonora yours?
Alon. What will become of Carlos?
Zan. He's your friend;
And since he can't espouse the fair himself,
Will take some comfort from Alonzo's fortune.
Alon. Alas, thou little know'st the force of love!
Love reigns a sultan with unrivalled sway;
Puts all relations, friendship's self to death,
If once he's jealous of it. I love Carlos;
Yet well I know what pangs I felt this morning
At his intended nuptials. For myself
I then felt pains, which now for him I feel.
Zan. You will not wed her then?
Alon. Not instantly.
Insult his broken heart the very moment!
Zan. I understand you: but you'll wed hereafter,
When your friend's gone, and his first pain assuaged.
Alon. Am I to blame in that?
Zan. My lord, I love
Your very errors; they are born from virtue.
Your friendship (and what nobler passion claims
The heart?) does lead you blindfold to your ruin.
Consider, wherefore did Alvarez break
Don Carlos' match, and wherefore urge Alonzo's?
'Twas the same cause, the love of wealth. To-morrow
May see Alonzo in Don Carlos' fortune;
A higher bidder is a better friend,
And there are princes sigh for Leonora.
When *your* friend's gone you'll wed; why, then, the cause,
Which gives you Leonora now, will cease.
Carlos has lost her; should you lose her too,
Why, then you heap new torments on your friend,
By that respect which laboured to relieve him—
'Tis well—he is disturbed; it makes him pause.
[*Aside.*
Alon. Think'st thou, my Zanga, should I ask Don Carlos,
His goodness would consent that I should wed *her?*
Zan. I know it would.
Alon. But then the cruelty
To ask it, and for me to ask it of him!
Zan. Methinks you are severe upon your friend.
Who was it gave him liberty and life?
Alon. That is the very reason which forbids it.
Were I a stranger I could freely speak:
In me it so resembles a demand,
Exacting of a debt, it shocks my nature.
Zan. My lord, you know the sad alternative.
Is Leonora worth one pang or not?
It hurts not me, my lord, but as I love you:
Warmly as you I wish Don Carlos well;
But I am likewise Don Alonzo's friend:
There all the difference lies between us two.
In me, my lord, you hear another self;
And, give me leave to add, a better too,
Cleared from those errors, which, though caused by virtue,
Are such as may hereafter give you pain——
Don Lopez of Castile would not demur thus.
Alon. Perish the name! What, sacrifice the fair
To age and ugliness, because set in gold?
I'll to Don Carlos, if my heart will let me.
I have not seen him since his sore affliction;
But shunned it, as too terrible to bear.
How shall I bear it now? I'm struck already.
[*Exit.*
Zan. Half of my work is done. I must secure
Don Carlos, ere Alonzo speak with him.
[*He gives a message to a servant, then returns.*
Proud hated Spain, oft drenched in Moorish blood!
Dost thou not feel a deadly foe within thee?
Shake not thy towers where'er I pass along,
Conscious of ruin, and their great destroyer?
Shake to the centre, if Alonzo's dear!
Look down, oh, holy prophet! see me torture
This Christian dog, this infidel, who dares
To smite thy votaries, and spurn thy law;
And yet hopes pleasure from two radiant eyes,
Which look as they were lighted up for thee!
Shall he enjoy thy paradise below?
Blast the bold thought, and curse him with her charms!
But see, the melancholy lover comes.

Enter Don CARLOS.

Car. Hope, thou hast told me lies from day to day,
For more than twenty years; vile promiser!
None here are happy, but the very fool,
Or very wise; and I wasn't fool enough
To smile in vanities, and hug a shadow;
Nor have I wisdom to elaborate
An artificial happiness from pains:
Even joys are pains, because they cannot last.
[*Sighs.*
Yet much is talked of bliss; it is the art
Of such as have the world in their possession,
To give it a good name, that fools may envy;
For envy to small minds is flattery.
How many lift the head, look gay, and smile
Against their consciences! and this we know,
Yet, knowing, disbelieve, and try again
What we have tried, and struggle with conviction.
Each new experience gives the former credit;
And reverend grey threescore is but a voucher,
That thirty told us true.
Zan. My noble lord,
I mourn your fate; But are no hopes surviving?

Car. No hopes. Alvarez has a heart of steel.
'Tis fixed—'tis past—'tis absolute despair!
Zan. You wanted not to have your heart made tender,
By your own pains, to feel a friend's distress.
Car. I understand you well. Alonzo loves;
I pity him.
Zan. I dare be sworn you do.
Yet he has other thoughts.
Car. What canst thou mean?
Zan. Indeed he has; and fears to ask a favour
A stranger from a stranger might request;
What costs you nothing, yet is all to him:
Nay, what indeed will to your glory add,
For nothing more than wishing your friend well.
Car. I pray, be plain; his happiness is mine.
Zan. He loves to death; but so reveres his friend,
He can't persuade his heart to wed the maid
Without your leave, and that he fears to ask.
In perfect tenderness I urged him to it.
Knowing the deadly sickness of his heart,
Your overflowing goodness to your friend,
Your wisdom, and despair yourself to wed her,
I wrung a promise from him he would try:
And now I come, a mutual friend to both,
Without his privacy, to let you know it,
And to prepare you kindly to receive him.
Car. Ha! if he weds I am undone indeed;
Not Don Alvarez' self can then relieve me.
Zan Alas, my lord, you know his heart is steel:
'Tis fixed, 'tis past, 'tis absolute despair.
Car. Oh, cruel Heaven! and is it not enough
That I must never, never see him more?
Say, is it not enough that I must die;
But I must be tormented in the grave?—
Ask my consent!—Must I then give her to him?
Lead to his nuptial sheets the blushing maid?
Oh!——Leonora! never, never, never!
Zan. A storm of plagues upon him! he refuses. [*Aside.*
Car. What, wed her?—and to-day?
Zan. To-day, or never.
To-morrow may some wealthier lover bring,
And then Alonzo is thrown out like you:
Then whom shall he condemn for his misfortune?
Carlos is an Alvarez to his love.
Car. Oh, torment! whither shall I turn?
Zan. To peace.
Car. Which is the way?
Zan. His happiness is yours——
I dare not disbelieve you.
Car. Kill my friend!
Or worse——Alas! and can there be a worse?
A worse there is; nor can my nature bear it.
Zan. You have convinced me 'tis a dreadful task.
I find Alonzo's quitting her this morning
For Carlos' sake, in tenderness to you,
Betrayed me to believe it less severe
Than I perceive it is.
Car. Thou dost upbraid me.
Zan. No, my good lord; but since you cant comply,
'Tis my misfortune that I mentioned it;
For had I not, Alonzo would indeed
Have died, as now, but not by your decree.
Car. By my decree! Do I decree his death?
I do——Shall I then lead her to his arms?
Oh, which side shall I take? Be stabbed, or—stab?
'Tis equal death! a choice of agonies?——
Ah, no! all other agonies are ease
To one——Oh, Leonora! never, never!
Go, Zanga, go, defer the dreadful trial,
Though but a day; something, perchance, may happen
To soften all to friendship and to love.
Go, stop my friend, let me not see him now;
But save us from an interview of death.
Zan. My lord, I am bound in duty to obey you——
If I not bring him, may Alonzo prosper! [*Exit.*
Car. What is this world? Thy school, Oh misery!
Our only lesson is to learn to suffer;
And he, who knows not that, was born for nothing.
Though deep my pangs, and heavy at my heart,
My comfort is, each moment takes away
A grain, at least, from the dead load that's on me,
And gives a nearer prospect of the grave.
But put it most severely—should I live—
Live long—alas, there is no length in time!
Not in thy time, Oh man!—What's fourscore years?
Nay, what, indeed, the age of time itself,
Since cut from out eternity's wide round?
Away, then!——To a mind resolved and wise,
There is an impotence in misery,
Which makes me smile, when all its shafts are in me.
Yet Leonora——she can make time long,
Its nature alter, as she altered mine.
While in the lustre of her charms I lay,
Whole summer suns rolled unperceived away;
I years for days, and days for moments told,
And was surprised to hear that I grew old.
Now fate does rigidly its dues regain,
And every moment is an age of pain.

As he is going out, enter ZANGA *and Don* ALONZO. ZANGA *stops Don* CARLOS.

Zan. Is this Don Carlos? this the boasted friend?
How can you turn your back upon his sadness?
Look on him, and then leave him if you can.
Whose sorrows thus depress him? Not his own:
This moment he could wed without your leave.
Car. I cannot yield; nor can I bear his griefs.
Alonzo! [*Going to him, and taking his hand.*
Alon. Oh, Carlos!

Car. Pray, forbear.
Alon. Art thou undone, and shall Alonzo smile?
Alonzo, who, perhaps, in some degree
Contributed to cause thy dreadful fate?
I was deputed guardian of thy love;
But, Oh, I loved myself! Pour down afflictions
On this devoted head, make me your mark;
And be the world by my example taught,
How sacred it should hold the name of friend!
Car. You charge yourself unjustly; well I know
The only cause of my severe affliction.
Alvarez, cursed Alvarez! So much anguish,
Felt for so small a failure, is one merit
Which faultless virtue wants. The crime was mine,
Who placed thee there, where only thou couldst fail;
Though well I knew that dreadful post of honour
I gave thee to maintain. Ah! who could bear
Those eyes unhurt? The wounds myself have felt,
(Which wounds alone should cause me to condemn thee)
They plead in thy excuse; for I too strove
To shun those fires, and found 'twas not in man.
Alon. You cast in shades the failure of a friend,
And soften all; but think not to deceive me;
I know my guilt, and I implore your pardon,
As the sole glimpse I can obtain of peace.
Car. Pardon for him, who but this morning threw
Fair Leonora from his heart, all bathed
In ceaseless tears, and blushing for her love!
Who, like a rose-leaf wet with morning dew,
Would have stuck close, and clung for ever there!
But 'twas in thee, through fondness for thy friend,
To shut thy bosom against ecstacies;
For which, while this pulse beats, it beats to thee;
While this blood flows, it flows for my Alonzo,
And every wish is levelled at thy joy.
Zan. [*To Alonzo.*] My lord, my lord, this is your time to speak.
Alon. [*To Zan.*] Because he's kind? It therefore is the worst;
For 'tis his kindness which I fear to hurt.
Shall the same moment see him sink in woes,
And me providing for a flood of joys,
Rich in the plunder of his happiness?
No, I may die; but I can never speak.
Car. Now, now it comes! they are concerting it!
The first word strikes me dead—Oh, Leonora!
And shall another taste her fragrant breath?
Who knows what after-time may bring to pass?
Fathers may change, and I may wed her still.
[*Aside.*
Alon. [*To Zan.*] Do I not see him quite possessed with anguish,
Which, like a demon, writhes him to and fro;
And shall I pour in new? No, fond desire!
No, love! one pang at parting, and farewell.
I have no other love but Carlos now.
Car. Alas! my friend, why with such eager grasp
Dost press my hand, and weep upon my cheek?
Alon. If, after death, our forms (as some believe)
Shall be transparent, naked every thought,
And friends meet friends, and read each other's hearts,
Thou'lt know one day that thou wert held most dear.
Farewell.
Car. Alonzo, stay—he cannot speak—
[*Holds him.*
Lest it should grieve me—Shall I be outdone?
And lose in glory, as I lose in love? [*Aside.*
I take it much unkindly, my Alonzo,
You think so meanly of me, not to speak,
When well I know your heart is near to bursting.
Have you forgot how you have bound me to you?
Your smallest friendship's liberty and life.
Alon. There, there it is, my friend! it cuts me there.
How dreadful is it to a generous mind
To ask, when sure he cannot be denied!
Car. How greatly thought! In all he towers above me. [*Aside.*
Then you confess you would ask something of me?
Alon. No, on my soul.
Zan. [*To Alon.*] Then lose her.
Car. Glorious spirit!
Why what a pang has he run through for this!
By Heaven, I envy him his agonies.
Why was not mine the most illustrious lot,
Of starting at one action from below,
And flaming up into consummate greatness?
Ha! angels strengthen me!—It shall be so——
I cannot want strength. Great actions, once conceived,
Strengthen like wine, and animate the soul,
And call themselves to being. [*Aside.*] My Alonzo!
Since thy great soul disdains to make request,
Receive with favour that I make to thee.
Alon. What means my Carlos?
Car. Pray observe me well.
Fate and Alvarez tore her from my heart,
And, plucking up my love, they had well nigh
Plucked up life too, for they were twined together.
Of that no more—What now does reason bid?
I cannot wed—Farewell my happiness!
But, O my soul, with care provide for hers!
In life, how weak, how helpless is woman!
Soon hurt; in happiness itself unsafe,
And often wounded while she plucks the rose;
So properly the object of affliction,

That Heaven is pleased to make distress become her,
And dresses her most amiably in tears.
Take then my heart in dowry with the fair!
Be thou her guardian, and thou must be mine;
Shut out the thousand pressing ills of life
With thy surrounding arms—Do this, and then
Set down the liberty and life thou gavest me,
As little things, as essays of thy goodness,
And rudiments of friendship so divine.
Alon. There is a grandeur in thy goodness to me,
Which with thy foes would render thee adored.
But have a care, nor think I can be pleased
With any thing that lays in pains for thee.
Thou dost dissemble, and thy heart's in tears.
Car. My heart's in health, my spirits dance their round,
And at my eyes pleasure looks out in smiles.
Alon. And canst thou, canst thou part with Leonora?
Car. I do not part with her, I give her thee.
Alon. O Carlos!
Car. Don't disturb me, I'm sincere,
Nor is it more than simple justice in me.
This morn didst thou resign her for my sake;
I but perform a virtue learnt from thee;
Discharge a debt, and pay her to thy wishes.
Alon. Ah, how?—But think not words were ever made
For such occasions. Silence, tears, embraces,
Are languid eloquence; I'll seek relief
In absence from the pain of so much goodness,
There thank the blest above, thy sole superiors,
Adore, and raise my thoughts of them by thee.
[*Exit.*
Zan. Thus far success has crowned my boldest hope.
My next care is to hasten these new nuptials,
And then my master-works begin to play.
[*Aside.*
Why this was greatly done, without one sigh
[*To Car.*
To carry such a glory to its period.
Car. Too soon thou praisest me. He's gone, and now
I must unsluice my over-burthened heart,
And let it flow. I would not grieve my friend
With tears, nor interrupt my great design;
Great sure as ever human breast durst think of.
But now my sorrows, long with pain suppressed,
Burst their confinment with impetuous sway,
O'er-swell all bounds, and bear even life away:
So, till the day was won, the Greek renowned
With anguish bore the arrow in his wound,
Then drew the shaft from out his tortured side,
Let gush the torrent of his blood, and died.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. O Joy, thou welcome stranger! twice three years
I have not felt thy vital beam; but now
It warms my veins, and plays around my heart:
A fiery instinct lifts me from the ground,
And I could mount! The spirits numberless
Of my dear countrymen, which yesterday
Left their poor bleeding bodies on the field,
Are all assembled here, and o'er-inform me.——
O, bridegroom! great indeed thy present bliss;
Yet even by me unenvied; for be sure
It is thy last, last smile, that which now
Sits on thy cheek; enjoy it while thou mayest;
Anguish, and groans, and death bespeak to morrow.

Enter ISABELLA.

My Isabella!
Isa. What commands my Moor?
Zan. My fair ally! my lovely minister!
'Twas well Alvarez, by my arts impelled,
(To plunge Don Carlos in the last despair,
And to prevent all future molestation)
Finished the nuptials soon as he resolved them;
This conduct ripened all for me and ruin.
Scarce had the priest the holy rite performed,
When I, by sacred inspiration, forged
That letter, which I trusted to thy hand;
That letter, which, in glowing terms, conveys,
From happy Carlos to fair Leonora,
The most profound acknowledgments of heart,
For wondrous transports which he never knew.
This is a good subservient artifice,
To aid the nobler workings of my brain.
Isa. I quickly dropt it in the bride's apartment,
As you commanded.
Zan. With a lucky hand;
For soon Alonzo found it; I observed him
From out my secret stand. He took it up;
But scarce was it unfolded to his sight,
When he, as if an arrow pierced his eye,
Started, and, trembling, dropt it on the ground.
Pale and aghast awhile my victim stood,
Disguised a sigh or two, and puffed them from him;
Then rubbed his brow, and took it up again.
At first he looked as if he meant to read it;
But, checked by rising fears, he crushed it thus,
And thrust it, like an adder, in his bosom.
Isa. But if he read it not, it cannot sting him,
At least not mortally.
Zan. At first I thought so;
But farther thought informs me otherwise,

And turns this disappointment to account.
He more shall credit it, because unseen,
(If 'tis unseen) as thou anon may'st find.
Isa. That would indeed commend my Zanga's skill.
Zan. This, Isabella, is Don Carlos' picture;
Take it, and so dispose of it, that, found,
It may raise up a witness of her love;
Under her pillow, in her cabinet,
Or elsewhere, as shall best promote our end.
Isa. I'll weigh it as its consequence requires,
Then do my utmost to deserve your smile. [*Exit.*
Zan. Is that Alonzo prostrate on the ground?
—Now he starts up, like flame from sleeping embers,
And wild distraction glares from either eye!
If thus a slight surmise can work his soul,
How will the fulness of the tempest tear him?

Enter Don ALONZO.

Alon. And yet it cannot be—I am deceived—
I injure her! she wears the face of Heaven.
Zan. He doubts. [*Aside.*
Alon. I dare not look on this again.
If the first glance, which gave suspicion only,
Had such effect, so smote my heart and brain,
The certainty would dash me all in pieces.
It cannot——Ha! it must, it must be true.
[*Starts.*
Zan. Hold there, and we succeed. He has descried me;
And (for he thinks I love him) will unfold
His aching heart, and rest it on my counsel.
I'll seem to go, to make my stay more sure.
[*Aside.*
Alon. Hold, Zanga, turn.
Zan. My lord!
Alon. Shut close the doors,
That not a spirit find an entrance here.
Zan. My lord's obeyed.
Alon. I see that thou art frighted.
If thou dost love me, I shall fill thy heart
With scorpions' stings.
Zan. If I do love, my lord?
Alon. Come near me, let me rest upon thy bosom;
(What pillow like the bosom of a friend?)
For I am sick at heart.
Zan. Speak, sir, O speak,
And take me from the rack!
Alon. And is there need
Of words? Behold a wonder! See my tears!
Zan. I feel them too. Heaven grant my senses fail me!
I rather would lose them, than have this real.
Alon. Go, take a round through all things in thy thought,
And find that one—for there is only one
Which could extort my tears—find that, and tell
Thyself my misery, and spare me the pain.
Zan. Sorrow can think but ill——I am bewildered;
I know not where I am.
Alon. Think, think no more!
It ne'er can enter in an honest heart.
I'll tell thee, then——I cannot——yet I do,
By wanting force to give it utterance.
Zan. Speak, ease your heart; its throbs will burst your bosom!
Alon. I am most happy: mine is victory,
Mine the king's favour, mine the nation's shout,
And great men make their fortunes of my smiles.
O curse of curses! in the lap of blessing
To be most curst!——My Leonora's false!
Zan. Save me, my lord!
Alon. My Leonora's false!
[*Gives him the letter.*
Zan. Then Heaven has lost its image here on earth.
[*While Zanga reads the letter, he trembles, and shews the utmost concern.*
Alon. Good-natured man! he makes my pains his own!
I durst not read it; but I read it now
In thy concern!
Zan. Did you not read it then?
Alon. Mine eye just touched it, and could bear no more.
Zan. Thus perish all that gives Alonzo pain!
[*Tears the letter.*
Alon. Why didst thou tear it?
Zan. Think of it no more.
'Twas your mistake; and groundless are your fears.
Alon. And didst thou tremble, then, for my mistake?
Or give the whole contents, or by the pangs
That feed upon my heart, thy life's in danger!
Zan. Is this Alonzo's language to his Zanga?
Draw forth your sword, and find the secret here.
For whose sake is it, think you, I conceal it?
Wherefore this rage? Because I seek your peace?
I have no interest in suppressing it,
But what good-natured tenderness for you
Obliges me to have. Not mine the heart
That will be rent in two. Not mine the fame
That will be damned, though all the world should know it.
Alon. Then my worst fears are true, and life is past.
Zan. What has the rashness of my passion uttered?
I know not what; but rage is our destruction,
And all its words are wind——Yet sure, I think,
I nothing owned. But, grant I did confess,
What is a letter? Letters may be forged.
For Heaven's sweet sake, my lord, lift up your heart!
Some foe to your repose——
Alon. So Heaven look on me,
As I can't find the man I have offended.
Zan. Indeed! [*Aside*]——Our innocence is not our shield:

They take offence, who have not been offended;
They seek our ruin, too, who speak us fair,
And death is often ambushed in their smiles.
We know not whom we have to fear. 'Tis certain
A letter may be forged, and in a point
Of such a dreadful consequence as this,
One would rely on nought that might be false—
Think, have you any other cause to doubt her?
Away, you can find none. Resume your spirit;
All's well again.
Alon. O that it were!
Zan. It is;
For who would credit that, which, credited,
Makes hell superfluous by superior pains,
Without such proofs as cannot be withstood?
Has she not ever been to virtue trained?
Is not her fame as spotless as the sun,
Her sex's envy, and the boast of Spain?
Alon. O Zanga! it is that confounds me most,
That full in opposition to appearance——
Zan. No more, my lord, for you condemn yourself.
What is absurdity, but to believe
Against appearance!——You can't yet, I find,
Subdue your passion to your better sense;——
And, truth to tell, it does not much displease me.
'Tis fit your indiscretions should be checked
With some degree of pain.
Alon. What indiscretions?
Zan. Come, you must bear to hear your faults from me.
Had you not sent Don Carlos to the court.
The night before the battle, that foul slave,
Who forged the senseless scroll which gives you pain,
Had wanted footing for his villany.
Alon. I sent him not.
Zan. Not send him! Ha! That strikes me.
I thought he came on message to the king.
Is there another cause could justify
His shunning danger, and the promised fight?
But I perhaps may think too rigidly;
So long an absence, and impatient love——
Alon. In my confusion that had quite escaped me.
By Heaven, my wounded soul does bleed afresh;
'Tis clear as day—for Carlos is so brave,
He lives not but on fame, he hunts for danger,
And is enamoured of the face of death.
How then could he decline the next day's battle,
But for the transports—Oh, it must be so—
Inhuman, by the loss of his own honour,
To buy the ruin of his friend!
Zan. You wrong him;
He knew not of your love.
Alon. Ha!——
Zan. That stings home. [*Aside.*
Alon. Indeed, he knew not of my treacherous love—
Proofs rise on proofs, and still the last the strongest.
The eternal law of things declares it true,
Which calls for judgment on distinguished guilt,
And loves to make our crime our punishment.
Love is my torture, love was first my crime;
For she was his, my friend's, and he (O horror!)
Confided all in me. O, sacred faith!
How dearly I abide thy violation!
Zan. Were, then, their loves far gone?
Alon. The father's will
There bore a total sway; and he, as soon
As news arrived that Carlos' fleet was seen
From off our coast, fired with the love of gold,
Determined, that the very sun which saw
Carlos' return, should see his daughter wed.
Zan. Indeed, my lord, then you must pardon me,
If I presume to mitigate the crime.
Consider, strong allurements soften guilt;
Long was his absence, ardent was his love,
At midnight his return, the next day destined
For his espousals—'twas a strong temptation.
Alon. Temptation!
Zan. 'Twas but gaining of one night.
Alon. One night!
Zan. That crime could ne'er return again.
Alon. Again! By Heaven thou dost insult thy lord.
Temptation! One night gained! O stings and death!
And am I then undone! Alas, my Zanga!
And dost thou own it too? Deny it still,
And rescue me one moment from distraction.
Zan. My lord, I hope the best.
Alon. False, foolish hope,
And insolent to me! Thou know'st it false;
It is as glaring as the noon-tide sun.
Devil! This morning, after three years coldness,
To rush at once into a passion for me!
'Twas time to feign, 'twas time to get another,
When her first fool was sated with her beauties.
Zan. What says my lord? Did Leonora then
Never disclose her passion for you?
Alon. Never.
Zan. Throughout the whole three years?
Alon. O never! never!
Why, Zanga, shouldst thou strive? 'Tis all in vain:
Though thy soul labours, it can find no reed
For hope to catch at. Ah! I am plunging down
Ten thousand fathoms in despair.
Zan. Hold, sir, I'll break your fall—wave every fear,
And be a man again—Had he enjoyed her,
Be most assured, he had resigned her to you
With less reluctance.
Alon. Ha! Resign her to me!———
Resign her!—Who resigned her?—Double death!
How could I doubt so long? My heart is broke.
First love her to distraction! then resign her!
Zan. But was it not with utmost agony?
Alon. Grant that, he still resigned her; that's enough.

Would he pluck out his eye to give it me?
Tear out his heart?—She was his heart no more—
Nor was it with reluctance he resigned her!
By Heaven, he asked, he courted me to wed.
I thought it strange; 'tis now no longer so.
Zan. Was it his request? Are you right sure of that?
I fear the letter was not all a tale.
Alon. A tale! There's proof equivalent to sight.
Zan. I should distrust my sight on this occasion.
Alon. And so should I; by Heaven, I think I should.
What! Leonora, the divine, by whom
We guessed at angels! Oh! I'm all confusion.
Zan. You now are too much ruffled to think clearly.
Since bliss and horror, life and death hang on it,
Go to your chamber, there maturely weigh
Each circumstance; consider, above all,
That it is jealousy's peculiar nature
To swell small things to great; nay, out of nought
To conjure much, and then to lose its reason
Amid the hideous phantoms it has formed.
Alon. Had I ten thousand lives, I'd give them all
To be deceived. I fear 'tis doomsday with me.
And yet she seemed so pure, that I thought Heaven
Borrowed her form for virtue's self to wear,
To gain her lovers with the sons of men.
O Leonora! Leonora! [*Exit.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Zan. Thus far it works auspiciously. My patient
Thrives underneath my hand in misery.
He's gone to think; that is, to be distracted.
Isa. I overheard your conference, and saw you,
To my amazement, tear the letter.
Zan. There,
There, Isabella, I out-did myself.
For tearing it, I not secure it only
In its first force; but superadd a new,
For who can now the character examine,
To cause a doubt, much less detect the fraud?
And after tearing it, as loth to shew
The foul contents, if I should swear it now
A forgery, my lord would disbelieve me;
Nay, more, would disbelieve the more I swore.
But is the picture happily disposed of?
Isa. It is.
Zan. That's well—Ah! what is well? O pang to think!
O dire necessity! is this my province?
Whither, my soul! ah! whither art thou sunk
Beneath thy sphere? Ere while, far, far above
Such little arts, dissembling, falsehoods, frauds,
The trash of villany itself, which falls
To cowards, and poor wretches wanting bread.
Does this become a soldier? This become
Whom armies followed, and a people loved?
My martial glory withers at the thought.
But great my end; and since there are no other,
These means are just; they shine with borrowed light,
Illustrious from the purpose they pursue.
And greater sure my merit, who, to gain
A point sublime, can such a task sustain;
To wade through ways obscene, my honour bend,
And shock my nature, to attain my end.
Late time shall wonder; that my joys will raise;
For wonder is involuntary praise. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter Don ALONZO *and* ZANGA.

Alon. Oh, what a pain to think! when every thought,
Perplexing thought, in intricacies runs,
And reason knits the inextricable toil,
In which herself is taken! I am lost,
Poor insect that I am; I am involved,
And buried in the web myself have wrought!
One argument is balanced by another,
And reason reason meets in doubtful fight,
And proofs are countermined by equal proofs.
No more I'll bear this battle of the mind,
This inward anarchy; but find my wife,
And to her trembling heart presenting death,
Force all the secret from her.
Zan. O, forbear!
You totter on the very brink of ruin.
Alon. What dost thou mean?
Zan. That will discover all,
And kill my hopes. What can I think or do? [*Aside.*
Alon. What dost thou murmur?
Zan. Force the secret from her!
What's perjury to such a crime as this?
Will she confess it then? O, groundless hope!
But rest assured, she'll make this accusation,
Or false or true, your ruin with the king;
Such is her father's power.
Alon. No more, I care not;
Rather than groan beneath this load, I'll die.
Zan. But for what better will you change this load?
Grant you should know it, would not that be worse?
Alon. No; it would cure me of my mortal pangs:
By hatred and contempt I should despise her,
And all my love-bred agonies would vanish.
Zan. Ah! were I sure of that, my lord——
Alon. What then?

Zan. You should not hazard life to gain the secret.
Alon. What dost thou mean? Thou know'st I'm on the rack.
I'll not be played with; speak, if thou hast aught,
Or I this instant fly to Leonora.
Zan. That is, to death. My lord, I am not yet
Quite so far gone in guilt to suffer it,
Though gone too far, Heaven knows—'Tis I am guilty—
I have took pains, as you, I know, observed,
To hinder you from diving in the secret,
And turned aside your thoughts from the detection.
Alon. Thou dost confound me!
Zan. I confound myself,
And frankly own it, though to my shame I own it;
Nought but your life in danger could have torn
The secret out, and made me own my crime.
Alon. Speak quickly; Zanga, speak.
Zan. Not yet, dread sir:
First, I must be assured, that if you find
The fair one guilty, scorn, as you assured me,
Shall conquer love and rage, and heal your soul.
Alon. Oh! 'twill, by Heaven!
Zan. Alas! I fear it much,
And scarce can hope so far; but I of this
Exact your solemn oath, that you'll abstain
From all self-violence, and save my lord.
Alon. I trebly swear.
Zan. You'll bear it like a man?
Alon. A god.
Zan. Such have you been to me; these tears confess it,
And poured forth miracles of kindness on me:
And what amends is now within my power,
But to confess, expose myself to justice,
And, as a blessing, claim my punishment?
Know, then, Don Carlos———
Alon. Oh!
Zan. You cannot bear it.
Alon. Go on, I'll have it, though it blast mankind;
I'll have it all, and instantly. Go on.
Zan. Don Carlos did return at dead of night—

Enter LEONORA.

Leon. My lord Alonzo, you are absent from us,
And quite undo our joy.
Alon. I'll come, my love:
Be not our friends deserted by us both;
I'll follow you this moment.
Leon. My good lord,
I do observe severity of thought
Upon your brow. Aught hear you from the Moors?
Alon. No, my delight.
Leon. What then employed your mind?
Alon. Thou, love, and only thou; so Heaven befriend me,
As other thought can find no entrance here.
Leon. How good in you, my lord, whom nations' cares
Solicit, and a world in arms obeys,
To drop one thought on me!
[*He shews the utmost impatience.*
Alon. Dost thou then prize it?
Leon. Do you then ask it?
Alon. Know then, to thy comfort,
Thou hast me all, my throbbing heart is full
With thee alone; I have thought of nothing else;
Nor shall, I from my soul believe, till death.
My life, our friends expect thee.
Leon. I obey. [*Exit.*
Alon. Is that the face of cursed hypocrisy?
If she is guilty, stars are made of darkness,
And beauty shall no more belong to Heaven—
Don Carlos did return at dead of night——
Proceed, good Zanga; so thy tale began.
Zan. Don Carlos did return at dead of night;
That night, by chance (ill chance for me) did I
Command the watch that guards the palace gate.
He told me he had letters for the king,
Dispatched from you.
Alon. The villain lied!
Zan. My lord,
I pray, forbear——Transported at his sight,
After so long a bondage, and your friend,
(Who could suspect him of an artifice?)
No farther I enquired, but let him pass,
False to my trust, at least imprudent in it.
Our watch relieved, I went into the garden,
As is my custom, when the night's serene,
And took a moon-light walk: when soon I heard
A rustling in an arbour that was near me.
I saw two lovers in each other's arms,
Embracing and embraced. Anon the man
Arose, and, falling back some paces from her,
Gazed ardently awhile, then rushed at once,
And throwing all himself into her bosom,
There softly sighed—'Oh, night of ecstacy!
When shall we meet again?'—Don Carlos, then,
Led Leonora forth.
Alon. Oh, Oh my heart!
[*He sinks into a chair.*
Zan. Groan on, and with the sound refresh my soul!
'Tis through his heart; his knees smite one another:
'Tis through his brain; his eye-balls roll in anguish. [*Aside.*
My lord, my lord, why do ye rack my soul?
Speak to me, let me know that you still live.
Do not you know me, sir? Pray, look upon me;
You think too deeply——I am your own Zanga,
So loved, so cherished, and so faithful to you.—
Why start you in such fury? Nay, my lord,
For Heaven's sake sheath your sword! What can this mean?
Fool that I was, to trust you with the secret,
And you unkind to break your word with me.
Oh, passion for a woman!——On the ground!
Where is your boasted courage? Where your scorn,

And prudent rage, that was to cure your grief,
And chase your love-bred agonies away?
Rise, sir, for honour's sake. Why should the Moors,
Why should the vanquished triumph?
Alon. Would to Heaven
That I were lower still! Oh, she was all!—
My fame, my friendship, and my love of arms,
All stoop to her; my blood was her possession.
Deep in the secret foldings of my heart
She lived with life, and far the dearer she.
But—and no more—set nature on a blaze,
Give her a fit of jealousy—away—
To think on't—is the torment of the damned,
And not to think on't is impossible.
How fair the cheek that first alarmed my soul!
How bright the eye that set it on a flame!
How soft the breast on which I laid my peace
For years to slumber, unawaked by care!
How fierce the transport! how sublime the bliss!
How deep, how black, the horror and despair!
Zan. You said you would bear it like a man.
Alon. I do.
Am I not most distracted?
Zan. Pray, be calm.
Alon. As hurricanes: be thou assured of that.
Zan. Is this the wise Alonzo?
Alon. Villain, no!
He died in the arbour—he was murdered there!
I am his dæmon though——My wife!—my wife!
Zan. Alas! he weeps.
Alon. Go, dig her grave!
Zan. My lord!
Alon. But that her blood's too hot, I would carouse it
Around my bridal board!
Zan. And I would pledge thee. [*Aside.*
Alon. But I may talk too fast. Pray, let me think,
And reason mildly. Wedded and undone
Before one night descends! Oh, hasty evil!
What friend to comfort me in my extreme!
Where's Carlos? Why is Carlos absent from me?
Does he know what has happened?
Zan. My good lord!
Alon. O, depth of horror! He!—My bosom friend!
Zan. Alas, compose yourself, my lord.
Alon. To death!
Gaze on her with both eyes so ardently!
Give them the vultures, tear him all in pieces!
Zan. Most excellent! [*Aside.*
Alon. Hark! you can keep a secret.
In yonder arbour, bound with jasmine—
Who's that? What villain's that? Unhand her—Murder!—
Tear them asunder—Murder—How they grind
My heart betwixt them!—Oh, let go my heart!
Yet let it go——Embracing and embraced!
Oh, pestilence!—Who let him in?—A traitor.
[*Goes to stab Zanga, he prevents him.*
Alas my head turns round, and my limbs fail me!
Zan. My lord!
Alon. Oh, villain, villain, most accurst!
If thou didst know it, why didst let me wed?
Zan. Hear me, my lord, your anger will abate.
I knew it not:—I saw them in the garden;
But saw no more than you might well expect
To see in lovers destined for each other.
By Heaven I thought their meeting innocent.
Who could suspect fair Leonora's virtue,
Till after-proofs conspired to blacken it?
Sad proofs, which came too late, which broke not out,
(Eternal curses on Alvarez' haste!)
Till holy rites had made the wanton yours;
And then, I own, I laboured to conceal it,
In duty and compassion to your peace.
Alon. Live now, be damned hereafter—for I want thee——.
Oh, night of ecstacy!—Ha! was't not so?
I will enjoy this murder.——Let me think——
The jasmine bower—'tis secret and remote:
Go wait me there, and take thy dagger with thee.
[*Exit Zanga.*
How the sweet sound still sings within my ear!
When shall we meet again?—To-night, in hell!

As he is going, enter LEONORA.

Ha! I'm surprised! I stagger at her charms!
Oh, angel-devil!——Shall I stab her now?
No—It shall be as I at first determined.
To kill her now, were half my vengeance lost.
Then must I now dissemble——if I can.
Leon. My lord, excuse me; see, a second time
I come in embassy from all your friends,
Whose joys are languid, uninspired by you.
Alon. This moment, Leonora, I was coming
To thee, and all——but sure, or I mistake,
Or thou canst well inspire my friends with joy.
Leon. Why sighs my lord?
Alon. I sighed not, Leonora.
Leon. I thought you did; your sighs are mine, my lord,
And I shall feel them all.
Alon. Dost flatter me?
Leon. If my regards for you are flattery,
Full far indeed I stretched the compliment
In this day's solemn rite.
Alon. What rite?
Leon. You sport me.
Alon. Indeed I do; my heart is full of mirth.
Leon. And so is mine——I look on cheerfulness,
As on the health of virtue.
Alon. Virtue!——Damn——
Leon. What says my lord?
Alon. Thou art exceeding fair.
Leon. Beauty alone is but of little worth;
But when the soul and body of a piece,
Both shine alike, then they obtain a price,
And are a fit reward for gallant actions,

Heaven's pay on earth for such great souls as yours;——
If fair and innocent, I am your due.
Alon. Innocent! [*Aside.*
Leon. How, my lord! I interrupt you.
Alon. No, my best life! I must not part with thee——
This hand is mine——Oh, what a hand is here!
So soft, souls sink into it, and are lost!
Leon. In tears, my lord?
Alon. What less can speak my joy?
I gaze, and I forget my own existence:
'Tis all a vision—my head swims in heaven!
Wherefore! oh, wherefore this expence of beauty?
And wherefore—Oh!——
Why, I could gaze upon thy looks for ever,
And drink in all my being from thine eyes:
And I could snatch a flaming thunderbolt,
And hurl destruction!——
Leon. How, my lord! what mean you?
Acquaint me with the secret of your heart,
Or cast me out for ever from your love!
Alon. Art thou concerned for me?
Leon. My lord, you fright me.
Is this the fondness of your nuptial hour?
I am ill-used, my lord, I must not bear it.
Why, when I woo your hand, is it denied me?
Your very eyes, why are they taught to shun me?
Nay, my good lord, I have a title here,
[*Taking his hand.*
And I will have it. Am not I your wife?
Have not I just authority to know
That heart which I have purchased with my own?
Lay it before me then; it is my due.
Unkind Alonzo! though I might demand it,
Behold I kneel! See, Leonora kneels!
And deigns to be a beggar for her own!
Tell me the secret, I conjure you tell me.
The bride foregoes the homage of her day,
Alvarez' daughter trembles in the dust.
Speak, then, I charge you speak, or I expire,
And load you with my death! My lord, my lord!
Alon. Ha, ha, ha!
[*He breaks from her, and she sinks upon the floor.*
Leon. Are these the joys which fondly I conceived?
And is it thus a wedded life begins?
What did I part with, when I gave my heart;
I knew not that all happiness went with it.
Why did I leave my tender father's wing,
And venture into love! The maid that loves,
Goes out to sea upon a shattered plank,
And puts her trust in miracles for safety.
Where shall I sigh?—Where pour out my complaints?
He that should hear, should succour, should redress,
He is the source of all.
Alon. Go to thy chamber;
I soon will follow; that which now disturbs thee
Shall be cleared up, and thou shall not condemn me. [*Exit Leon.*
Oh, how like innocence she looks!—What, stab her!
And rush into her blood!——I never can!
In her guilt shines, and nature holds my hand.
How then? Why thus——No more; it is determined.

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. I fear his heart has failed him. She must die.
Can I not rouse the snake that's in his bosom,
To sting our human nature, and effect it!
[*Aside.*
Alon. This vast and solid earth, that blazing sun,
Those skies through which it rolls, must all have end!
What then is man? the smallest part of nothing!
Day buries day, month month, and year the year—
Our life is but a chain of many deaths!
Can, then, death's self be feared? our life much rather.
Life is the desert, life the solitude,
Death joins us to the great majority:
'Tis to be borne to Plato's, and to Cæsars;
'Tis to be great for ever;
'Tis pleasure, 'tis ambition then to die.
Zan. I think, my lord, you talked of death.
Alon. I did.
Zan. I give you joy, then Leonora's dead!
Alon. No, Zanga, the greatest guilt is mine,
'Tis mine, who might have marked his midnight visit;
Who might have marked his tameness to resign her;
Who might have marked her sudden turn of love:
These, and a thousand tokens more; and yet
(For which the saints absolve my soul!) did wed.
Zan. Where does this tend?
Alon. To shed a woman's blood
Would stain my sword, and make my wars inglorious;
But just resentment to myself bears in it
A stamp of greatness above vulgar minds.
He, who, superior to the checks of nature,
Dares make his life the victim of his reason,
Does, in some sort, that reason deify,
And take a flight at Heaven.
Zan. Alas, my lord,
'Tis not your reason, but her beauty finds
Those arguments, and throws you on your sword.
You cannot close an eye that is so bright;
You cannot strike a breast that is so soft,
That has ten thousand ecstacies in store
For Carlos——No, my lord, I mean for you.
Alon. Oh, through my heart and marrow! Prithee spare me;
Nor more upbraid the weakness of thy lord.
I own, I tried, I quarrelled with my heart,

And pushed it on, and bid it give her death;
But, oh, her eyes struck first, and murdered me!
Zan. I know not what to answer to my lord.
Men are but men; we did not make ourselves.
Farewell, then, my best lord, since you must die.
Oh, that I were to share your monument,
And in eternal darkness close these eyes
Against those scenes which I am doomed to suffer!
Alon. What dost thou mean?
Zan. And is it then unknown?
Oh, grief of heart to think that you should ask it!
Sure you distrust that ardent love I bear you,
Else could you doubt when you are laid in dust—
But it will cut my poor heart through and through,
To see those revel on your sacred tomb,
Who brought you thither by their lawless loves.
For there they'll revel, and exult to find
Him sleep so fast, who else might mar their joys.
Alon. Distraction!——But Don Carlos, well thou know'st,
Is sheathed in steel, and bent on other thoughts.
Zan. I'll work him to the murder of his friend. [*Aside.*
Yes, tell the fever of his blood returns,
While her last kiss still glows upon his cheek.
But when he finds Alonzo is no more,
How will he rush like lightning to her arms!
There sigh, there languish, there pour out his soul;
But not in grief——sad obsequies to thee!——
But thou wilt be at peace, nor see, nor hear
The burning kiss, the sigh of ecstacy,
Their throbbing hearts that jostle one another:
Thank Heaven, these torments will be all my own.
Alon. I'll ease thee of that pain. Let Carlos die!
O'ertake him on the road, and see it done.
'Tis my command. [*Gives his signet.*
Zan. I dare not disobey.
Alon. My Zanga, now I have thy leave to die.
Zan. Ah, sir! think, think again. Are all men buried
In Carlos' grave! You know not womankind.
When once the throbbing of the heart has broke
The modest zone with which it first was tied,
Each man she meets will be a Carlos to her.
Alon. That thought has more of hell than had the former.
Another, and another, and another!
And each shall cast a smile upon my tomb!
I am convinced; I must not, will not die.
Zan. You cannot die; nor can you murder her.
What then remains? In nature no third way,
But to forget, and so to love again.
Alon. Oh!
Zan. If you forgive, the world will call you good;
If you forget, the world will call you wise;
If you receive her to your grace again,
The world will call you—very, very kind.
Alon. Zanga, I understand thee well. She dies,
Though my arm trembles at the stroke, she dies.
Zan. That's truly great. What think you 'twas set up
The Greek and Roman name in such a lustre,
But doing right in stern despite to nature,
Shutting their ears to all her little cries,
When great, august, and godlike justice called?
At Aulis, one poured out a daughter's life,
And gained more glory than by all his wars;
Another slew his sister in just rage;
A third, the theme of all succeeding times,
Gave to the cruel axe a darling son.
Nay, more, for justice some devote themselves,
As he at Carthage, an immortal name!
Yet there is one step left above them all,
Above their history, above their fable,
A wife, bride, mistress, unenjoyed——do that,
And tread upon the Greek and Roman glory.
Alon. 'Tis done!——Again new transports fire my brain:
I had forgot it, 'tis my bridal night.
Friend, give me joy, we must be gay together;
See that the festival be duly honoured.
And when with garlands the full bowl is crowned,
And music gives the elevating sound,
And golden carpets spread the sacred floor,
And a new day the blazing tapers pour;
Thou, Zanga, thou my solemn friends invite,
From the dark realms of everlasting night;
Call Vengeance, call the furies, call Despair,
And Death, our chief invited guest, be there;
He, with pale hand, shall lead the bride, and spread
Eternal curtains round our nuptial bed. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. Oh, pitiful! Oh, terrible to sight!
Poor mangled shade! all covered o'er with wounds.
And so disguised with blood!——Who murdered thee?
Tell thy sad tale, and thou shalt be revenged.
Ha! Carlos?—Horror! Carlos?—Oh, away!
Go to the grave, or let me sink to mine.
I cannot bear the sight—What sight?—Where am I?
There's nothing here—If this was fancy's work,
She draws a picture strongly.——

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. Ha!——you're pale.
Alon. Is Carlos murdered?

Zan. I obeyed your order.
Six ruffians overtook him on the road;
He fought as he was wont, and four he slew.
Then sunk beneath an hundred wounds to death.
His last breath blest Alonzo, and desired
His bones might rest near yours.
Alon. Oh, Zanga! Zanga!
But I'll not think: for I must act, and thinking
Would ruin me for action. Oh, the medley
Of right and wrong! the chaos of my brain!
He should, and should not die—You should obey,
And not obey——It is a day of darkness,
Of contradictions, and of many deaths.
Where's Leonora, then? Quick, answer me:
I'm deep in horrors, I'll be deeper still.
I find thy artifice did take effect,
And she forgives my late deportment to her.
Zan. I told her, from your childhood you was wont,
On any great surprise, but chiefly then
When cause of sorrow bore it company,
To have your passions shake the seat of reason;
A momentary ill, which soon blew o'er.
Then did I tell her of Don Carlos' death,
(Wisely suppressing by what means he fell)
And laid the blame on that. At first she doubted;
But such the honest artifice I used,
And such her ardent wish it should be true,
That she, at length, was fully satisfied.
Alon. 'Twas well she was. In our late interview,
My passion so far threw me from my guard,
(Methinks 'tis strange) that, conscious of her guilt,
She saw not, through its thin disguise, my heart.
Zan. But what design you, sir, and how?
Alon. I'll tell thee.
Thus I've ordained it. In the jasmine bower,
The place which she dishonoured with her guilt,
There will I meet her; the appointment's made;
And calmly spread (for I can do it now)
The blackness of her crime before her sight,
And then, with all the cool solemnity
Of public justice, give her to the grave. [*Exit.*
Zan. Why, get thee gone! horror and night go with thee.
Sisters of Acheron, go hand in hand;
Go dance around the bower, and close them in;
And tell them that I sent you to salute them.
Profane the ground, and for th' ambrosial rose,
And breath of jasmine, let hemlock blacken,
And deadly nightshade poison all the air.
For the sweet nightingale may ravens croak,
Toads pant, and adders rustle through the leaves;
May serpents, winding up the trees, let fall
Their hissing necks upon them from above,
And mingle kisses—such as I could give them.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The bower.*

LEONORA *sleeping.* *Enter* ALONZO.

Alon. Ye amaranths! ye roses, like the morn!
Sweet myrtles, and ye golden orange groves!
Why do you smile? Why do you look so fair?
Are ye not blasted as I enter in?
Yes, see how every flower lets fall its head!
How shudders every leaf without a wind!
How every green is as the ivy pale!
Did ever midnight ghosts assemble here?
Have these sweet echoes ever learned to groan?
Joy-giving, love-inspiring, holy bower!
Know, in thy fragrant bosom thou receivest
A——murderer! Oh, I shall stain thy lilies,
And horror will usurp the seat of bliss.
So Lucifer broke into paradise,
And soon damnation followed. [*He advances.*]
Ha! she sleeps——
The day's uncommon heat has overcome her.
Then take, my longing eyes, your last full gaze.
Oh, what a sight is here! how dreadful fair!
Who would not think that being innocent?
Where shall I strike? Who strikes her, strikes himself.
My own life-blood will issue at her wound.
Oh, my distracted heart!—Oh, cruel Heaven!
To give such charms as these, and then call man,
Mere man, to be your executioner.
Was it because it was too hard for you?
But see, she smiles! I never shall smile more.
It strongly tempts me to a parting kiss.
[*Going, he starts back.*
Ha! smile again. She dreams of him she loves.
Curse on her charms! I'll stab her through them all. [*As he is going to strike, she wakes.*
Leon. My lord, your stay was long, and yonder lull
Of falling waters tempted me to rest,
Dispirited with noon's excessive heat.
Alon. Ye powers! with what an eye she mends the day!
While they were closed, I should have given the blow. [*Aside.*
Oh, for a last embrace! and then for justice:
Thus, Heaven and I shall both be satisfied.
Leon. What says my lord!
Alon. Why this Alonzo says;
If love were endless, men were gods; 'tis that
Does counterbalance travel, danger, pain——
'Tis Heaven's expedient to make mortals bear
The light, and cheat them of the peaceful grave.
Leon. Alas, my lord! why talk you of the grave?
Your friend is dead: in friendship you sustain
A mighty loss; repair it with my love.
Alon. Thy love, thou piece of witchcraft! I would say,
Thou brightest angel! I could gaze for ever.
Where hadst thou this, enchantress, tell me where,
Which, with a touch, works miracles, boils up
My blood to tumults, and turns round my brain?
Even now thou swim'st before me. I shall lose thee——
No, I will make thee sure, and clasp thee all.
Who turned this slender waist with so much art,

And shut perfection in so small a ring?
Who spread that pure expanse of white above,
On which the dazzled sight can find no rest,
But, drunk with beauty, wanders up and down
For ever, and for ever finds new charms?
But oh, those eyes! those murderers! Oh, whence,
Whence didst thou steal their burning orbs? From heaven?
Thou didst; and 'tis religion to adore them.
Leon. My best Alonzo, moderate your thoughts;
Extremes still fright me, though of love itself.
Alon. Extremes indeed! it hurried me away;
But I come home again—and now for justice—
And now for death—It is impossible——
Sure such were made by Heaven guiltless to sin,
Or in their guilt to laugh at punishment. [*Aside.*
I leave her to just Heaven.
[*Drops the dagger, and goes off.*
Leon. Ha, a dagger!
What dost thou say, thou minister of death?
What dreadful tale dost tell me?——Let me think—

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. Death to my towering hopes! Oh, fall from high!
My close, long-laboured scheme at once is blasted.
That dagger, found, will cause her to enquire;
Enquiry will discover all; my hopes
Of vengeance perish; I myself am lost——
Curse on the coward's heart! wither his hand,
Which held the steel in vain!—What can be done?—
Where can I fix?—That's something still—'twill breed
Fell rage and bitterness betwixt their souls,
Which may, perchance, grow up to greater evil:
If not, 'tis all I can—It shall be so— [*Aside.*
Leon. Oh, Zanga, I am sinking in my fears!
Alonzo dropped this dagger as he left me,
And left me in a strange disorder too.
What can this mean? Angels preserve his life!
Zan. Yours, madam, yours.
Leon. What, Zanga, dost thou say?
Zan. Carry you goodness, then, to such extremes,
So blinded to the faults of him you love,
That you perceive not he is jealous?
Leon. Heavens!
And yet a thousand things recur that swear it.
What villain could inspire him with that thought?
It is not of the growth of his own nature.
Zan. Some villain, who, hell knows; but he is jealous;
And 'tis most fit a heart so pure as yours
Do itself justice, and assert its honour,
And make him conscious of its stab to virtue.
Leon. Jealous! it sickens at my heart. Unkind,
Ungenerous, groundless, weak, and insolent!
Why, wherefore, and what shadow of occasion?
'Tis fascination, 'tis the wrath of Heaven
For the collected crimes of all his race.
Oh, how the great man lessens to my thought!
How could so mean a vice as jealousy,
Unnatural child of ignorance and guilt,
Which tears and feeds upon its parent's heart,
Live in a throng of such exalted virtues?
I scorn and hate, yet love him and adore.
I cannot, will not, dare not think it true,
Till from himself I know it. [*Exit.*
Zan. This succeeds
Just to my wish. Now she, with violence,
Upbraids him; he, well knowing she is guilty,
Rages no less; and if, on either side,
The waves run high, there still live hopes of ruin.

Enter ALONZO.

My lord———
Alon. Oh, Zanga, hold thy peace! I am no coward;
But Heaven itself did hold my hand; I felt it,
By the well-being of my soul, I did.
I'll think of vengeance at another season.
Zan. My lord, her guilt——
Alon. Perdition on thee, Moor,
For that one word! Ah, do not rouse that thought!
I have o'erwhelmed it as much as possible:
Away, then, let us talk of other things.
I tell thee, Moor, I love her to distraction.
If 'tis my shame, why, be it so—I love her;
Nor can I help it; 'tis imposed upon me
By some superior and resistless power.
I could not hurt her to be lord of earth;
It shocks my nature like a stroke from Heaven.
Angels defend her, as if innocent.
But see, my Leonora comes—Begone.
[*Exit Zanga.*

Enter LEONORA.

Oh, seen for ever, yet for ever new!
The conquered thou dost conquer o'er again,
Inflicting wound on wound.
Leon. Alas, my lord!
What need of this to me?
Alon. Ha! dost thou weep?
Leon. Have I no cause?
Alon. If love is thy concern,
Thou hast no cause: none ever loved like me.
But wherefore this? Is it to break my heart,
Which loses so much blood for every tear?
Leon. Is it so tender?
Alon. Is it not? Oh, Heaven!
Doubt of my love! Why, I am nothing else;
It quite absorbs my every other passion.
Oh, that this one embrace would last for ever!
Leon. Could this man ever mean to wrong my virtue?
Could this man e'er design upon my life?
Impossible! I throw away the thought. [*Aside.*
These tears declare how much I taste the joy

Of being folded in your arms and heart;
My universe does lie within that space.
This dagger bore false witness.
Alon. Ha, my dagger!
It rouses horrid images. Away,
Away with it, and let us talk of love,
Plunge ourselves deep into the sweet illusion,
And hide us there from every other thought.
Leon. It touches you.
Alon. Let's talk of love.
Leon. Of death!
Alon. As thou lov'st happiness——
Leon. Of murder!
Alon. Rash,
Rash woman! yet forbear.
Leon. Approve my wrongs!
Alon. Then must I fly, for thy sake and my own.
Leon. Nay, by my injuries, you first must hear me:
Stab me, then think it much to hear my groan!
Alon. Heaven strike me deaf!
Leon. It well may sting you home.
Alon. Alas, thou quite mistak'st my cause of pain!
Yet, yet dismiss me; I am all in flames.
Leon. Who has most cause, you or myself? What act
Of my whole life encouraged you to this?
Or of your own, what guilt has drawn it on you?
You find me kind, and think me kind to all;
The weak, ungenerous error of your sex.
What could inspire the thought? We oftenest judge
Fom our own hearts; and is yours then so frail,
It prompts you to conceive thus ill of me?
He that can stoop to harbour such a thought,
Deserves to find it true. [*Holding him.*
Alon. Oh, sex, sex, sex! [*Turning on her.*
The language of you all. Ill-fated woman!
Why hast thou forced me back into the gulf
Of agonies I had blocked up from thought?
I know the cause; thou saw'st me impotent
Ere while to hurt thee, therefore thou turn'st on me;
But, by the pangs I suffer, to thy woe:
For, since thou hast replunged me in my torture,
I will be satisfied.
Leon. Be satisfied!
Alon. Yes, thy own mouth shall witness it against thee.
I will be satified,
Leon. Of what?
Alon. Of what!
How dar'st thou ask that question? Woman, woman,
Weak and assured at once! thus 'tis for ever.
Who told thee that thy virtue was suspected?
Who told thee I designed upon thy life?
You found the dagger; but that could not speak:
Nor did I tell thee; who did tell thee, then?
Guilt, conscious guilt!
Leon. This to my face! Oh, Heaven!
Alon. This to thy very soul.
Leon. Thou art not in earnest?
Alon. Serious as death.
Leon. Then Heaven have mercy on thee.
Till now, I struggled not to think it true;
I sought conviction, and would not believe it.
And dost thou force me? This shall not be borne;
Thou shalt repent this insult. [*Going.*
Alon. Madam, stay.
Your passion's wise; 'tis a disguise for guilt:
'Tis my turn now to fix you here awhile;
You and your thousand arts shall not escape me.
Leon. Arts!
Alon. Arts. Confess; for death is in my hand.
Leon. 'Tis in your words.
Alon. Confess, confess, confess!
Nor tear my veins with passion to compel thee.
Leon. I scorn to answer thee, presumptuous man!
Alon. Deny, then, and incur a fouler shame.
Where did I find this picture?
Leon. Ha, Don Carlos!
By my best hopes, more welcome than thy own.
Alon. I know it; but is vice so very rank,
That thou shouldst dare to dash it in my face?
Nature is sick of thee, abandoned woman!
Leon. Repent.
Alon. Is that for me?
Leon. Fall, ask my pardon.
Alon. Astonishment!
Leon. Dar'st thou persist to think I am dishonest?
Alon. I know thee so.
Leon. This blow, then, to thy heart——
[*She stabs herself, he endeavours to prevent her.*
Alon. Hoa, Zanga! Isabella! hoa! she bleeds!
Descend, ye blessed angels, to assist her!
Leon. This is the only way I would wound thee,
Though most injust. Now think me guilty still.

Enter ISABELLA.

Alon. Bear her to instant help! The world to save her!
Leon. Unhappy man! well mayst thou gaze and tremble:
But fix thy terror and amazement right;
Not on my blood, but on thy own distraction.
What hast thou done! Whom censured?—Leonora!
When thou hast censured, thou wouldst save her life;
Oh, inconsistent! Should I live in shame,
Or stoop to any other means but this
To assert my virtue? No; she who disputes
Admits it possible she might be guilty.
While aught but truth could be my inducement to it,

While it might look like an excuse to thee,
I scorned to vindicate my innocence;
But now, I let thy rashness know, the wound,
Which least I feel, is that my dagger made.
[*Isabella leads out Leonora.*
Alon. Ha! was this woman guilty?—And if not—
How my thoughts darken that way! Grant, kind Heaven,
That she prove guilty, or my being end!
Is that my hope, then?—Sure the sacred dust
Of her that bore me trembles in its urn.
Is it in man the sore distress to bear,
When hope itself is blackened to despair,
When all the bliss I pant for, is to gain,
In hell, a refuge from severer pain? [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter ZANGA.

Zan. How stands the great account 'twixt me and vengeance?
Though much is paid, yet still it owes me much,
And I will not abate a single groan——
Ha! that were well—but that were fatal too—
Why, be it so——Revenge, so truly great,
Would come too cheap, if bought with less than life.
Come, death, come, hell, then! 'tis resolved, 'tis done.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Ah, Zanga, see me tremble! Has not yet
Thy cruel heart its fill? Poor Leonora——
Zan. Welters in blood, and gasps for her last breath.
What then? We all must die.
Isa. Alonzo raves,
And, in the tempest of his grief, has thrice
Attempted on his life. At length disarmed,
He calls his friends that save him his worst foes,
And importunes the skies for swift perdition.
Thus in his storm of sorrow. After a pause,
He started up, and called aloud for Zanga,
For Zanga raved; and see, he seeks you here,
To learn the truth which most he dreads to know.
Zan. Begone. Now, now, my soul, consummate all! [*Exit Isab.*

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. Oh Zanga!
Zan. Do not tremble so; but speak.
Alon. I dare not. [*Falls on him.*
Zan. You will drown me with your tears.
Alon. Have I not cause?
Zan. As yet you have no cause.
Alon. Dost thou too rave?
Zan. Your anguish is to come:
You much have been abused.
Alon. Abused! by whom?
Zan. To know were little comfort.
Alon. Oh, 'twere much!

Zan. Indeed!
Alon. By Heaven! Oh, give him to my fury!
Zan. Born for your use, I live but to oblige you.
Know, then, 'twas—I.
Alon. Am I awake?
Zan. For ever.
Thy wife is guiltless—that's one transport to me;
And I, I let thee know it—that's another.
I urged Don Carlos to resign his mistress,
I forged the letter, I disposed the picture;
I hated, I despised, and I destroy!
Alon. Oh! [*Swoons.*
Zan. Why, this is well—why, this is blow for blow!
Where are you? Crown me, shadow me with laurels,
Ye spirits who delight in just revenge!
Let Europe and her pallid sons go weep;
Let Afric and her hundred thrones rejoice:
Oh, my dear countrymen, look down, and see
How I bestride your prostrate conqueror!
I tread on haughty Spain, and all her kings.
But this is mercy, this is my indulgence;
'Tis peace, 'tis refuge from my indignation.
I must awake him into horrors. Hoa!
Alonzo, hoa! the Moor is at the gate!
Awake, invincible, omnipotent!
Thou who dost all subdue!
Alon. Inhuman slave!
Zan. Fallen Christian, thou mistakest my character.
Look on me. Who am I? I know, thou sayst,
The Moor, a slave, an abject, beaten slave:
(Eternal woes to him that made me so!)
But look again. Has six years cruel bondage
Extinguished majesty so far, that nought
Shines here to give an awe of one above thee?
When the great Moorish king, Abdallah, fell—
Fell by thy hand accurs'd—I fought fast by him,
His son, though, through his fondness, in disguise,
Less to expose me to the ambitious foe.——
Ha! does it wake thee?——O'er my father's corse,
I stood astride, till I had clove thy crest;
And then was made the captive of a squadron,
And sunk into thy servant——But Oh! what,
What were my wages? Hear nor Heaven nor earth!
My wages were a blow! by Heaven, a blow!
And from a mortal hand!
Alon. Oh villain, villain!
Zan. All strife is vain. [*Shewing a dagger.*
Alon. Is thus my love returned?
Is this my recompence? Make friends of tigers!
Lay not your young, Oh mothers! on the breast,
For fear they turn to serpents as they lie,
And pay you for their nourishment with death!—
Carlos is dead, and Leonora dying!
Both innocent! both murdered! both by me!
That heavenly maid, who should have lived for ever,

At least have gently slept her soul away;
Whose life should have shut up, as evening flowers
At the departing sun—was murdered! murdered!
Oh shame! Oh guilt! Oh horror! Oh remorse!
Oh punishment! Had Satan never fell,
Hell had been made for me.——Oh Leonora!

Zan. Must I despise thee, too, as well as hate thee?
Complain of grief—complain thou art a man.—
Priam from Fortune's lofty summit fell;
Great Alexander 'midst his conquests mourned;
Heroes and demi-gods have known their sorrows;
Cæsars have wept; and I have had my blow:
But 'tis revenged, and now my work is done.
Yet ere I fall, be it one part of vengeance
To make thee to confess that I am just.—
Thou see'st a prince, whose father thou hast slain;
Whose native country thou hast laid in blood;
Whose sacred person (Oh!) thou hast profaned,
Whose reign extinguished. What was left to me,
So highly born? No kingdom, but revenge!
No treasure, but thy tortures and thy groans.
If men should ask who brought thee to thy end,
Tell them, the Moor, and they will not despise thee.
If cold white mortals censure this great deed,
Warn them, they judge not of superior beings,
Souls made of fire, and children of the sun,
With whom revenge is virtue. Fare thee well—
Now, fully satisfied, I should take leave:
But one thing grieves me, since thy death is near,
I leave thee my example how to die.

As he is going to stab himself, Alonzo rushes upon him to prevent him. In the mean time, enter Don ALVAREZ, *attended. They disarm and seize Zanga. Alonzo puts the dagger in his bosom.*

Alon. No, monster, thou shalt not escape by death.
Oh, father!

Alv. Oh, Alonzo!—Isabella,
Touched with remorse to see her mistress' pangs,
Told all the dreadful tale.

Alon. What groan was that?

Zan. As I have been a vulture to thy heart,
So will I be a raven to thine ear,
As true as ever snuffed the scent of blood,
As ever flapped its heavy wing against
The window of the sick, and croaked despair.
Thy wife is dead.

[*Alvarez goes to the side of the stage, and returns.*

Alv. The dreadful news is true.

Alon. Prepare the rack; invent new torments for him.

Zan. This too is well. The fixed and noble mind
Turns all occurrents to its own advantage;
And I'll make vengeance of calamity.
Were I not thus reduced, thou wouldst not know,
That, thus reduced, I dare defy thee still.
Torture thou may'st, but thou shalt ne'er despise me.
The blood will follow where the knife is driven,
The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear,
And sighs and cries by nature grow on pain.
But these are foreign to the soul: not mine
The groans that issue, or the tears that fall;
They disobey me; on the rack I scorn thee,
As when my faulchion clove thy helm in battle.

Alv. Peace, villain!

Zan. While I live, old man, I'll speak:
And well I know thou dar'st not kill me yet;
For that would rob thy blood-hounds of their prey.

Alon. Who called Alonzo?

Alv. No one called, my son.

Alon. Again!——'Tis Carlos' voice, and I obey.—
Oh, how I laugh at all that this can do!
[*Shewing the dagger.*
The wounds that pained, the wounds that murdered me,
Were given before; I am already dead;
This only marks my body for the grave.
[*Stabs himself.*
Afric, thou art revenged.—Oh, Leonora! [*Dies.*

Zan. Good ruffians, give me leave; my blood is yours,
The wheel's prepared, and you shall have it all.
Let me but look one moment on the dead,
And pay yourselves with gazing on my pangs.
[*He goes to Alonzo's body.*
Is this Alonzo? Where's the haughty mein?
Is that the hand which smote me? Heavens, how pale!
And art thou dead? So is my enmity.
I war not with the dust. The great, the proud,
The conqueror of Afric was my foe.
A lion preys not upon carcases.
This was thy only method to subdue me.
Terror and doubt fall on me: all thy good
Now blazes, all thy guilt is in the grave.
Never had man such funeral applause:
If I lament thee, sure thy worth was great.
Oh, vengeance, I have followed thee too far,
And, to receive me, hell blows all her fires!
[*He is borne off.*

Alv. Dreadful effects of jealousy! a rage
In which the wise with caution will engage;
Reluctant long, and tardy to believe,
Where, swayed by nature, we ourselves deceive,
Where our own folly joins the villain's art,
And each man finds a Zanga in his heart.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

GEORGE BARNWELL.

BY

LILLO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
THOROWGOOD, *a merchant.*	MARIA, *daughter to Thorowgood.*
BARNWELL, *uncle to George.*	MILLWOOD, *mistress to Barnwell.*
GEORGE BARNWELL.	LUCY, *Millwood's maid.*
TRUEMAN, *friend to Barnwell.*	*Officers, with their Attendants, Keeper, and Footman.*
BLUNT.	

Scene,—London, and an adjacent village.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in Thorowgood's house.*

Enter THOROWGOOD *and* TRUEMAN.

True. SIR, the packet from Genoa is arrived. [*Gives letters.*

Thor. Heaven be praised! The storm that threatened our royal mistress, pure religion, liberty, and laws, is, for a time, diverted. The haughty and revengeful Spaniard, disappointed of the loan on which he depended from Genoa, must now attend the slow returns of wealth from his new world, to supply his empty coffers, ere he can execute his proposed invasion of our happy island. By this means, time is gained to make such preparations, on our part, as may, Heaven concurring, prevent his malice, or turn the meditated mischief on himself.

True. He must be insensible, indeed, who is not affected when the safety of his country is concerned. Sir, may I know by what means?—— If I am not too bold——

Thor. Your curiosity is laudable; and I gratify it with the greater pleasure, because from thence you may learn, how honest merchants, as such, may sometimes contribute to the safety of their country, as they do at all times to its happiness; that if hereafter you should be tempted to any action that has the appearance of vice or meanness in it, upon reflecting on the dignity of our profession, you may, with honest scorn, reject whatever is unworthy of it.

True. Should Barnwell, or I, who have the benefit of your example, by our ill conduct, bring any imputation on that honourable name, we must be left without excuse.

Thor. You compliment, young man. [*Trueman bows respectfully.*] Nay, I am not offended. As the name of merchant never degrades the gentleman, so, by no means does it exclude him; only take heed not to purchase the character of complaisant at the expence of your sincerity.—But, to answer your question: The bank of Genoa had agreed, at an excessive interest, and on good security, to advance the king of Spain a sum of money sufficient to equip his vast Armada; of which our peerless Elizabeth (more than in name the mother of her people) being well informed, sent Walsingham, her wise and faithful secretary,

to consult the merchants of this loyal city; who all agreed to direct their several agents to influence, if possible, the Genoese to break their contract with the Spanish court. It is done: the state and bank of Genoa having maturely weighed, and rightly judged of their true interest, prefer the friendship of the merchants of London to that of the monarch, who proudly stiles himself king of both Indies.

True. Happy success of prudent counsels! What an expence of blood and treasure is here saved! Excellent queen! O how unlike those princes, who make the danger of foreign enemies a pretence to oppress their subjects by taxes great, and grievous to be borne!

Thor. Not so our gracious queen! whose richest exchequer is her people's love, as their happiness her greatest glory.

True. On these terms to defend us, is to make our protection a benefit worthy her who confers it, and well worth our acceptance. Sir, have you any commands for me at this time?

Thor. Only look carefully over the files, to see whether there are any tradesmen's bills unpaid; if there are, send and discharge them. We must not let artificers lose their time, so useful to the public and their families, in unnecessary attendance. [*Exit Trueman.*

Enter MARIA.

Well, Maria, have you given orders for the entertainment? I would have it in some measure worthy the guests. Let there be plenty, and of the best, that the courtiers may at least commend our hospitality.

Mar. Sir, I have endeavoured not to wrong your well-known generosity by an ill-timed parsimony.

Thor. Nay, it was a needless caution: I have no cause to doubt your prudence.

Mar. Sir, I find myself unfit for conversation; I should but increase the number of the company, without adding to their satisfaction.

Thor. Nay, my child, this melancholy must not be indulged.

Mar. Company will but increase it: I wish you would dispense with my absence. Solitude best suits my present temper.

Thor. You are not insensible, that it is chiefly on your account these noble lords do me the honour so frequently to grace my board. Should you be absent, the disappointment may make them repent of their condescension, and think their labour lost.

Mar. He that shall think his time or honour lost in visiting you, can set no real value on your daughter's company, whose only merit is, that she is yours. The man of quality, who chooses to converse with a gentleman and merchant of your worth and character, may confer honour by so doing, but he loses none.

Thor. Come, come, Maria, I need not tell you, that a young gentleman may prefer your conversation to mine, and yet intend me no disrepect at all; for though he may lose no honour in my company, it is very natural for him to expect more pleasure in yours. I remember the time when the company of the greatest and wisest men in the kingdom would have been insipid and tiresome to me, if it had deprived me of an opportunity of enjoying your mother's.

Mar. Yours, no doubt, was as agreeable to her; for generous minds know no pleasure in society but where it is mutual.

Thor. Thou knowest I have no heir, no child, but thee; the fruits of many years successful industry must all be thine. Now, it would give me pleasure, great as my love, to see on whom you will bestow it. I am daily solicited, by men of the greatest rank and merit, for leave to address you: but I have hitherto declined it, in hopes that, by observation, I should learn which way your inclinations tend; for, as I know love to be essential to the married state, I had rather my approbation should confirm your choice, than direct it.

Mar. What can I say? How shall I answer, as I ought, this tenderness, so uncommon even in the best of parents? But you are without example; yet, had you been less indulgent, I had been most wretched. That I look on the crowd of courtiers that visit here, with equal esteem, but equal indifference, you have observed, and I must needs confess; yet, had you asserted your authority, and insisted on a parent's right to be obeyed, I had submitted, and to my duty sacrificed my peace.

Thor. From your perfect obedience, in every other instance, I feared as much; and therefore would leave you, without a bias, in an affair wherein your happiness is so immediately concerned.

Mar. Whether from a want of that just ambition that would become your daughter, or from some other cause, I know not; but I find high birth and titles don't recommend the man, who owns them, to my affections.

Thor. I would not that they should, unless his merit recommends him more. A noble birth and fortune, though they make not a bad man good, yet they are a real advantage to a worthy one, and place his virtues in the fairest light.

Mar. I cannot answer for my inclinations; but they shall ever be submitted to your wisdom and authority. And as you will not compel me to marry where I cannot love, love shall never make me act contrary to my duty. Sir, have I your permission to retire?

Thor. I'll see you to your chamber. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Millwood's House.*

Enter MILLWOOD *and* LUCY.

Mill. How do I look to-day, Lucy?

Lucy. Oh, killingly, madam! A little more red, and you'll be irresistible.——But why this more than ordinary care of your dress and complexion? What new conquest are you aiming at?

Mill. A conquest would be new indeed.

Lucy. Not to you, who make them every day ——but to me——Well, it is what I am never to expect—unfortunate as I am——But your wit and beauty———

Mill. First made me a wretch, and still continue me so. Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us; we are no otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction.

Lucy. You are certainly, madam, on the wrong side in this argument. Is not the expence all theirs? And, I am sure, it is our own fault if we have not our share of the pleasure.

Mill. We are but slaves to men.

Lucy. Nay, it is they that are slaves, most certainly; for we lay them under contribution,

Mill. Slaves have no property; no, not even in themselves: all is the victor's.

Lucy. You are strangely arbitrary in your principles, madam.

Mill. I would have my conquest complete, like those of the Spaniards in the new world; who first plundered the natives of all the wealth they had, and then condemned the wretches to the mines for life, to work for more.

Lucy. Well, I shall never approve of your scheme of government; I should think it much more politic, as well as just, to find my subjects an easier employment.

Mill. It is a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind, that a woman without virtue, like a man without honour or honesty, is capable of any action, though never so vile: and yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us from our innocence, and make us contemptible and wicked, even in their own opinion? Then, is it not just, the villains, to their cost, should find us so? But guilt makes them suspicious, and keeps them on their guard; therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex, who, having never injured women, apprehend no injury from them.

Lucy. Ay, they must be young indeed.

Mill. Such a one, I think, I have found. As I have passed through the city, I have often observed him receiving and paying considerable sums of money; from thence I conclude, that he is employed in affairs of consequence.

Lucy. Is he handsome?

Mill. Ay, ay, the stripling is well made, and has a good face.

Lucy. About———

Mill. Eighteen.

Lucy. Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen!—You will be vastly happy. Why, if you manage well, you may keep him to yourself these two or three years!

Mill. If I manage well, I shall have done with him much sooner. Having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop, and, gazing wishfully in his face, asked his name. He blushed, and, bowing very low, answered, George Barnwell. I begged his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him, that he was the person I had long wished to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate at a proper time and place. He named a tavern; I talked of honour and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallowed the bait, promised to come, and this is the time I expect him. [*Knocking at the door.*] Somebody knocks——D'ye hear; I am at home to nobody to-day but him. [*Exit Lucy.*] Less affairs must give way to those of more consequence; and I am strangely mistaken if this does not prove of great importance to me, and him too, before I have done with him. Now, after what manner shall I receive him? Let me consider———What manner of person am I to receive? He is young, innocent, and bashful; therefore I must take care not to put him out of countenance at first. But then, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he is amorous; and, with a little assistance, will soon get the better of his modesty. I will even trust to nature, who does wonders in these matters. If to seem what one is not, in order to be the better liked for what one really is; if to speak one thing, and mean the direct contrary, be art in a woman—I know nothing of nature.

Enter BARNWELL, *bowing very low.* LUCY *at a distance.*

Mill. Sir, the surprise and joy——

Barn. Madam!

Mill. This is such a favour—— [*Advancing.*

Barn. Pardon me, madam.

Mill. So unhoped for! [*Still advances.*

[*Barnwell salutes her, and retires as in confusion.*

To see you here——Excuse the confusion——

Barn. I fear I am too bold———

Mill. Alas, sir, I may justly apprehend you think me so. Please, sir, to sit. I am as much at a loss how to receive this honour as I ought, as I am surprised at your goodness in conferring it.

Barn. I thought you had expected me; I promised to come.

Mill. That is the more surprising; few men are such religious observers of their word.

Barn. All who are honest are.

Mill. To one another; but we simple women are seldom thought of consequence enough to gain a place in their remembrance.

[*Laying her hand on his, as by accident.*

Barn. Her disorder is so great, she don't perceive she has laid her hand on mine. Heavens! How she trembles!—What can this mean?

[*Aside.*

Mill. The interest I have in all that relates to you (the reason of which you shall know hereafter) excites my curiosity; and, were I sure you would pardon my presumption, I should desire to know your real sentiments on a very particular subject.

Barn. Madam, you may command my poor thoughts on any subject. I have none that I would conceal.

Mill. You will think me bold.

Barn. No, indeed.

Mill. What, then, are your thoughts of love?

Barn. If you mean the love of women, I have not thought of it at all. My youth and circumstances make such thoughts improper in me yet. But if you mean the general love we owe to mankind, I think no one has more of it in his temper than myself. I do not know that person in the world, whose happiness I do not wish, and would not promote, were it in my power. In an especial manner I love my uncle, and my master; but above all, my friend.

Mill. You have a friend, then, whom you love?

Barn. As he does me, sincerely.

Mill. He is, no doubt, often blessed with your company and conversation?

Barn. We live in one house, and both serve the same worthy merchant.

Mill. Happy, happy youth! Whoever thou art, I envy thee, and so must all, who see and know this youth. What have I lost, by being formed a woman! I hate my sex, myself. Had I been a man, I might, perhaps, have been as happy in your friendship, as he who now enjoys it is: but as it is———Oh!——

Barn. I never observed woman before; or this is, sure, the most beautiful of her sex. [*Aside.*] You seem disordered, madam—May I know the cause?

Mill. Do not ask me—I can never speak it, whatever is the cause. I wish for things impossible. I would be a servant, bound to the same master, to live in one house with you.

Barn. How strange, and yet how kind, her words and actions are! And the effect they have on me is as strange. I feel desires I never knew before. I must be gone, while I have power to go. [*Aside.*] Madam, I humbly take my leave.

Mill. You will not, sure, leave me so soon!

Barn. Indeed I must.

Mill. You cannot be so cruel! I have prepared a poor supper, at which I promised myself your company.

Barn. I am sorry I must refuse the honour you designed me: but my duty to my master calls me hence. I never yet neglected his service. He is so gentle, and so good a master, that, should I wrong him, though he might forgive me, I should never forgive myself.

Mill. Am I refused, by the first man, the second favour I ever stooped to ask? Go then, thou proud hard-hearted youth; but know, you are the only man that could be found, who would let me sue twice for greater favours.

Barn. What shall I do? How shall I go, or stay?

Mill. Yet do not, do not leave me. I with my sex's pride would meet your scorn; but when I look upon you, when I behold those eyes—Oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes—this flood of tears too, that will force its way, declare—what woman's modesty should hide.

Barn. Oh, heavens! she loves me, worthless as I am. Her looks, her words, her flowing tears confess it. And can I leave her then? Oh, never, never! Madam, dry up your tears: you shall command me always; I will stay here for ever, if you would have me.

Lucy. So: she has wheedled him out of his virtue of obedience already, and will strip him of all the rest, one after another, till she has left him as few as her ladyship, or myself. [*Aside.*

Mill. Now you are kind, indeed: but I mean not to detain you always: I would have you shake off all slavish obedience to your master; but you may serve him still.

Lucy. Serve him still! Ay, or he'll have no opportunity of fingering his cash; and then he'll not serve your end, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*

Enter BLUNT.

Blunt. Madam, supper's on the table.

Mill. Come, sir, you'll excuse all defects. My thoughts were too much employed on my guest to observe the entertainment.

[*Exeunt Barnwell and Millwood.*

Blunt. What! is all this preparation, this elegant supper, variety of wines, and music, for the entertainment of that young fellow?

Lucy. So it seems.

Blunt. How! is our mistress turned fool at last?

She's in love with him, I suppose.

Lucy. I suppose not. But she designs to make him in love with her, if she can.

Blunt. What will she get by that? He seems under age, and cannot be supposed to have much money.

Lucy. But his master has, and that's the same thing, as she will manage it.

Blunt. I do not like this fooling with a handsome young fellow: while she is endeavouring to ensnare him, she may be caught herself.

Lucy. Nay, were she like me, that would certainly be the consequence; for, I confess, there is something in youth and innocence that moves me mightily.

Blunt. Yes; so does the smoothness and plumpness of a partridge move a mighty desire in the hawk to be the destruction of it.

Lucy. Why, birds are their prey, and men are ours; though, as you observed, we are sometimes caught ourselves. But that, I dare say, will never be the case of our mistress.

Blunt. I wish it may prove so; for you know

we all depend upon her. Should she trifle away her time with a young fellow that there is nothing to be got by, we must all starve.

Lucy. There is no danger of that; for I am sure she has no view in this affair but interest.

Blunt. Well, and what hopes are there of success in that?

Lucy. The most promising that can be. It is true the youth has his scruples; but she will soon teach him to answer them, by stifling his conscience. Oh, the lad is in a hopeful way, depend upon it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Draws, and discovers BARNWELL *and* MILLWOOD *at supper. An entertainment of music and singing. After which they come forward.*

Barn. What can I answer? All that I know is, that you are fair, and I am miserable.

Mill. We are both so, and yet the fault is in ourselves.

Barn. To ease our present anguish by plunging into guilt, is to buy a moment's pleasure with an age of pain.

Mill. I should have thought the joys of love as lasting as they are great; if ours prove otherwise, it is your inconstancy must make them so.

Barn. The law of Heaven will not be reversed, and that requires us to govern our passions.

Mill. To give us sense of beauty and desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is a cruelty to nature. Have we passions only to torment us?

Barn. To hear you talk, though in the cause of vice; to gaze upon your beauty, press your hand, and see your snow-white bosom heave and fall, inflame my wishes; my pulse beats high, my senses all are in a hurry, and I am on the rack of wild desire.——Yet, for a moment's guilty pleasure, shall I lose my innocence, my peace of mind, and hopes of solid happiness?

Mill. Chimeras all!

Barn. I would not——yet must on——
Reluctant thus the merchant quits his ease,
And trusts to rocks and sands, and stormy seas;
In hopes some unknown golden coast to find,
Commits himself, though doubtful, to the wind,
Longs much for joys to come—yet mourns these left behind.

Mill. Along with me, and prove
No joys like woman-kind, no heaven like love.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* THOROWGOOD'S *House. Enter* BARNWELL.

Barn. How strange are all things round me! Like some thief who treads forbidden ground, and fain would lurk unseen, fearful I enter each apartment of this well-known house. To guilty love, as if that were too little, already have I added breach of trust———A thief!——Can I know myself that wretched thing, and look my honest friend and injured master in the face?—Though hypocrisy may a while conceal my guilt, at length it will be known, and public shame and ruin must ensue. In the mean time, what must be my life? Ever to speak a language foreign to my heart; hourly to add to the number of my crimes, in order to conceal them. Sure such was the condition of the grand apostate, when first he lost his purity. Like me, disconsolate, he wandered; and, while yet in heaven, bore all his future hell about him.

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. Barnwell! Oh! how I rejoice to see you safe! So will our master and his gentle daughter; who, during your absence, often enquired after you.

Barn. Would he were gone! His officious love will pry into the secrets of my soul. [*Aside.*

True. Unless you knew the pain the whole family has felt on your account, you cannot conceive how much you are beloved. But why thus cold and silent? When my heart is full of joy for your return, why do you turn away? why thus avoid me? What have I done? How am I altered since you saw me last? Or rather, what have you done? and why are you thus changed? for I am still the same.

Barn. What have I done, indeed! [*Aside.*

True. Not speak!—nor look upon me!—

Barn. By my face he will discover all I would conceal; methinks already I begin to hate him. [*Aside.*

True. I cannot bear this usage from a friend; one whom till now I ever found so loving;—whom yet I love; though this unkindness strikes at the root of friendship, and might destroy it in any breast but mine.

Barn. I am not well. [*Turning to him.*]—Sleep has been a stranger to these eyes since you beheld them last.

True. Heavy they look indeed, and swoln with tears;—now they overflow. Rightly did my sympathizing heart forebode last night, when thou wast absent, something fatal to our peace.

Barn. Your friendship engages you too far.—My troubles, whate'er they are, are mine alone: you have no interest in them, nor ought your concern for me to give you a moment's pain.

True. You speak as if you knew of friendship nothing but the name. Before I saw your grief, I felt it. Since we parted last I have slept no more than you, but pensive in my chamber sat alone, and spent the tedious night in wishes for

your safety and return: even now, though ignorant of the cause, your sorrow wounds me to the heart.

Barn. 'Twill not be always thus. Friendship and all engagements cease, as circumstances and occasions vary; and, since you once may hate me, perhaps it might be better for us both that now you loved me less.

True. Sure I but dream! Without a cause would Barnwell use me thus? Ungenerous and ungrateful youth, farewell; I shall endeavour to follow your advice. [*Going.*] Yet stay; perhaps I am too rash, and angry when the cause demands compassion. Some unforeseen calamity may have befallen him, too great to bear.

Barn. What part am I reduced to act? It is vile and base to move his temper thus, the best of friends and men.

True. I am to blame; prithee, forgive me, Barnwell. Try to compose your ruffled mind; and let me know the cause that thus transports you from yourself; my friendly counsel may restore your peace.

Barn. All that is possible for man to do for man, your generous friendship may effect; but here even that is in vain.

True. Something dreadful is labouring in your breast; oh, give it vent, and let me share your grief! it will ease your pain, should it admit no cure, and make it lighter by the part I bear.

Barn. Vain supposition! my woes increase by being observed; should the cause be known, they would exceed all bounds.

True. So well I know thy honest heart, guilt cannot harbour there.

Barn. Oh, torture insupportable! [*Aside.*

True. Then why am I excluded? Have I a thought I would conceal from you?

Barn. If still you urge me on this hated subject, I will never enter more beneath this roof, nor see your face again.

True. It is strange—but I have done; say but you hate me not.

Barn. Hate you! I am not that monster yet.

True. Shall our friendship still continue?

Barn. It is a blessing I never was worthy of, yet now must stand on terms; and but upon conditions can confirm it.

True. What are they?

Barn. Never hereafter, though you should wonder at my conduct, desire to know more than I am willing to reveal.

True. It is hard; but upon any conditions I must be your friend.

Barn. Then, as much as one lost to himself can be another's, I am yours. [*Embracing.*

True. Be ever so, and may Heaven restore your peace!

Barn. Will yesterday return? We have heard the glorious sun, that till then incessant rolled, once stopped his rapid course, and once went back. The dead have risen, and parched rocks poured forth a liquid stream to quench a people's thirst. The sea divided, and formed walls of water, while a whole nation passed in safety through its sandy bosom. Hungry lions have refused their prey; and men unhurt have walked amidst consuming flames; but never yet did time, once past, return.

True. Though the continued chain of time has never once been broke, nor ever will, but uninterrupted must keep on its course, till, lost in eternity, it ends where it first began; yet as Heaven can repair whatever evils time can bring upon us, we ought never to despair. But business requires our attendance; business, the youth's best preservative from ill, as idleness his worst of snares. Will you go with me?

Barn. I'll take a little time to reflect on what has past, and follow you. [*Exit* Trueman.] I might have trusted Trueman, and engaged him to apply to my uncle to repair the wrong I have done my master; but what of Millwood? Must I expose her too? Ungenerous and base! Then Heaven requires it not. But Heaven requires that I forsake her. What! never to see her more? Does Heaven require that? I hope I may see her, and Heaven not be offended. Presumptuous hope! Dearly already have I proved my frailty. Should I once more tempt Heaven, I may be left to fall, never to rise again. Yet, shall I leave her, for ever leave her, and not let her know the cause? She who loves me with such a boundless passion! Can cruelty be duty? I judge of what she then must feel, by what I now endure. The love of life, and fear of shame, opposed by inclination strong as death or shame, like wind and tide in raging conflict meeting, when neither can prevail, keep me in doubt. How then can I determine?

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Without a cause assigned, or notice given, to absent yourself last night was a fault, young man, and I came to chide you for it; but hope I am prevented. That modest blush, the confusion so visible in your face, speak grief and shame. When we have offended Heaven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs himself to be forgiven, be harder to appease? If my pardon or love be of moment to your peace, look up, secure of both.

Barn. This goodness has overcome me. [*Aside.*] Oh, sir, you know not the nature and extent of my offence; and I should abuse your mistaken bounty to receive it. Though I had rather die than speak my shame; though racks could not have forced the guilty secret from my breast, your kindness has.

Thor. Enough, enough, whatever it be; this concern shews you are convinced, and I am satisfied. How painful is the sense of guilt to an ingenuous mind? Some youthful folly, which it were prudent not to inquire into. When we

consider the frail condition of humanity, it may raise our pity, not our wonder, that youth should *go astray*; when reason, weak at the best, opposed to inclination, scarce formed, and wholly unassisted by experience, faintly contends, or *willingly* becomes the slave of sense. The state of youth is much to be deplored, and the more so, because they see it not; being then to danger most exposed, when they are least prepared for their defence. [*Aside.*

Barn. It will be known, and you will recall your pardon and abhor me.

Thor. I never will. Yet be upon your guard *in this* gay thoughtless season of your life; when the sense of pleasure is quick, and passions high, the voluptuous appetites, raging and fierce, demand the strongest curb; take heed of a relapse: when vice becomes habitual, the very power of leaving it is lost.

Barn. Hear me, on my knees, confess——

Thor. Not a syllable more upon this subject; it were not mercy, but cruelty, to hear what must give such torment to reveal.

Barn. This generosity amazes and distracts me.

Thor. This remorse makes thee dearer to me than if thou hadst never offended. Whatever is your fault, of this I am certain, 'twas harder for you to offend, than for me to pardon.

[*Exit Thorowgood.*

Barn. Villain, villain, villain! basely to wrong so excellent a man! Should I again return to folly? Detested thought!—But what of Millwood *then?*—Why, I renounce her;—I give her up—The struggle's over, and virtue has prevailed. Reason may convince, but gratitude compels. *This* unlooked-for generosity has saved me from destruction. [*Going.*

Enter a Footman.

Foot. Sir, two ladies from your uncle in the country desire to see you.

Barn. Who should they be? [*Aside.*] Tell them I'll wait upon them, Methinks I dread to see them.——Now every thing alarms me.——Guilt, what a coward hast thou made me! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another room in Thorowgood's House.*

Enter MILLWOOD, LUCY, *and a Footman.*

Foot. Ladies, he will wait upon you immediately.

Mill. 'Tis very well.——I thank you.

[*Exit Foot.*

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. Confusion! Millwood!

Mill. That angry look tells me that here I am an unwelcome guest. I feared as much; the unhappy are so every where.

Barn. Will nothing but my utter ruin content you?

Mill. Unkind and cruel! Lost myself, your happiness is now my only care.

Barn. How did you gain admission?

Mill. Saying we were desired by your uncle to visit, and deliver a message to you, we were received by the family without suspicion, and with much respect conducted here.

Barn. Why did you come at all?

Mill. I never shall trouble you more. I'm come to take my leave for ever. Such is the malice of my fate: I go hopeless, despairing ever to return. This hour is all I have left: one short hour is all I have to bestow on love and you, for whom I thought the longest life too short.

Barn. Then we are met to part for ever?

Mill. It must be so. Yet think not that time or absence shall ever put a period to my grief, or make me love you less. Though I must leave you, yet condemn me not.

Barn. Condemn you! No, I approve your resolution, and rejoice to hear it; it is just——it is necessary——I have well weighed, and found it so.

Lucy. I am afraid the young man has more sense than she thought he had. [*Aside.*

Barn. Before you came, I had determined never to see you more.

Mill. Confusion! [*Aside.*

Lucy. Ay, we are all out; this is a turn so unexpected, that I shall make nothing of my part; they must e'en play the scene betwixt themselves. [*Aside.*

Mill. It was some relief to think, though absent, you would love me still; but to find, though fortune had been indulgent, that you, more cruel and inconstant, had resolved to cast me off—— This, as I never could expect, I have not learned to bear.

Barn. I am sorry to hear you blame me in a resolution that so well becomes us both.

Mill. I have reason for what I do, but you have none.

Barn. Can we want a reason for parting, who have so many to wish we never had met?

Mill. Look on me, Barnwell. Am I deformed or old, that satiety so soon succeeds enjoyment? Nay, look again; am I not she whom yesterday you thought the fairest and the kindest of her sex; whose hand, trembling with extasy, you pressed and moulded thus, while on my eyes you gazed with such delight, as if desire increased by being fed?

Barn. No more; let me repent my former follies, if possible, without remembering what they were.

Mill. Why?

Barn. Such is my frailty, that it is dangerous.

Mill. Where is the danger, since we are to part?

Barn. The thought of that already is too painful.

Mill. If it be painful to part, then I may hope, at least, you do not hate me?

Barn. No——no——I never said I did——— Oh, my heart!

Mill. Perhaps you pity me?

Barn. I do——I do——Indeed I do.

Mill. You'll think upon me?

Barn. Doubt it not, while I can think at all.

Mill. You may judge an embrace at parting too great a favour—though it would be the last. [*He draws back.*] A look shall then suffice—— Farewell—for ever. [*Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.*

Barn. If to resolve to suffer be to conquer,—I have conquered———Painful victory!

Re-enter MILLWOOD *and* LUCY.

Mill. One thing I had forgot;——I never must return to my own house again. This I thought proper to let you know, lest your mind should change, and you should seek in vain to find me there. Forgive me this second intrusion; I only came to give you this caution, and that, perhaps, was needless.

Barn. I hope it was; yet it is kind, and I must thank you for it.

Mill. My friend, your arm. [*To Lucy.*] Now, I am gone for ever. [*Going.*

Barn. One thing more—Sure there is no danger in my knowing where you go? If you think otherwise—

Mill. Alas! [*Weeping.*

Lucy. We are right, I find; that's my cue. [*Aside.*] Ah, dear sir! she is going she knows not whither; but go she must.

Barn. Humanity obliges me to wish you well: why will you thus expose yourself to needless troubles?

Lucy. Nay, there is no help for it: she must quit the town immediately, and the kingdom as soon as possible. It was no small matter, you may be sure, that could make her resolve to leave you.

Mill. No more, my friend; since he, for whose dear sake alone I suffer, and am content to suffer, is kind and pities me; wherever I wander, through wilds and deserts benighted and forlorn, that thought shall give me comfort.

Barn. For my sake!—Oh, tell me how, which way am I so cursed to bring such ruin on thee?

Mill. No matter; I am contented with my lot.

Barn. Leave me not in this uncertainty.

Mill. I have said too much.

Barn. How, how am I the cause of your undoing?

Mill. To know it will but increase your troubles.

Barn. My troubles cannot be greater than they are.

Lucy. Well, sir, if she will not satisfy you, I will.

Barn. I am bound to you beyond expression.

Mill. Remember, sir, that I desired you not to hear it.

Barn. Begin, and ease my racking expectation.

Lucy. Why, you must know, my lady here was an only child, and her parents dying while she was young, left her and her fortune (no inconsiderable one, I assure you) to the care of a gentleman who has a good estate of his own.

Mill. Ay, ay, the barbarous man is rich enough; but what are riches when compared to love?

Lucy. For a while he performed the office of a faithful guardian, settled her in a house, hired her servants.——But you have seen in what manner she lived, so I need say no more of that.

Mill. How I shall live hereafter, Heaven knows!

Lucy. All things went on as one could wish; till some ago, his wife dying, he fell violently in love with his charge, and would fain have married her. Now the man is neither old nor ugly, but a good personable sort of a man, but I do not know how it was, she could never endure him. In short, her ill usage so provoked him, that he brought in an account of his executorship, wherein he makes her debtor to him.——

Mill. A trifle in itself, but more than enough to ruin me, whom, by this unjust account, he had stripped of all before.

Lucy. Now, she having neither money nor friend, except me, who am as unfortunate as herself, he compelled her to pass his account, and give bond for the sum he demanded; but still provided handsomely for her, and continued his courtship, till, being informed by his spies (truly I suspect some in her own family), that you were entertained at her house, and staid with her all night, he came this morning raving and storming like a madman, talks no more of marriage (so there is no hope of making up matters that way), but vows her ruin, unless she shall allow him the same favour that he supposes she granted you.

Barn. Must she be ruined, or find her refuge in another's arms?

Mill. He gave me but an hour to resolve in; that is happily spent with you—And now I go—

Barn. To be exposed to all the rigours of the various seasons; the summer's parching heat, and winter's cold; unhoused, to wander, friendless, through the inhospitable world, in misery and want; attended with fear and danger, and pursued by malice and revenge. Wouldst thou endure all this for me, and can I do nothing, nothing, to prevent it?

Lucy. It is really a pity there can be no way found out.

Barn. Oh, where are all my resolutions now? Like early vapours, or the morning dew, chased by the sun's warm beams, they are vanished and lost, as though they had never been.

Lucy. Now I advised her, sir, to comply with the gentleman: that would not only put an end to her troubles, but make her fortune at once.

Barn. Tormenting fiend, away! I had rather perish, nay, see her perish, than have her saved by him. I will, myself, prevent her ruin, though with my own. A moment's patience; I'll return immediately. [*Exit Barnwell.*

Lucy. It was well you came, or, by what I can perceive, you had lost him.

Mill. That, I must confess, was a danger I did not foresee; I was only afraid he should have come without money. You know, a house of entertainment, like mine, is not kept without expence.

Lucy. That is very true; but then you should be reasonable in your demands; 'tis pity to discourage a young man.

Mill. Leave that to me.

Re-enter BARNWELL, *with a bag of money.*

Barn. What am I about to do?——Now, you, who boast your reason all-sufficient, suppose yourselves in my condition, and determine for me; whether it is right to let her suffer for my faults, or, by this small addition to my guilt, prevent the ill effects of what is past.

Lucy. These young sinners think every thing in the way of wickedness so strange!——But I could tell him, that this is nothing but what is very common; for one vice as naturally begets another, as a father a son. But he will find out that himself, if he lives long enough.

[*Aside.*

Barn. Here, take this, and with it purchase your deliverance; return to your house, and live in peace and safety.

Mill. So, I may hope to see you there again?

Barn. Answer me not, but fly, lest, in the agonies of my remorse, I take again what is not mine to give, and abandon thee to want and misery.

Mill. Say but you will come!

Barn. You are my fate, my heaven or my hell; only leave me now, dispose of me hereafter as you please. [*Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.*

What have I done? Were my resolutions founded on reason, and sincerely made? Why, then, has Heaven suffered me to fall? I sought not the occasion; and, if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. Is virtue inconsistent with itself, or are vice and virtue only empty names; or do they depend on accidents, beyond our power to produce, or to prevent; wherein we have no part, and yet must be determined by the event? But why should I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror, and remorse! I find I am lost, cast down from all my late-erected hope, and plunged again in guilt, yet scarce know how or why!

Such undistinguished horrors make my brain,
Like hell, the seat of darkness and of pain.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Room in Thorowgood's House.

THOROWGOOD *and* TRUEMAN *discovered (with Account Books) sitting at a Table.*

Thor. METHINKS I would not have you only learn the method of merchandise, and practise it hereafter, merely as a means of getting wealth: it will be well worth your pains to study it as a science, to see how it is founded in reason and the nature of things: how it promotes humanity, as it has opened, and yet keeps up an intercourse between nations, far remote from one another in situation, customs, and religion; promoting arts, industry, peace, and plenty: by mutual benefits diffusing mutual love from pole to pole.

True. Something of this I have considered, and hope, by your assistance, to extend my thoughts much farther. I have observed those countries, where trade is promoted and encouraged, do not make discoveries to destroy, but to improve mankind by love and friendship; to tame the fierce, and polish the most savage; to teach them the advantage of honest traffic, by taking from them, with their own consent, their useless superfluities, and giving them, in return, what, from their ignorance in manual arts, their situation, or some other accident, they stand in need of.

Thor. It is justly observed: the populous east, luxuriant, abounds with glittering gems, bright pearls, aromatic spices, and health-restoring drugs: the late-found western world's rich earth glows with unnumbered veins of gold and silver ore. On every climate, and on every country, Heaven has bestowed some good peculiar to itself. It is the industrious merchant's business to collect the various blessings of each soil and climate; and, with the product of the whole, to enrich his native country.——Well, I have examined your accounts; they are not only just, as I have always found them, but regularly kept, and fairly entered. I commend your diligence. Method in business is the surest guide; he, who neglects it, frequently stumbles, and always wanders perplexed, uncertain, and in danger.—Are Barnwell's accounts ready for my inspection? He does not use to be the last on these occasions.

True. Upon receiving your orders he retired, I thought in some confusion. If you please, I'll go and hasten him. I hope he has not been guilty of any neglect.

Thor. I am now going to the Exchange; let him know, at my return I expect to find him ready. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MARIA *with a book. Sits and reads.*

Mar. How forcible is truth! The weakest mind, inspired with love of that, fixed and collected in itself, with indifference beholds the united force of earth and hell opposing. Such

souls are raised above the sense of pain, or so supported, that they regard it not. The martyr cheaply purchases his heaven; small are his sufferings, great is his reward. Not so the wretch who combats love with duty; whose mind, weakened and dissolved by the soft passion, feeble and hopeless, opposes his own desires——What is an hour, a day, a year of pain, to a whole life of tortures such as these?

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. Oh, Barnwell! oh, my friend! how art thou fallen!

Mar. Ha! Barnwell! What of him! Speak, say, what of Barnwell?

True. It is not to be concealed: I have news to tell of him, that will afflict your generous father, yourself, and all who know him.

Mar. Defend us, Heaven!

True. I cannot speak it. See there.

[*Gives a letter.*

Mar. [*Reads.*] 'I know my absence will surprise my honoured master and yourself; and the more, when you shall understand, that the reason of my withdrawing, is my having embezzled part of the cash with which I was entrusted. After this, it is needless to inform you, that I intend never to return again. Though this might have been known, by examining my accounts; yet, to prevent that unnecessary trouble, and to cut off all fruitless expectations of my return, I have left this from the lost

GEORGE BARNWELL.

True. Lost indeed! Yet how he should be guilty of what he there charges himself withal, raises my wonder equal to my grief. Never had youth a higher sense of virtue. Justly he thought, and as he thought he practised; never was life more regular than his.—An understanding uncommon at his years, an open, generous manliness of temper, his manners easy, unaffected, and engaging.

Mar. This, and much more, you might have said with truth. He was the delight of every eye, and joy of every heart that knew him.

True. Since such he was, and was my friend, can I support his loss? See, the fairest, happiest maid this wealthy city boasts, kindly condescends to weep for thy unhappy fate, poor, ruined Barnwell!

Mar. Trueman, do you think a soul, so delicate as his, so sensible of shame, can ever submit to live a slave to vice?

True. Never, never. So well I know him, I am sure this act of his, so contrary to his nature, must have been caused by some unavoidable necessity.

Mar. Is there no means yet to preserve him?

True. Oh, that there were! but few men recover their reputation lost, a merchant never. Nor would he, I fear, though I should find him, ever be brought to look his injured master in the face.

Mar. I fear as much, and therefore would never have my father know it.

True. That is impossible.

Mar. What is the sum?

True. It is considerable; I have marked it here, to shew it, with the letter, to your father, at his return.

Mar. If I should supply the money, could you so dispose of that, and the account, as to conceal this unhappy mismanagement from my father?

True. Nothing more easy. But can you intend it?—Will you save a helpless wretch from ruin?—Oh, it were an act worthy such exalted virtue as Maria's! Sure Heaven, in mercy to my friend, inspired the generous thought.

Mar. Doubt not, but I would purchase so great a happiness at a much dearer price. But how shall he be found?

True. Trust to my diligence for that. In the mean time, I will conceal his absence from your father, or find such excuses for it, that the real cause shall never be suspected.

Mar. In attempting to save from shame, one whom we hope may yet return to virtue, to Heaven, and you, the only witnesses of this action, I appeal, whether I do any thing unbecoming my sex and character.

True. Earth must approve the deed, and Heaven, I doubt not, will reward it.

Mar. If Heaven succeeds it, I am well rewarded. A virgin's fame is sullied by suspicion's lightest breath; and, therefore, as this must be a secret from my father, and the world, for Barnwell's sake, for mine, let it be so to him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Millwood's House.*

Enter LUCY *and* BLUNT.

Lucy. Well, what do you think of Millwood's conduct now?

Blunt. I own it is surprising: I do not know which to admire most, her feigned, or his real passion; though I have sometimes been afraid that her avarice would discover her. But his youth and want of experience make it the easier to impose on him.

Lucy. No, it is his love. To do him justice, notwithstanding his youth, he does not want understanding. But you men are much easier imposed on in these affairs, than your vanity will allow you to believe. Let me see the wisest of you all as much in love with me as Barnwell is with Millwood, and I will engage to make as great a fool of him.

Blunt. And, all circumstances considered, to make as much money of him too?

Lucy. I cannot answer for that. Her artifice, in making him rob his master at first, and the various stratagems by which she has obliged him to continue that course, astonish even me, who know her so well.

Blunt. But then you are to consider that the money was his master's.

Lucy. There was the difficulty of it. Had it been his own, it had been nothing. Were the world his, she might have it for a smile. But those golden days are done: he is ruined, and Millwood's hopes of farther profits there are at an end.

Blunt. That is no more than we all expected.

Lucy. Being called by his master to make up his accounts, he was forced to quit his house and service, and wisely flies to Millwood for relief and entertainment.

Blunt. I have not heard of this before: how did she receive him?

Lucy. As you would expect. She wondered what he meant, was astonished at his impudence, and, with an air of modesty peculiar to herself, swore so heartily that she never saw him before, that she put me out of countenance.

Blunt. That is much indeed! But how did Barnwell behave?

Lucy. He grieved; and at length, enraged at this barbarous treatment, was preparing to be gone; and making towards the door, shewed a sum of money, which he had brought from his master's, the last he is ever likely to have from thence.

Blunt. But then, Millwood——

Lucy. Ay, she, with her usual address, returned to her old arts of lying, swearing, and dissembling; hung on his neck, wept, and swore it was meant in jest.—The amorous youth melted into tears, threw the money into her lap, and swore he had rather die than think her false.

Blunt. Strange infatuation!

Lucy. But what ensued was stranger still. As doubts and fears, followed by reconcilement, ever increase love where the passion is sincere; so in him it caused so wild a transport of excessive fondness, such joy, such grief, such pleasure, and such anguish, that nature seemed sinking with the weight, and his charmed soul disposed to quit his breast for hers. Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevailed, and reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevailed upon the wretched youth to promise——what I tremble but to think of.

Blunt. I am amazed! What can it be?

Lucy. You will be more so, to hear it is to attempt the life of his nearest relation, and best benefactor.

Blunt. His uncle! whom we have often heard him speak of as a gentleman of a large estate, and fair character, in the country where he lives?

Lucy. The same. She was no sooner possessed of the last dear purchase of his ruin, but her avarice, insatiate as the grave, demanded this horrid sacrifice. Barnwell's near relation, and unsuspected virtue, must give too easy means to seize this good man's treasure; whose blood must seal the dreadful secret, and prevent the terrors of her guilty fears.

Blunt. Is it possible she could persuade him to do an act like that? He is by nature honest, grateful, compassionate, and generous; and though his love, and her artful persuasions, have wrought him to practise what he most abhors; yet we all can witness for him, with what reluctance he has still complied: so many tears he shed over each offence, as might, if possible, sanctify theft, and make a merit of a crime.

Lucy. 'Tis true, at the naming of the murder of his uncle, he started into rage; and, breaking from her arms (where she till then had held him, with well-dissembled love, and false endearments), called her cruel, monster, devil, and told her she was born for his destruction. She thought it not for her purpose to meet his rage with her rage, but affected a most passionate fit of grief, railed at her fate, and cursed her wayward stars, that still her wants should force her to press him to act such deeds, as she must needs abhor as well as he. She told him necessity had no law, and love no bounds; that therefore he never truly loved, but meant, in her necessity, to forsake her. Then she kneeled, and swore, that, since by his refusal he had given her cause to doubt his love, she never would see him more, unless, to prove it true, he robbed his uncle to supply her wants, and murdered him to keep it from discovery.

Blunt. I am astonished. What said he?

Lucy. Speechless he stood; but in his face you might have read, that various passions tore his very soul. Oft he in anguish threw his eyes towards heaven, and then as often bent their beams on her; then wept and groaned, and beat his troubled breast: at length, with horror not to be expressed, he cried,—'Thou cursed fair, have I 'not given dreadful proofs of love? What drew 'me from my youthful innocence, and stained 'my then unspotted soul, but love? What caused 'me to rob my worthy, gentle master, but cursed 'love? What makes me now a fugitive from his 'service, loathed by myself, and scorned by all 'the world, but love? What fills my eyes with 'tears, my soul with torture never felt on this side 'death before? Why love, love, love! And why, 'above all, do I resolve (for, tearing his hair, he 'cried, I do resolve) to kill my uncle?'

Blunt. Was she not moved? It makes me weep to hear the sad relation.

Lucy. Yes, with joy, that she had gained her point. She gave him no time to cool, but urged him to attempt it instantly. He is now gone. If he performs it, and escapes, there is more money for her; if not, he will never return, and then she is fairly rid of him.

Blunt. It is time the world were rid of such a monster.

Lucy. If we do not use our endeavours to prevent the murder, we are as bad as she.

Blunt. I am afraid it is too late.

Lucy. Perhaps not. Her barbarity to Barnwell makes me hate her. We have run too great a length with her already. I did not think her

or myself so wicked as I find, upon reflection, we are.

Blunt. It is true, we have been all too much so. But there is something so horrid in murder, that all other crimes seem nothing when compared to that: I would not be involved in the guilt of it for all the world.

Lucy. Nor I, Heaven knows. Therefore let us clear ourselves, by doing all that is in our power to prevent it. I have just thought of a way that to me seems probable. Will you join with me to detect this cursed design?

Blunt. With all my heart. He, who knows of a murder intended to be committed, and does not discover it, in the eye of the law and reason, is a murderer.

Lucy. Let us lose no time; I will acquaint you with the particulars as we go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A walk at some distance from a country seat.*

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. A dismal gloom obscures the face of day. Either the sun has slipped behind a cloud, or journeys down the west of heaven with more than common speed, to avoid the sight of what I am doomed to act. Since I set forth on this accursed design, where'er I tread, methinks, the solid earth trembles beneath my feet. Murder my uncle!——Yonder limpid stream, whose hoary fall has made a natural cascade, as I passed by, in doleful accents seemed to murmur——Murder! The earth, the air, and water seemed concerned. But that is not strange: the world is punished, and nature feels a shock, when Providence permits a good man's fall. Just Heaven! then what should I feel for him that was my father's only brother, and since his death has been to me a father; that took me up an infant and an orphan, reared me with tenderest care, and still indulged me with most paternal fondness? Yet here I stand his destined murderer—I stiffen with horror at my own impiety——It is yet unperformed—What if I quit my bloody purpose, and fly the place? [*Going, then stops.*]——But whither, oh, whither shall I fly? My master's once friendly doors are ever shut against me; and without money Millwood will never see me more; and she has got such firm possession of my heart, and governs there with such despotic sway, that life is not to be endured without her. Ay, there is the cause of all my sin and sorrow! it is more than love; it is the fever of the soul, and madness of desire. In vain does nature, reason, conscience, all oppose it; the impetuous passion bears down all before it, and drives me on to lust, to theft, and murder. Oh, conscience! feeble guide to virtue, thou only shewest us when we go astray, but wantest power to stop us in our course!——Ha! in yonder shady walk I see my uncle——He is alone——Now for my disguise. [*Plucks out a visor.*]——This is his hour of private meditation. Thus daily he prepares his soul for Heaven; while I——But what have I to do with Heaven? Ha! no struggles, conscience——

Hence, hence remorse, and every thought that's good;
The storm, that lust began, must end in blood.

[*Puts on the vizor, draws a pistol, and exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A close Walk in a Wood.*

Enter UNCLE.

Unc. If I were superstitious, I should fear some danger lurked unseen, or death were nigh. A heavy melancholy clouds my spirits. My imagination is filled with ghastly forms of dreary graves, and bodies changed by death; when the pale lengthened visage attracts each weeping eye, and fills the musing soul at once with grief and horror, pity and aversion. I will indulge the thought. The wise man prepares himself for death, by making it familiar to his mind. When strong reflections hold the mirror near, and the living in the dead behold their future self, how does each inordinate passion and desire cease, or sicken at the view! The mind scarce moves; the blood, curdling and chilled, creeps slowly through the veins: fixed, still, and motionless, we stand, so like the solemn objects of our thoughts, we are almost at present what we must be hereafter; till curiosity awakes the soul, and sets it on enquiry.

Enter BARNWELL, *at a distance.*

Oh, death! thou strange, mysterious power, seen every day, yet never understood, but by the incommunicative dead, what art thou? The extensive mind of man, that with a thought circles the earth's vast globe, sinks to the centre, or ascends above the stars; that worlds exotic finds, or thinks it finds, thy thick clouds attempts to pass in vain; lost and bewildered in the horrid gloom, defeated, she returns more doubtful than before, of nothing certain but of labour lost.

[*During this speech, Barnwell sometimes presents the pistol, and draws it back again.*

Barn. Oh! 'tis impossible.

[*Throwing down the pistol.*

[*Uncle starts, and attempts to draw his sword.*]

Unc. A man so near me! Armed and masked——

Barn. Nay, then, there's no retreat.

[*Plucks a poignard from his bosom, and stabs him.*

Unc. Oh! I am slain. All gracious Heaven, regard the prayer of thy dying servant! bless, with thy choicest blessings, my dearest nephew! forgive my murderer, and take my fleeting soul to endless mercy!

[*Barnwell throws off his mask, runs to him, and, kneeling by him, raises and chafes him.*

Barn. Expiring saint! Oh, murdered, martyred uncle! lift up your dying eyes, and view your nephew in your murderer——Oh, do not look so tenderly upon me!——Let indignation lighten from your eyes, and blast me ere you die.——By Heaven, he weeps, in pity of my woes.——Tears, tears for blood!——The murdered, in the agonies of death, weeps for his murderer.——Oh, speak your pious purpose; pronounce my pardon then, and take me with you——He would, but cannot——Oh, why, with such fond affection, do you press my murdering hand?——[*Uncle sighs and dies.*]——What, will you kiss me?——Life, that hovered on his lips but till he had sealed my pardon, in that sigh expired.——He is gone for ever, and, oh! I follow——[*Swoons away upon his uncle's dead body.*]——Do I still breathe, and taint with my infectious breath the wholesome air?——Let Heaven, from its high throne, in justice or in mercy now look down on that dear murdered saint, and me the murderer, and if his vengeance spares, let pity strike and end my wretched being.——Murder the worst of crimes, and parricide the worst of murders, and this the worst of parricides!——Cain, who stands on record from the birth of time, and must to its last final period, as accursed, slew a brother favoured above him: detested Nero, by another's hand, dispatched a mother that he feared and hated: but I, with my own hand, have murdered a brother, mother, father, and a friend, most loving and beloved.——This execrable act of mine is without a parallel.——Oh, may it ever stand alone, the last of murders, as it is the worst!

The rich man thus, in torment and despair,
Preferred his vain, his charitable prayer.
The fool, his own soul lost, would fain be wise
For others' good, but Heaven his suit denies.
By laws and means well-known we stand or fall;
And one eternal rule remains for all. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* THOROWGOOD'S *House.*

Mar. How falsely do they judge, who censure or applaud, as we are afflicted or rewarded here! I know I am unhappy; yet cannot charge myself with any crime, more than the common frailties of our kind, that should provoke just Heaven to mark me out for sufferings so uncommon and severe. Falsely to accuse ourselves, Heaven must abhor. Then it is just and right that innocence should suffer; for Heaven must be just in all its ways. Perhaps by that we are kept from moral evils, much worse than penal, or more improved in virtue. Or may not the lesser evils that we sustain, be made the means of greater good to others? Might all the joyless days and sleepless nights that I have passed, but purchase peace for thee! What news of Barnwell?

True. None; I have sought him with the greatest diligence, but all in vain.

Mar. Does my father yet suspect the cause of his absence?

True. All appeared so just and fair to him, it is not possible he ever should. But his absence will no longer be concealed. Your father is wise; and though he seems to hearken to the friendly excuses I would make for Barnwell, yet I am afraid he regards them only as such, without suffering them to influence his judgment.

Mar. How does the unhappy youth defeat all our designs to serve him? Yet I can never repent what we have done. Should he return, 'twill make his reconciliation with my father easier, and preserve him from the future reproach of a malicious unforgiving world.

Enter THOROWGOOD *and* LUCY.

Thor. This woman here has given me a sad, and, abating some circumstances, too probable an account of Barnwell's defection.

Lucy. I am sorry, sir, that my frank confession of my former unhappy course of life should cause you to suspect my truth on this occasion.

Thor. It is not that; your confession has in it all the appearance of truth. Among many other particulars, she informs me, that Barnwell has been influenced to break his trust, and wrong me, at several times, of considerable sums of money. Now, as I know this to be false, I would fain doubt the whole of her relation, too dreadful to be willingly believed.

Mar. Sir, your pardon; I find myself on a sudden so indisposed that I must retire. Providence opposes all attempts to save him. Poor ruined Barnwell! Wretched, lost Maria! [*Aside. Exit.*

Thor. How am I distressed on every side! Pity for that unhappy youth, fear for the life of a much valued friend——and then my child—the only joy and hope of my declining life!——Her melancholy increases hourly, and gives me painful apprehensions of her loss——Oh, Trueman, this person informs me that your friend, at the instigation of an impious woman, is gone to rob and murder his venerable uncle.

True. Oh, execrable deed! I am blasted with horror at the thought.

Lucy. This delay may ruin all.

Thor. What to do or think I know not. That he ever wronged me, I know, is false; the rest may be so too; there is all my hope.

True. Trust not to that; rather suppose all

true, than lose a moment's time. Even now the horrid deed may be doing—dreadful imagination!——or it may be done, and we be vainly debating on the means to prevent what is already past.

Thor. This earnestness convinces me, that he knows more than he has yet discovered. What, ho! without there! who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Order the groom to saddle the swiftest horse, and prepare to set out with speed; an affair of life and death demands his diligence. [*Exit Servant.*] For you, whose behaviour on this occasion I have no time to commend as it deserves, I must engage your further assistance. Return, and observe this Millwood till I come. I have your directions, and will follow you as soon as possible. [*Exit Lucy.*] Trueman, you, I am sure, will not be idle on this occasion. [*Exit Thorowgood.*

True. He only, who is a friend, can judge of my distress. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Millwood's house.*

Enter MILLWOOD.

Mill. I wish I knew the event of his design. The attempt without success would ruin him. Well; what have I to apprehend from that? I fear too much. The mischief being only intended, his friends, through pity of his youth, turn all their rage on me. I should have thought of that before. Suppose the deed done; then, and then only, I shall be secure.—Or what if he returns without attempting it at all!——

Enter BARNWELL *bloody.*

But he is here, and I have done him wrong. His bloody hands shew he has done the deed, but shew he wants the prudence to conceal it.

Barn. Where shall I hide me? Whither shall I fly, to avoid the swift unerring hand of justice?

Mill. Dismiss your fears; though thousands had pursued you to the door, yet, being entered here, you are as safe as innocence. I have a cavern, by art so cunningly contrived, that the piercing eyes of jealousy and revenge may search in vain, nor find the entrance to the safe retreat. There will I hide you, if any danger's near.

Barn. Oh, hide me——from myself, if it be possible; for, while I bear my conscience in my bosom, though I were hid where man's eye never saw me, nor light ever dawned, it were all in vain. For, oh! that inmate, that impartial judge, will try, convict, and sentence me for murder, and execute me with never-ending torments. Behold these hands, all crimsoned over with my dear uncle's blood! Here is a sight to make a statue start with horror, or turn a living man into a statue!

Mill. Ridiculous! Then it seems you are afraid of your own shadow, or, what is less than a shadow, your conscience!

Barn. Though to man unknown I did the accursed act, what can we hide from Heaven's all-seeing eye?

Mill. No more of this stuff. What advantage have you made of his death; or what advantage may yet be made of it? Did you secure the keys of his treasure, which, no doubt, were about him? What gold, what jewels, or what else of value have you brought me?

Barn. Think you I added sacrilege to murder? Oh! had you seen him, as his life flowed from him in a crimson flood, and heard him praying for me by the double name of nephew and of murderer—(alas, alas! he knew not then, that his nephew was his murderer!)—how would you have wished, as I did, though you had a thousand years of life to come, to have given them all to have lengthened his one hour! But, being dead, I fled the sight of what my hands had done; nor could I, to have gained the empire of the world, have violated, by theft, his sacred corpse.

Mill. Whining, preposterous, canting villain! to murder your uncle, rob him of life, nature's first, last, dear prerogative, after which there is no injury—then fear to take what he no longer wanted, and bring to me your penury and guilt! Do you think I will hazard my reputation, nay, life, to entertain you?

Barn. Oh, Millwood!——this from thee!—But I have done. If you hate me, if you wish me dead, then are you happy; for, oh! it is sure my grief will quickly end me.

Mill. In his madness he will discover all, and involve me in his ruin. We are on a precipice, from whence there is no retreat for both—Then to preserve myself——[*Pauses.*]——There is no other way.——It is dreadful, but reflection comes too late when danger is pressing, and there is no room for choice.——It must be done—[*Aside. Rings a bell, enter a Servant.*]—Fetch me an officer, and seize this villain. He has confessed himself a murderer. Should I let him escape, I might justly be thought as bad as he.

[*Exit Servant.*

Barn. Oh, Millwood! sure you do not, you cannot mean it. Stop the messenger; upon my knees, I beg you would call him back. It is fit I die indeed, but not by you. I will this instant deliver myself into the hands of justice, indeed I will; for death is all I wish. But thy ingratitude so tears my wounded soul, it is worse ten thousand times than death with torture.

Mill. Call it what you will; I am willing to live, and live secure, which nothing but your death can warrant.

Barn. If there be a pitch of wickedness that sets the author beyond the reach of vengeance, you must be secure. But what remains for me, but a dismal dungeon, hard galling fetters, an awful trial, and an ignominious death, justly to

fall unpitied and abhorred: After death to be suspended between heaven and earth, a dreadful spectacle, the warning and horror of a gaping crowd! This I could bear, nay, wish not to avoid, had it but come from any hand but thine.

Enter BLUNT, *Officer, and Attendants.*

Mill. Heaven defend me! Conceal a murderer! Here, sir, take this youth into your custody. I accuse him of murder, and will appear to make good my charge. [*They seize him.*

Barn. To whom, of what, or how shall I complain? I will not accuse her. The hand of Heaven is in it, and this the punishment of lust and parricide. Yet Heaven, that justly cuts me off, still suffers her to live; perhaps to punish others. Tremendous mercy! So fiends are cursed with immortality, to be the executioners of Heaven!

Be warned, ye youths, who see my sad despair:
Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair.
By reason guided, honest joys pursue:
The fair, to honour and to virtue true,
Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.
By my example learn to shun my fate:
(How wretched is the man who's wise too late!)
Ere innocence, and fame, and life, be lost,
Here purchase wisdom cheaply, at my cost.

[*Exeunt Barnwell, Officer, and Attendants.*

Mill. Where is Lucy? Why is she absent at such a time?

Blunt. Would I had been so too! Lucy will soon be here; and I hope to thy confusion, thou devil!

Mill. Insolent!——This to me?

Blunt. The worst that we know of the devil is, that he first seduces to sin, and then betrays to punishment. [*Exit.*

Mill. They disapprove of my conduct then, and mean to set up for themselves.——My ruin is resolved.——I see my danger, but scorn both it and them. I was not born to fall by such weak instruments. [*Going.*

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Where is the scandal of her own sex, and curse of ours?

Mill. What means this insolence! Whom do you seek?

Thor. Millwood.

Mill. Well, you have found her then. I am Millwood.

Thor. Then you are the most impious wretch that ever the sun beheld.

Mill. From your appearance I should have expected wisdom and moderation; but your manners belie your aspect. What is your business here? I know you not.

Thor. Hereafter you may know me better; I am Barnwell's master.

Mill. Then you are master to a villain, which, I think, is not much to your credit.

Thor. Had he been as much above thy arts, as my credit is superior to thy malice, I need not have blushed to own him.

Mill. My arts! I do not understand you, sir: if he has done amiss, what is that to me? Was he my servant, or yours? you should have taught him better.

Thor. Why should I wonder to find such uncommon impudence in one arrived to such a height of wickedness? When innocence is banished, modesty soon follows. Know, sorceress, I am not ignorant of any of the arts by which you first deceived the unwary youth. I know how, step by step, you have led him on, reluctant and unwilling, from crime to crime, to this last horrid act, which you contrived, and, by your cursed wiles, even forced him to commit.

Mill. Ha! Lucy has got the advantage, and accused me first. Unless I can turn the accusation, and fix it upon her and Blunt, I am lost. [*Aside.*

Thor. Had I known your cruel design sooner, it had been prevented. To see you punished, as the law directs, is all that now remains. Poor satisfaction! for he, innocent as he is, compared to you, must suffer too. But Heaven, who knows our frame, and graciously distinguishes between frailty and presumption, will make a difference, though man cannot, who sees not the heart, but only judges by the outward action.

Mill. I find, sir, we are both unhappy in our servants. I was surprised at such ill treatment, without cause, from a gentleman of your appearance, and therefore too hastily returned it; for which I ask your pardon. I now perceive you have been so far imposed on, as to think me engaged in a former correspondence with your servant, and, some way or other, accessary to his undoing.

Thor. I charge you as the cause, the sole cause, of all his guilt, and all his suffering; of all he now endures, and must endure, till a violent and shameful death shall put a dreadful period to his life and miseries together.

Mill. It is very strange. But who is secure from scandal and detraction? So far from contributing to his ruin, I never spoke to him till since this fatal accident, which I lament as much as you. It is true I have a servant, on whose account he hath of late frequented my house. If she has abused my good opinion of her, am I to blame? Has not Barnwell done the same by you?

Thor. I hear you; pray go on.

Mill. I have been informed he had a violent passion for her, and she for him: but till now I always thought it innocent. I know her poor, and given to expensive pleasures. Now, who can tell but she may have influenced the amorous youth to commit this murder to supply her extravagancies?——It must be so. I now recollect a thousand circumstances that confirm it. I will have her, and a man servant, whom I suspect as an

accomplice, secured immediately. I hope, sir, you will lay aside your ill-grounded suspicions of me, and join to punish the real contrivers of this bloody deed. [*Offers to go.*

Thor. Madam, you pass not this way: I see your design, but shall protect them from your malice.

Mill. I hope you will not use your influence, and the credit of your name, to screen such guilty wretches. Consider, sir, the wickedness of persuading a thoughtless youth to such a crime.

Thor. I do——and of betraying him when it was done.

Mill. That which you call betraying him may convince you of my innocence. She who loves him, though she contrived the murder, would never have delivered him into the hands of justice, as I, struck with horror at his crimes, have done.

Thor. How should an unexperienced youth escape her snares? The powerful magic of her wit and form might betray the wisest to simple dotage, and fire the blood that age had froze long since. Even I, that with just prejudice came prepared, had, by her artful story, been deceived, but that my strong conviction of her guilt makes even a doubt impossible.—[*Aside.*]—Those whom subtlely you would accuse, you know are your accusers; and, which proves unanswerably their innocence, and your guilt, they accused you before the deed was done, and did all that was in their power to prevent it.

Mill. Sir, you are very hard to be convinced; but I have a proof, which, when produced, will silence all objections. [*Exit Millwood.*

Enter LUCY, TRUEMAN, BLUNT, *officers, &c.*

Lucy. Gentlemen, pray place yourselves, some on one side of that door, and some on the other; watch her entrance, and act as your prudence shall direct you. This way, [*To Thorowgood.*] and note her behaviour. I have observed her; she is driven to the last extremity, and is forming some desperate resolution. I guess at her design.

Re-enter MILLWOOD *with a Pistal; Trueman, secures her.*

True. Here thy power of doing mischief ends, deceitful, cruel, bloody woman!

Mill. Fool, hypocrite, villain, man! thou canst not call me that.

True. To call thee woman were to wrong thy sex, thou devil!

Mill. That imaginary being is an emblem of thy cursed sex collected. A mirror, wherein each particular man may see his own likeness, and that of all mankind.

Thor. Think not, by aggravating the faults of others, to extenuate thy own, of which the abuse of such uncommon perfections of mind and body is not the least.

Mill. If such I had, well may I curse your barbarous sex, who robbed me of them ere I knew their worth; then left me, too late, to count their value by their loss. Another and another spoiler came, and all my gain was poverty and reproach. My soul disdained, and yet disdains, dependence and contempt. Riches, no matter by what means obtained, I saw secured the worst of men from both. I found it therefore necessary to be rich, and to that end I summoned all my arts. You call them wicked; be it so; they were such as my conversation with your sex had furnished me withal.

Thor. Sure none but the worst of men conversed with thee.

Mill. Men of all degrees, and all professions, I have known, yet found no difference, but in their several capacities; all were alike wicked, to the utmost of their power. In pride, contention, avarice, cruelty, and revenge, the reverend priesthood were my unerring guides. From suburb magistrates, who live by ruined reputations, as the inhospitable natives of Cornwall do by shipwrecks, I learned, that to charge my innocent neighbours with my crimes, was to merit their protection: for to screen the guilty is the less scandalous, when many are suspected; and detraction, like darkness and death, blackens all objects, and levels all distinction.—Such are your venal magistrates, who favour none but such as by their office they are sworn to punish. With them, not to be guilty is the worst of crimes, and large fees, privately paid, are every needful virtue.

Thor. Your practice has sufficiently discovered your contempt of laws, both human and divine; no wonder, then, that you should hate the officers of both.

Mill. I know you, and I hate you all; I expect no mercy, and I ask for none; I followed my inclinations, and that the best of you do every day. All actions seem alike natural and indifferent to man and beast, who devour, or are devoured, as they meet with others weaker or stronger than themselves.

Thor. What pity it is a mind so comprehensive, daring, and inquisitive, should be a stranger to religion's sweet and powerful charms!

Mill. I am not fool enough to be an atheist, though I have known enough of men's hypocrisy to make a thousand simple women so. Whatever religion is in itself, as practised by mankind, it has caused the evils you say it was designed to cure. War, plague, and famine have not destroyed so many of the human race, as this pretended piety has done; and with such barbarous cruelty, as if the only way to honour Heaven were to turn the present world into hell.

Thor. Truth is truth, though from an enemy, and spoken in malice. You bloody, blind, and superstitious bigots, how will you answer this?

Mill. What are your laws, of which you make your boast, but the fool's wisdom, and the coward's valour, the instrument and screen of all your villanies? By them you punish in others what you

act yourselves, or would have acted, had you been in their circumstances. The judge, who condemns the poor man for being a thief, had been a thief himself, had he been poor. Thus you go on deceiving and being deceived, harassing, plaguing, and destroying one another. But women are your universal prey.

Women, by whom you are, the source of joy,
With cruel arts you labour to destroy:
A thousand ways our ruin you pursue,
Yet blame in us those arts first taught by you.
Oh, may from hence each violated maid,
By flattering, faithless, barbarous man betrayed,
When robbed of innocence, and virgin fame,
From your destruction raise a nobler name,
To avenge their sex's wrongs devote their mind,
And future Millwoods prove to plague mankind!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in a Prison.*

Enter THOROWGOOD, BLUNT, *and* LUCY.

Thor. I HAVE recommended to Barnwell a reverend divine, whose judgment and integrity I am well acquainted with. Nor has Millwood been neglected; but she, unhappy woman, still obstinate, refuses his assistance.

Lucy. This pious charity to the afflicted well becomes your character; yet pardon me, sir, if I wonder you were not at their trial.

Thor. I knew it was impossible to save him; and I and my family bear so great a part in his distress, that to have been present would but have aggravated our sorrows without relieving his.

Blunt. It was mournful indeed. Barnwell's youth and modest deportment, as he passed, drew tears from every eye. When placed at the bar, and arraigned before the reverend judges, with many tears and interrupting sobs, he confessed and aggravated his offences, without accusing, or once reflecting on Millwood, the shameless author of his ruin. But she, dauntless and unconcerned, stood by his side, viewing, with visible pride and contempt, the vast assembly, who all, with sympathising sorrow, wept for the wretched youth. Millwood, when called upon to answer, loudly insisted upon her innocence, and made an artful and a bold defence; but finding all in vain, the impartial jury and the learned bench concurring to find her guilty, how did she curse herself, poor Barnwell, us, her judges, all mankind! But what could that avail? She was condemned, and is this day to suffer with him.

Thor. The time draws on. I am going to visit Barnwell, as you are Millwood.

Lucy. We have not wronged her, yet I dread this interview. She is proud, impatient, wrathful, and unforgiving. To be the branded instruments of vengeance, to suffer in her shame, and sympathize with her in all she suffers, is the tribute we must pay for our former ill-spent lives, and long confederacy with her in wickedness.

Thor. Happy for you it ended when it did! What you have done against Millwood, I know, proceeded from a just abhorrence of her crimes, free from interest, malice, or revenge. Proselytes to virtue should be encouraged; pursue your proposed reformation, and know me hereafter for your friend.

Lucy. This is a blessing as unhoped for as unmerited. But Heaven, that snatched us from impending ruin, sure intends you as its instrument to secure us from apostacy.

Thor. With gratitude to impute your deliverance to Heaven is just. Many, less virtuously disposed than Barnwell was, have never fallen in the manner he has done. May not such owe their safety rather to Providence than to themselves? With pity and compassion let us judge him. Great were his faults, but strong was the temptation. Let his ruin teach us diffidence, humility, and circumspection: for if we, who wonder at his fate, had, like him, been tried, like him, perhaps, we had fallen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A dungeon, a table, and a lamp.*

BARNWELL *reading.* *Enter* THOROWGOOD *at a distance.*

Thor. There see the bitter fruits of passion's detested reign, and sensual appetite indulged; severe reflections, penitence, and tears.

Barn. My honoured, injured master, whose goodness has covered me a thousand times with shame, forgive this last unwilling disrespect. Indeed I saw you not.

Thor. It is well; I hope you are better employed in viewing of yourself; your journey is long, your time for preparation almost spent. I sent a reverend divine to teach you to improve it, and should be glad to hear of his success.

Barn. The word of truth, which he recommended for my constant companion in this my sad retirement, has at length removed the doubts I laboured under. From thence I have learned the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, though great, are not unpardonable; and that it is not my interest only, but my duty, to believe and to rejoice in my hope. So shall Heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit, of my example.

Thor. Proceed.

Barn. It is wonderful that words should charm despair, speak peace and pardon to a murderer's conscience; but truth and mercy flow in every sentence, attended with force and energy divine.

How shall I describe my present state of mind! I hope in doubt, and trembling I rejoice; I feel my grief increase, even as my fears give way. Joy and gratitude now supply more tears than the horror and anguish of despair before.

Thor. These are the genuine signs of true repentance; the only preparatory, the certain way to everlasting peace. Oh, the joy it gives to see a soul formed and prepared for Heaven! For this the faithful minister devotes himself to meditation, abstinence, and prayer, shunning the vain delights of sensual joys, and daily dies, that others may live for ever. For this he turns the sacred volume over, and spends his life in painful search of truth. The love of riches and the lust of power, he looks upon with just contempt and detestation; he only counts for wealth the souls he wins, and his highest ambition is to serve mankind. If the reward of all his pains be to preserve one soul from wandering, or turn one from the error of his ways, how does he then rejoice, and own his little labours overpaid!

Barn. What do I owe for all your generous kindness? But though I cannot, Heaven can and will reward you.

Thor. To see thee thus, is joy too great for words. Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee!—Farewell.

Barn. Oh, sir, there is something I would say, if my sad swelling heart would give me leave.

Thor. Give it vent a while, and try.

Barn. I had a friend—it is true I am unworthy—yet methinks your generous example might persuade——Could not I see him once, before I go from whence there is no return?

Thor. He is coming, and as much thy friend as ever. I will not anticipate his sorrow; too soon he will see the sad effect of this contagious ruin. This torrent of domestic misery bears too hard upon me. I must retire to indulge a weakness I find impossible to overcome. [*Aside.*] Much loved—and much lamented youth!—Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee!———Eternally farewell!

Barn. The best of masters and of men—Farewell! While I live let me not want your prayers.

Thor. Thou shalt not. Thy peace being made with Heaven, death is already vanquished. Bear a little longer the pains that attend this transitory life, and cease from pain for ever.

[*Exit Thorowgood.*

Barn. Perhaps I shall. I find a power within, that bears my soul above the fears of death, and, spite of conscious shame and guilt, gives me a taste of pleasure more than mortal.

Enter TRUEMAN *and Keeper.*

Keep. Sir, there is the prisoner. [*Exit Keeper.*

Barn. Trueman!—My friend, whom I so wished to see, yet now he's here, I dare not look upon him! [*Weeps.*

True. Oh, Barnwell! Barnwell!

Barn. Mercy! Mercy! gracious Heaven! For death, but not for this, I was prepared.

True. What have I suffered since I saw thee last! What pain has absence given me!—But, oh, to see thee thus!———

Barn. I know it is dreadful! I feel the anguish of thy generous soul—But I was born to murder all who love me! [*Both weep.*

True. I came not to reproach you; I thought to bring you comfort; but I am deceived, for I have none to give. I came to share thy sorrow, but cannot bear my own.

Barn. My sense of guilt, indeed, you cannot know; it is what the good and innocent, like you, can never conceive: but other griefs, at present, I have none, but what I feel for you. In your sorrow I read you love me still; but, yet, methinks, it is strange, when I consider what I am.

True. No more of that; I can remember nothing but thy virtues, thy honest, tender friendship, our former happy state, and present misery. Oh, had you trusted me when first the fair seducer tempted you, all might have been prevented!

Barn. Alas, thou knowest not what a wretch I have been. Breach of friendship was my first and least offence. So far was I lost to goodness, so devoted to the author of my ruin, that had she insisted on my murdering thee,——I think——I should have done it.

True. Prithee, aggravate thy faults no more.

Barn. I think I should! Thus good and generous as you are, I should have murdered you!

True. We have not yet embraced, and may be interrupted. Come to my arms.

Barn. Never, never will I taste such joys on earth; never will I so soothe my just remorse. Are those honest arms and faithful bosom fit to embrace and to support a murderer? These iron fetters only shall clasp, and flinty pavement bear me; [*throwing himself on the ground,*] even these too good for such a bloody monster.

True. Shall fortune sever those whom friendship joined? Thy miseries cannot lay thee so low, but love will find thee. Here will we offer to stern calamity; this place the altar, and ourselves the sacrifice. Our mutual groans shall echo to each other through the dreary vault; our sighs shall number the moments as they pass, and mingling tears communicate such anguish, as words were never made to express.

Barn. Then be it so. [*Rising.*] Since you propose an intercourse of woe, pour all your griefs into my breast, and in exchange take mine. [*Embracing.*] Where's now the anguish that we promised? You have taken mine, and make me no return. Sure peace and comfort dwell within these arms, and sorrow cannot approach me while I am here. This too is the work of Heaven; which, having before spoke peace and pardon to me, now sends thee to confirm it. Oh, take some of the joy that overflows my breast!

True. I do, I do. Almighty power! how hast thou made us capable to bear at once the extremes of pleasure and of pain.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir.

True. I come. [*Exit Keeper.*

Barn. Must you leave me? Death would soon have parted us for ever.

True. Oh, my Barnwell! there's yet another task behind. Again your heart must bleed for others woes.

Barn. To meet and part with you I thought was all I had to do on earth. What is there more for me to do or suffer?

True. I dread to tell thee, yet it must be known! Maria——

Barn. Our master's fair and virtuous daughter?—

True. The same.

Barn. No misfortune, I hope, has reached that maid! Preserve her, Heaven, from every ill, to shew mankind that goodness is your care!

True. Thy, thy misfortunes, my unhappy friend, have reached her. Whatever you and I have felt, and more, if more be possible, she feels for you.

Barn. I know he doth abhor a lie, and would not trifle with his dying friend. This is indeed the bitterness of death. [*Aside.*

True. You must remember (for we all observed it), for some time past, a heavy melancholy weighed her down. Disconsolate she seemed, and pined and languished from a cause unknown; till, hearing of your dreadful fate, the long-stifled flame blazed out; she wept, and wrung her hands, and tore her hair, and, in the transport of her grief, discovered her own lost state, while she lamented yours.

Barn. Will all the pain I feel restore thy ease, lovely unhappy maid! [*Weeping.*] Why did you not let me die, and never know it?

True. It was impossible. She makes no secret of her passion for you; she is determined to see you ere you die, and waits for me to introduce her. [*Exit Trueman.*

Barn. Vain, busy thoughts, be still! What avails it to think on what I might have been! I now am——what I have made myself.

Enter TRUEMAN *and* MARIA.

True. Madam, reluctant I lead you to this dismal scene. This is the seat of misery and guilt. Here awful justice reserves her public victims. This is the entrance to a shameful death.

Mar. To this sad place then, no improper guest, the abandoned lost Maria brings despair, and sees the subject and the cause of all this world of woe. Silent and motionless he stands, as if his soul had quitted her abode, and the lifeless form alone was left behind; yet that so perfect, that beauty and death, ever at enmity, now seem united there.

Barn. I groan, but murmur not. Just Heaven! I am your own; do with me what you please.

Mar. Why are your streaming eyes still fixed below, as though thou wouldst give the greedy earth thy sorrows, and rob me of my due! Were happiness within your power, you should bestow it where you pleased; but in your misery I must and will partake.

Barn. Oh, say not so, but fly, abhor, and leave me to my fate! Consider what you are, how vast your fortune, and how bright your fame. Have pity on your youth, your beauty, and unequalled virtue; for which so many noble peers have sighed in vain. Bless with your charms some honourable lord. Adorn with your beauty, and by your example improve, the English court, that justly claims such merit: so shall I quickly be to you—as though I had never been.

Mar. When I forget you, I must be so indeed. Reason, choice, virtue, all forbid it. Let women, like Millwood, if there are more such women, smile in prosperity, and in adversity forsake. Be it the pride of virtue to repair, or to partake, the ruin such have made.

True. Lovely, ill-fated maid! Was there ever such generous distress before? How must this pierce his grateful heart, and aggravate his woes!

Barn. Ere I knew guilt or shame, when fortune smiled, and when my youthful hopes were at the highest; if then to have raised my thoughts to you, had been presumption in me never to have been pardoned, think how much beneath yourself you condescend to regard me now!

Mar. Let her blush, who, proffering love, invades the freedom of your sex's choice, and meanly sues in hopes of a return. Your inevitable fate hath rendered hope impossible as vain. Then why should I fear to avow a passion so just and so disinterested?

True. If any should take occasion from Millwood's crimes to libel the best and fairest part of the creation, here let them see their error.—The most distant hopes of such a tender passion from so bright a maid, might add to the happiness of the most happy, and make the greatest proud: yet here 'tis lavished in vain. Though by the rich present the generous donor is undone, he on whom it is bestowed receives no benefit.

Barn. So the aromatic spices of the east, which all the living covet and esteem, are with unavailing kindness wasted on the dead.

Mar. Yes, fruitless is my love, and unavailing all my sighs and tears. Can they save thee from approaching death? From such a death? Oh sorrow insupportable! Oh, terrible idea! What is her misery and distress, who sees the first, last object of her love, for whom alone she would live, for whom she would die a thousand thousand deaths, if it were possible, expiring in her

arms? Yet she is happy when compared to me. Were millions of worlds mine, I would gladly give them in exchange for her condition. The most consummate woe is light to mine. The last of curses to other miserable maids, is all I ask for my relief, and that's denied me.

True. Time and reflection cure all ills.

Mar. All but this. His dreadful catastrophe virtue herself abhors. To give a holiday to suburb slaves, and passing entertain the savage herd, who elbowing each other for a sight, pursue and press upon him like his fate! A mind, with piety and resolution armed, may smile on death: But public ignominy, everlasting shame, shame, the death of souls! to die a thousand times, and yet survive even death itself in never-dying infamy—Is this to be endured! Can I, who live in him, and must each hour of my devoted life feel all these woes renewed—Can I endure this?

True. Grief has so impaired her spirits, she pants as in the agonies of death.

Barn. Preserve her, Heaven, and restore her peace, nor let her death be added to my crimes. [*Bell tolls.*] I am summoned to my fate.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir, the officers attend you. Millwood is already summoned.

Barn. Tell them, I am ready. And now, my friend, farewell. [*Embracing.*] Support, and comfort, the best you can, this mourning fair.—No more—Forget not to pray for me. [*Turning to Maria.*] Would you, bright excellence, permit me the honour of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world could give were mine. [*She inclines towards him, they embrace.*] Exalted goodness! Oh, turn your eyes from earth and me to Heaven, where virtue, like yours, is ever heard! Pray for the peace of my departing soul. Early my race of wickedness began, and soon I reached the summit. Ere nature has finished her work, and stamped me man, just at the time when others begin to stray, my course is finished. Though short my span of life, and few my days, yet count my crimes for years, and I have lived whole ages. Thus justice, in compassion to mankind, cuts off a wretch like me; by one such example to secure thousands from future ruin.—Justice and mercy are in Heaven the same: its utmost severity is mercy to the whole; thereby to cure man's folly and presumption, which else would render even infinite mercy vain and ineffectual.

If any youth, like you, in future times,
Shall mourn my fate, though he abhors my crimes,
Or tender maid, like you, my tale shall hear,
And to my sorrows give a pitying tear;
To each such melting eye and throbbing heart,
Would gracious Heaven this benefit impart,
Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain,
Then must you own, you ought not to complain,
Since you nor weep, nor shall I die in vain.

[*Exeunt Barnwell and Officers.*

SCENE III.—*The place of execution.*

The Gallows and Ladder at the farther end of the Stage. A crowd of spectators, BLUNT *and* LUCY.

Lucy. Heavens! what a throng!

Blunt. How terrible is death, when thus prepared!

Lucy. Support them, Heaven! Thou only canst support them; all other help is vain.

Officer. [*Within*] Make way there; make way, and give the prisoners room.

Lucy. They are here: observe them well.—How humble and composed young Barnwell seems! but Millwood looks wild, ruffled with passion, confounded, and amazed.

Enter BARNWELL, MILLWOOD, *Officers and Executioner.*

Barn. See, Millwood, see, our journey is at an end! Life, like a tale that's told, is passed away. That short, but dark and unknown passage, death, is all the space between us and endless joys, or woes eternal.

Mill. Is this the end of all my flattering hopes? Were youth and beauty given me for a curse, and wisdom only to ensure my ruin? They were, they were. Heaven, thou hast done thy worst. Or, if thou hast in store some untried plague, somewhat that is worse than shame, despair, and death, unpitied death, confirmed despair, and soul-confounding shame; something that men and angels cannot describe, and only fiends, who bear it, can conceive; now, pour it now on this devoted head, that I may feel the worst thou canst inflict, and bid defiance to thy utmost power.

Barn. Yet ere we pass the dreadful gulf of death, yet ere you are plunged in everlasting woe, Oh, bend your stubborn knees, and harder heart, humbly to deprecate the wrath divine! Who knows, but Heaven, in your dying moments, may bestow that grace and mercy which your life despised!

Mill. Why name you mercy to a wretch like me? Mercy is beyond my hope, almost beyond my wish. I cannot repent, nor ask to be forgiven.

Barn. Oh, think what 'tis to be for ever, ever miserable, nor with vain pride oppose a power, that is able to destroy you!

Mill. That will destroy me; I feel it will. A deluge of wrath is pouring on my soul. Chains, darkness, wheels, racks, sharp-stinged scorpions, molten lead, and whole seas of sulphur, are light to what I feel.

Barn. Oh, add not to your vast account de-

spair! a sin more injurious to Heaven, than all you have yet committed.

Mill. Oh, I have sinned beyond the reach of mercy!

Barn. Oh, say not so: it is blasphemy to think it. As yon bright roof is higher than the earth, so, and much more, does Heaven's goodness pass our apprehension. Oh, what created being shall presume to circumscribe mercy, that knows no bounds!

Mill. This yields no hope. Though pity may be boundless, yet it is free. I was doomed, before the world began, to endless pains, and thou to joys eternal.

Barn. Oh, gracious heaven! extend thy pity to her; let thy rich mercy flow in plenteous streams, to chase her fears, and heal her wounded soul!

Mill. It will not be: your prayers are lost in air, or else returned, perhaps, with double blessings, to your bosom: they help not me.

Barn. Yet hear me, Millwood!

Mill. Away, I will not hear thee: I tell thee, youth, I am by Heaven devoted a dreadful instance of its power to punish. [*Barnwell seems to pray.*] If thou wilt pray, pray for thyself, not me. How doth his fervent soul mount with his words, and both ascend to Heaven! that Heaven, whose gates are shut with adamantine bars against my prayers, had I the will to pray. I cannot bear it. Sure 'tis the worst of torments to behold others enjoy that bliss which we must never taste.

Officer. The utmost limit of your time is expired.

Mill. Encompassed with horror, whither must I go? I would not live—nor die——That I could cease to be——or ne'er had been!

Barn. Since peace and comfort are denied her here, may she find mercy where she least expects it, and this be all her hell! From our example may all be taught to fly the first approach of vice: but if o'ertaken,

By strong temptation, weakness, or surprise,
Lament their guilt, and by repentance rise;
The impenitent alone die unforgiven:
To sin's like men, and to forgive like Heaven.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter TRUEMAN.

Lucy. Heart-breaking sight!——Oh, wretched, wretched Millwood!

True. How is she disposed to meet her fate?

Blunt. Who can describe unutterable woe?

Lucy. She goes to death encompassed with horror, loathing life, and yet afraid to die. No tongue can tell her anguish and despair.

True. Heaven be better to her than her fears! May she prove a warning to others, a monument of mercy in herself.

Lucy. Oh, sorrow insupportable! Break, break, my heart!

True. In vain,
With bleeding hearts, and weeping eyes, we show,
A humane, generous sense of other's woe;
Unless we mark what drew to ruin on,
And, by avoiding that———prevent our own.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF PART FIRST

OF VOLUME FIRST.

THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

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COMPREHENDING

THE BEST PLAYS

IN

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

TRAGEDIES.

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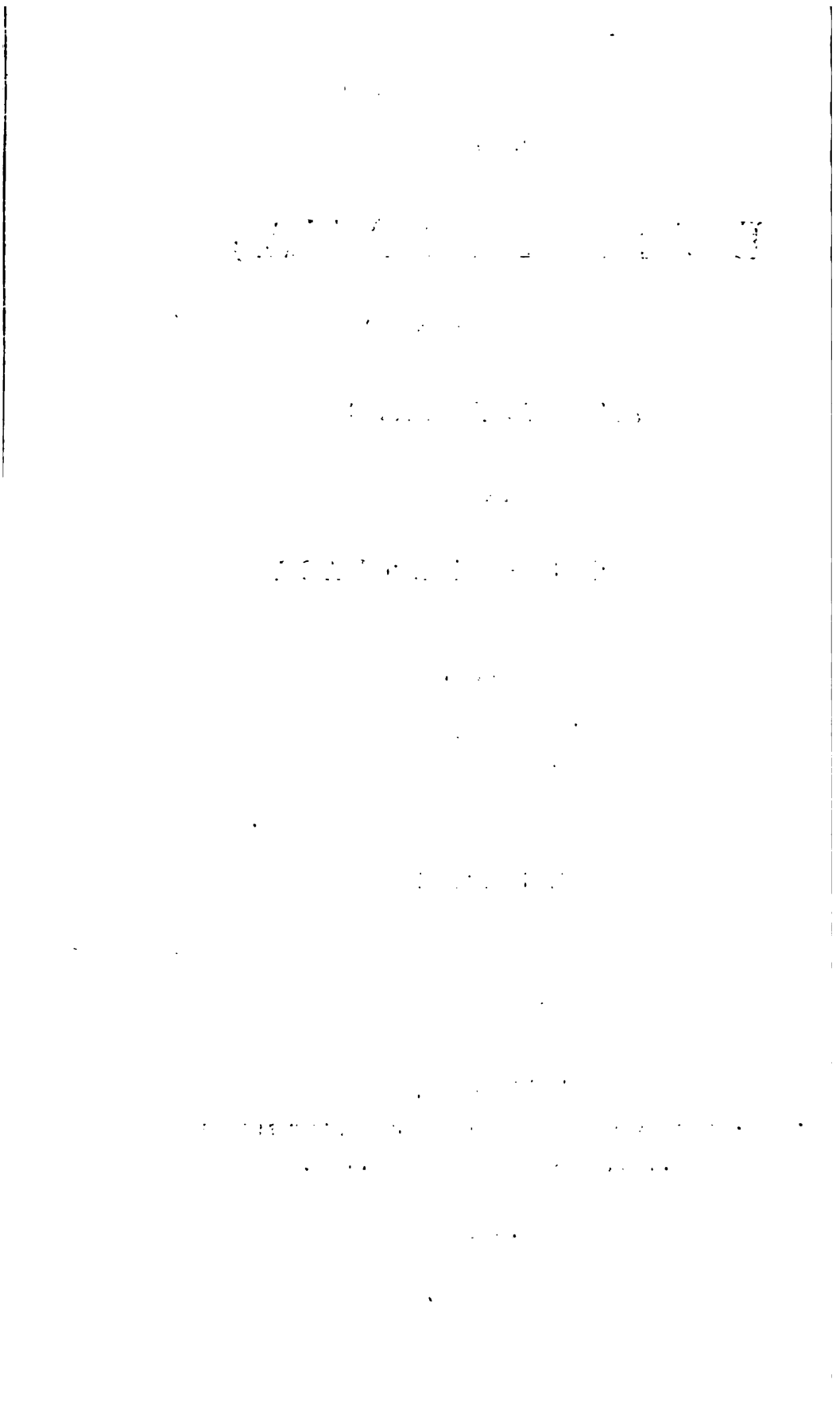


THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

ZARA.

BY

HILL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

OSMAN, *Sultan of Jerusalem.*
LUSIGNAN, *last of the blood of the Christian kings of Jerusalem.*
NERESTAN, CHATILLON, } *French officers.*
ORASMIN, *Minister to the Sultan.*
MELIDOR, *an officer of the Seraglio.*

WOMEN.

ZARA, SELIMA } *Slaves of the Sultan.*

Scene—Jerusalem.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Sel. It moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart!
Your peace of mind increases with your charms;
Tears now no longer shade your eyes soft lustre:
You meditate no more those happy climes,
To which Nerestan will return to guide you.
You talk no more of that gay nation now,
Where men adore their wives, and woman's power
Draws reverence from a polished people's softness:
Their husbands' equals, and their lovers' queens!
Free without scandal; wise without restraint;
Their virtue due to nature, not to fear.
Why have you ceased to wish this happy change?
A barred seraglio!—sad, unsocial life!
Scorned, and a slave! All this has lost its terror;
And Syria rivals, now, the banks of Seine!

Zar. Joys, which we do not know, we do not wish.
My fate's bound in by Sion's sacred wall:
Closed, from my infancy, within this palace,
Custom has learnt, from time, the power to please.
I claim no share in the remoter world,
The sultan's property, his will my law;
Unknowing all but him, his power, his fame;
To live his subject is my only hope,
All else an empty dream.——

Sel. Have you forgot
Absent Nerestan then? whose generous friendship
So nobly vowed redemption from your chains!
How oft have you admired his dauntless soul!
Osman, his conqueror, by his courage charmed,
Trusted his faith, and on his word released him:
Though not returned in time—we yet expect him.
Nor had his noble journey other motive,
Than to procure our ransom.—And is this,
This dear, warm hope, become an idle dream?
Zar. Since after two long years he not returns,
'Tis plain his promise stretched beyond his power.
A stranger and a slave, unknown, like him,
Proposing much, means little;—talks and vows,
Delighted with a prospect of escape:——
He promised to ransom ten Christians more,
And free us all from slavery!—I own
I once admired the unprofitable zeal,
But now it charms no longer.———
Sel. What if yet,
He, faithful, should return, and hold his vow;
Would you not, then——
Zar. No matter——Time is past,
And every thing is changed——
Sel. But, whence comes this?
Zar. Go—'twere too much to tell thee Zara's fate:
The sultan's secrets, all, are sacred here:
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forced to quit fair Jordan's flowery bank;
Heaven, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Raised me to comfort by a powerful hand;
This mighty Osman!———
Sel. What of him?
Zar. This sultan,
This conqueror of the Christians, loves——
Sel. Whom?
Zar. Zara!——
Thou blushest, and I guess thy thoughts accuse me:
But, know me better——'twas unjust suspicion.
All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with them:
Reason and pride, those props of modesty,
Sustain my guarded heart, and strengthen virtue:
Rather than sink to infamy, let chains
Embrace me with a joy, such love denies!
No—I shall now astonish thee;—His greatness
Submits to own a pure and honest flame.
Among the shining crowds, which live to please him,
His whole regard is fixed on me alone:
He offers marriage; and its rites now wait,
To crown me empress of this eastern world.
Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all:
My heart is not surprised, but struck to hear it.
If to be empress can complete your happiness,
I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.
Zar. Be still my equal——and enjoy my blessings;
For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.
Sel. Alas! but Heaven! will it permit this marriage?
Will not this grandeur, falsely called a bliss,
Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart?
Have you forgot you are of Christian blood?
Zar. Ah me! What hast thou said? why wouldst thou thus
Recal my wavering thoughts? How know I, what,
Or whence I am? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
Concealed me from myself, and from my blood.
Sel. Nerestan, who was born a Christian, here
Asserts, that you, like him, had Christian parents;
Besides——that cross, which, from your infant years
Has been preserved, was found upon your bosom,
As if designed by Heaven, a pledge of faith
Due to the God you purpose to forsake!
Zar. Can my fond heart, on such a feeble proof,
Embrace a faith, abhorred by him I love?
I see too plainly custom forms us all;
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fixed belief,
Are consequences of our place of birth:
Born beyond Ganges, I had been a Pagan;
In France, a Christian; I am here a Saracen:
'Tis but instruction, all! Our parents' hand
Writes on our heart the first faint characters,
Which time, re-tracing, deepens into strength,
That nothing can efface, but death or Heaven!
Thou wert not made a prisoner in this place,
Till after reason, borrowing force from years,
Had lent its lustre to enlighten faith:——
For me, who, in my cradle, was their slave,
Thy Christian doctrines were too lately taught me;
Yet, far from having lost the reverence due,
This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
Strikes through my heart a kind of awful fear!
I honour, from my soul, the Christian law;
Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
Melt nations into brotherhood;—no doubt
Christians are happy; and 'tis just to love them.
Sel. Why have you, then, declared yourself their foe?
Why will you join your hand with this proud Osman's,
Who owes his triumph to the Christian ruin?
Zar. Ah!—who could slight the offer of his heart?
Nay—for I mean to tell thee all my weakness—
Perhaps I had, ere now, profest thy faith,
But Osman loved me—and I've lost it all:—
I think on none but Osman—my pleased heart,
Filled with the blessing, to be loved by him,
Wants room for other happiness. Place thou
Before thy eyes, his merit and his fame,
His youth, yet blooming but in manhood's dawn,

How many conquered kings have swelled his power!
Think, too, how lovely! how his brow becomes
This wreath of early glories!—Oh, my friend!
I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me:
No—to be charmed with that were thanks too humble!
Offensive tribute, and too poor for love!
'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown:
I love not in him aught besides himself.
Though think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion:
But, had the will of Heaven, less bent to bless *him*,
Doomed Osman to my chains, and me to fill
The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretchedness
Catch and consume my wishes, but I would——
To raise me to myself, descend to him.
Sel. Hark! the wished music sounds—'Tis he—he comes—— [*Exit Selima.*
Zar. My heart prevented him, and found him near:
Absent two long whole days, the slow-paced hour
At last is come, and gives him to my wishes!
[*A grand march.*

Enter OSMAN, *reading a paper, which he re-delivers to* ORASMIN; *with Attendants.*

Osm. Wait my return—or, should there be a cause
That may require my presence, do not fear
To enter; ever mindful, that my own
[*Exit Oras. &c.*
Follows my people's happiness.—At length,
Cares have released my heart—to love and Zara.
Zar. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
Of your imperial image—every where
You reign triumphant: memory supplies
Reflection with your power; and you, like Heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious.
Osm. The sultans, my great ancestors, bequeathed
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me:
I know our prophet smiles on am'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire;
I know, that at my will I might possess;
That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
I might look down to my surrounded feet,
And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel.
I can look round, and count a hundred kings,
Unconquered by themselves, and slaves to others:
Hence was Jerusalem to christians lost;
But Heaven, to blast that unbelieving race,
Taught me to be a king, by thinking like one.
Hence, from the distant Euxine to the Nile,
The trumpet's voice has waked the world to war;
Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reached me;
For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love;
Glory and Zara join—and charm together.
Zar. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
This passion, so unlike your country's customs.
Osm. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's customs;
The jealousy, the faintness, the distrust,
The proud, superior coldness of the East.
I know to love you, Zara, with esteem;
To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart;
And dare inform you, that 'tis all your own:
My joys must all be yours: only my cares
Shall lie concealed within—and reach not Zara.
Zar. Obliged by this excess of tenderness,
How low, how wretched was the lot of Zara!
Too poor with aught, but thanks, to pay such blessings!
Osm. Not so—I love—and would be loved again;
Let me confess it, I possess a soul,
That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
I should believe you hated, had you power
To love with moderation: 'tis my aim,
In every thing, to reach supreme perfection.
If, with an equal flame, I touch your heart,
Marriage attends your smile—But know, 'twill make
Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.
Zar. Ah, sir! if such a heart as generous Osman's
Can, from my will, submit to take its bliss,
What mortal ever was decreed so happy!
Pardon the pride with which I own my joy,
Thus wholly to possess the man I love!
To know, and to confess his will my fate!
To be the happy work of his dear hands!
To be—

Enter ORASMIN.

Osm. Already interrupted! What? Who?—Whence?
Oras. This moment, sir, there is arrived
That Christian slave, who, licensed on his faith,
Went hence to France—and, now returned, prays audience.
Zar. [*Aside.*] Oh, Heaven!
Osm. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not?
Oras. He waits without. No Christian dares approach
This place, long sacred to the sultan's privacies.
Osm. Go—bring him with thee—monarchs, like the sun,
Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen;
With forms and reverence, let the great approach us;

Not the unhappy;—every place alike,
Gives the distressed a privilege to enter.——
[*Exit Oras.*
I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings insensibly to tyrants.

Re-enter ORASMIN *with* NERESTAN.

Ner. Imperial sultan! honoured, even by foes!
See me returned, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a Christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten Christian captives, prisoners here.
You promised, sultan, if I should return,
To grant their rated liberty:—Behold,
I am returned, and they are yours no more.
I would have stretched my purpose to myself,
But fortune has denied it;—my poor all
Sufficed no further, and a noble poverty
Is now my whole possession.—I redeem
The promised Christians; for I taught them hope:
But, for myself, I come again your slave,
To wait the fuller hand of future charity.
Osm. Christian! I must confess thy courage charms me!
But let thy pride be taught, it treads too high,
When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
Their unaccepted ransoms, joined with gifts,
Fit to reward thy purpose; instead of ten,
Demand a hundred Christians; they are thine:
Take them, and bid them teach their haughty country,
They left some virtue among Saracens.—
Be Lusignan alone excepted—He,
Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
To my Jerusalem—that claim, his guilt!
Such is the law of states; had I been vanquished,
Thus had he said of me. I mourn his lot,
Who must in fetters, lost to day-light pine,
And sigh away old age in grief and pain.
For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
Were to dishonour language;—she's a prize
Above thy purchase:—all the Christian realms,
With all their kings to guide them, would unite
In vain, to force her from me—Go, retire—
Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
Unhappy, poor, old man——
Osm. Was I not heard?
Have I not told thee, Christian, all my will?
What if I praised thee!—This presumptuous virtue,
Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride;
Be gone—and when to-morrow's sun shall rise
On my dominions, be not found—too near me.
[*Exit Nerestan.*
Zar. [*Aside.*] Assist him, Heaven!
Osm. Zara, retire a moment—
Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,
While I give orders to prepare the pomp
That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne.
[*Leads her out and returns.*
Orasmin! didst thou mark the imperious slave!
What could he mean?—he sighed—and, as he went,
Turned and looked back at Zara!—didst thou mark it?
Oras. Alas! my sovereign master! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.
Osm. Jealousy, said'st thou? I disdain it:—No!
Distrust is poor; and a misplaced suspicion
Invites and justifies the falsehood feared.—
Yet, as I love with warmth—so, I could hate!
But Zara is above disguise and art:——
My love is stronger, nobler, than my power.
Jealous!—I was not jealous! If I was,
I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown
Remembrance of the word, and of the image:
My heart is filled with a diviner flame.—
Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials.
Zara to careful empire joins delight.
I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,
Then, all the smiling day is love and Zara's.
[*Exit Orasmin.*
Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery pressed,
In proud, unsocial misery, unblessed,
Would, but for love's soft influence, curse their throne,
And, among crowded millions, live alone. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

NERESTAN, CHATILLON.

Cha. MATCHLESS Nerestan! generous and great!
You, who have broke the chains of hopeless slaves!
You, Christian saviour! by a Saviour sent!
Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight;
The grateful weepers wait to clasp your knees,
They throng to kiss the happy hand that saved them;
Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.
Ner. Illustrious Chatillon! this praise o'erwhelms me;
What have I done beyond a Christian's duty;
Beyond what you would, in my place, have done?
Chat. True—it is every honest Christian's duty;
Nay, 'tis the blessing of such minds as ours,
For others' good to sacrifice our own.—
Yet, happy they, to whom Heaven grants the power,

To execute, like you, that duty's call.
For us—the relicks of abandoned war,
Forgot in France, and in Jerusalem,
Left to grow old in fetters,—Osman's father
Consigned us to the gloom of a damp dungeon,
Where, but for you, we must have groaned out life,
And native France have blessed our eyes no more.
Ner. The will of gracious Heaven, that softened Osman,
Inspired me for your sakes :—But, with our joy,
Flows, mixed, a bitter sadness—I had hoped
To save from their perversion a young beauty,
Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
Was made a slave by cruel Noradin;
When, sprinkling Syria with the blood of Christians,
Cæsarea's walls saw Lusignan surprized,
And the proud crescent rise in bloody triumph.
From this seraglio having young escaped,
Fate, three years since, restored me to my chains;
Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
I flattered my fond hope with vain resolves,
To guide the lovely Zara to that court
Where Lewis has established virtue's throne:
But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman;
Zara herself forgets she is a Christian,
And loves the tyrant sultan!—Let that pass:
I mourn a disappointment still more cruel;
The prop of all our Christian hope is lost!
Chat. Dispose me at your will—I am your own.
Ner. Oh, Sir, great Lusignan, so long their captive,
That last of an heroic race of kings!
That warrior, whose past fame has filled the world!
Osman refuses to my sighs for ever!
Chat. Nay, then, we have been all redeemed in vain;
Perish that soldier who would quit his chains,
And leave his noble chief behind in fetters.
Alas! you know him not as I have known him;
Thank Heaven, that placed your birth so far removed
From those detested days of blood and woe:
But I, less happy, was condemned to see
Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down—and all
Our pious fathers' labours lost in ruins!
Heaven! had you seen the very temple rifled!
The sacred sepulchre itself profaned!
Fathers with children mingled, flame together!
And our last king, oppressed with age and arms,
Murdered, and bleeding o'er his murdered sons!
Then Lusignan, sole remnant of his race,
Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,
Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,
The conquerors and the conquered, groans and death!
Dreadful—and, waving in his hand his sword,
Red with the blood of infidels cried out,
This way, ye faithful Christians! follow me.——
Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat!
Chat. 'Twas Heaven, no doubt, that saved and led him on;
Pointed his path, and marched our guardian guide:
We reached Cæsarea—there the general voice
Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws;
Alas! 'twas vain—Cæsarea could not stand
When Sion's self was fallen!—we were betrayed;
And Lusignan condemned to length of life,
In chains, in damps, and darkness and despair:
Yet great, amidst his miseries, he looked,
As if he could not feel his fate himself,
But as it reached his followers. And shall we,
For whom our generous leader suffered this,
Be vilely safe, and dare be blessed without him?
Ner. Oh! I should hate the liberty he shared not.
I knew too well the miseries you describe,
For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
Cæsarea lost, and Saracens triumphant,
Were the first objects which my eyes e'er looked on.
Hurried, an infant, among other infants,
Snatched from the bosom of their bleeding mothers,
A temple saved us, till the slaughter ceased;
Then were we sent to this ill-fated city,
Here, in the palace of our former kings,
To learn, from Saracens, their hated faith,
And be completely wretched.——Zara, too,
Shared this captivity; we both grew up
So near each other, that a tender friendship
Endeared her to my wishes: My fond heart—
Pardon its weakness, bleeds to see her lost,
And, for a barbarous tyrant, quit her God!
Chat. Such is the Saracens' too fatal policy!
Watchful seducers, still, of infant weakness:
Happy that you, so young, escaped their hands!
But let us think——May not this Zara's interest,
Loving the sultan, and by him beloved,
For Lusignan procure some softer sentence?
The wise and just, with innocence, may draw
Their own advantage from the guilt of others.
Ner. How shall I gain admission to her presence?
Osman has banished me—but that's a trifle;
Will the seraglio's portals open to me?
Or, could I find that easy to my hopes,
What prospect of success from an apostate,
On whom I cannot look without disdain,
And who will read her shame upon my brow?
The hardest trial of a generous mind,
Is, to court favours from a hand it scorns.
Chat. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.
Ner. Well—it shall be attempted—Hark! who is this?
Are my eyes false; or, is it really she?

Enter Zara.

Zar. Start not, my worthy friend! I come to seek you;

The sultan has permitted it; fear nothing:——
But to confirm my heart, which trembles near you,
Soften that angry air, nor look reproach;
Why should we fear each other, both mistaking?
Associates from our birth, one prison held us,
One friendship taught affliction to be calm,
'Till Heaven thought fit to favour your escape,
And call you to the fields of happier France;
Thence, once again, it was my lot to find you
A prisoner here; where, hid amongst a crowd
Of undistinguished slaves, with less restraint,
I shared your frequent converse;——
It pleased your pity, shall I say your friendship?
Or rather, shall I call it generous charity?
To form that noble purpose, to redeem
Distressful Zara—you procured my ransom,
And, with a greatness that out-soared a crown,
Returned yourself a slave, to give me freedom;
But Heaven has cast our fate for different climes:
Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever;
Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,
I shall, with frequent tears, remember yours;
Your goodness will for ever soothe my heart,
And keep your image still a dweller there:
Warmed by your great example to protect
That faith, which lifts humanity so high,
I'll be a mother to distressful Christians.

Ner. How!—You protect the Christians! you, who can
Abjure their saving faith, and coldly see
Great Lusignan, their chief, die slow in chains!

Zar. To bring him freedom you behold me here;
You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.

Chat. Shall I then live to bless that happy hour?

Ner. Can Christians owe so dear a gift to Zara?

Zar. Hopeless I gathered courage to intreat
The sultan for his liberty—amazed,
So soon to gain the happiness I wished!
See where they bring the good old chief, grown dim
With age, by pain and sorrows hastened on!

Chat. How is my heart dissolved with sudden joy!

Zar. I long to view his venerable face;
But tears, I know not why, eclipse my sight.
I feel, methinks, redoubled pity for him;
But, I, alas! myself have been a slave;
And when we pity woes which we have felt,
'Tis but a partial virtue!

Ner. Amazement!—Whence this greatness in an infidel!

Enter LUSIGNAN *led in by two Guards.*

Lus. Where am I? From the dungeon's depth what voice
Has called me to revisit long-lost day?
Am I with Christians?—I am weak—forgive me,
And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years;
My miseries have worn me more than age.
Am I, in truth, at liberty? [*Seating himself.*

Chat. You are;
And every Christian's grief takes end with yours.

Lus. O light! O, dearer far than light, that voice!
Chatillon, is it you? my fellow-martyr?
And shall our wretchedness, indeed, have end?
In what place are we now!—my feeble eyes,
Disused to day-light, long in vain to find you.

Chat. This was the palace of your royal fathers:
'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.

Zar. The master of this place—the mighty Osman,
Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.
This generous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you,
Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
Brought the vowed ransoms of ten Christian slaves,
Himself contented to remain a captive:
But Osman, charmed by greatness, like his own,
To equal what he loved, has given him you.

Lus. So generous France inspires her social sons!
They have been ever dear and useful to me—
Would I were nearer to him—Noble sir,
[*Nerestan approaches.*
How have I merited, that you for me
Should pass such distant seas, to bring me blessings,
And hazard your own safety for my sake?

Ner. My name, sir, is Nerestan; born in Syria,
I wore the chains of slavery from my birth;
Till, quitting the proud crescent for the court
Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye
I learnt the trade of arms: the rank I held
Was but the kind distinction which he gave me,
To tempt my courage to deserve regard.
Your sight, unhappy prince, would charm his eye;
That best and greatest monarch will behold,
With grief and joy, those venerable wounds,
And print embraces where your fetters bound you.
All Paris will revere the cross's martyr;
Paris, the refuge still of ruined kings!

Lus. Alas! in times long past, I have seen its glory:
When Philip the Victorious lived, I fought
A-breast with Montmorency and Melun,
D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy;
Names which were then the praise and dread of war!
But what have I to do at Paris now?
I stand upon the brink of the cold grave;
That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,
The King of Kings, and ask the recompence
For all my woes, long suffered for his sake——
You generous witnesses of my last hour,
While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,
And join the resignation of my soul.
Nerestan! Chatillon! and you, fair mourner!
Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows!

Pity a father, the unhappiest sure
That ever felt the hand of angry heaven!
My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;
Half my long life they flowed, and still will flow!
A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,
Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years—
My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember——
Chat. Would I were able to forget your woe.
Lus. Thou wert a prisoner with me in Cæsarea,
And there beheld'st my wife and two dear sons
Perish in flames.
Chat. A captive and in fetters,
I could not help them.
Lus. I know thou couldst not——
Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene! these eyes beheld it.
Husband and father, helpless I beheld it—
Denied the mournful privilege to die!
Oh, my poor children! whom I now deplore;
If ye are saints in Heaven, as sure ye are,
Look with an eye of pity on that brother,
That sister whom you left! If I have yet
Or son or daughter: for in early chains,
Far from their lost and unassisting father,
I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,
To this seraglio; hence to be dispersed
In nameless remnants o'er the East, and spread
Our Christian miseries round a faithless world.
Chat. 'Twas true—For in the horrors of that day,
I snatched your infant daughter from her cradle;
But, finding every hope of flight was vain,
Scarce had I sprinkled, from a public fountain,
Those sacred drops which wash the soul from sin,
When from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
Forced the lost innocent, who smiling lay,
And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers!
With her, your youngest, then your only son,
Whose little life had reached the fourth sad year,
And just given sense to feel his own misfortunes,
Was ordered to this city.
Ner. I too, hither,
Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
Came in that crowd of undistinguished Christians.——
Lus. You! came you thence? Alas! who knows but you
Might heretofore have seen my two poor children.
[*Looking up.*] Ah, madam! that small ornament you wear,
Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
How long has it been yours?
Zar. From my first birth, sir——
Ah, what! you seem surprised! why should this move you?
Lus. Would you confide it to my trembling hands?
Zar. To what new wonders am I now reserved?
Oh, sir! what mean you?
Lus. Providence and Heaven!
Oh, failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope?
Can this be possible?—Yes, yes—'tis she!
This little cross—I know it, by sure marks!
Oh! take me, Heaven! while I can die with joy——
Zar. Oh, do not, sir, distract me!—rising thoughts,
And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me!
Lus. Tell me, yet,
Has it remained for ever in your hands?
What——both brought captives from Cæsarea hither!
Zar. Both, both——
Oh, Heaven! have I then found a father?
Lus. Their voice! their looks!
The living images of their dear mother!
O God! who see'st my tears, and knowest my thoughts,
Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope——
Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.
Madam! Nerestan! Help me, Chatillon! [*Rising.*
Nerestan, hast thou on thy breast a scar,
Which, ere Cæsarea fell, from a fierce hand,
Surprising us by night, my child received?
Ner. Blessed hand!—I bear it—sir, the mark is there!
Lus. Merciful Heaven!
Ner. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, sir!—Oh, Zara, kneel.—
Zar. [*Kneeling.*] My father!—Oh!——
Lus. Oh, my lost children!
Both. Oh!
Lus. My son! my daughter! lost in embracing you,
I would now die, lest this should prove a dream!
Chat. How touched is my glad heart, to see their joy!
Lus. They shall not tear you from my arms—my children!
Again, I find you—dear in wretchedness:
Oh, my brave son—and thou, my nameless daughter!
Now dissipate all doubt, remove all dread;
Has Heaven, that gives me back my children—given them,
Such as I lost them?—Come they Christians to me?
One weeps, and one declines a conscious eye!
Your silence speaks—too well I understand it.
Zar. I cannot, sir, deceive you—Osman's laws
Were mine—and Osman is not a Christian.——
Lus. Her words are thunder bursting on my head;
Wert not for thee, my son, I now should die!
Full sixty years I fought the Christian cause,
Saw their doomed temple fall, their power destroyed:
Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth,
Yet never for myself my tears sought Heaven;
All for my children rose my fruitless prayers:
Yet what avails a father's wretched joy?

I have a daughter gained, and Heaven an enemy.
Oh! my misguided daughter—lose not thy faith,
Reclaim thy birthright—think upon the blood
Of twenty Christian kings, that fills thy veins;
'Tis heroes' blood—the blood of saints and martyrs!
What would thy mother feel, to see thee thus!
She, and thy murdered brothers!—think, they call thee;
Think that thou seest them stretch their bloody arms,
And weep to win thee from their murderer's bosom.
Even in the place where thou betrayest thy God,
He died, my child, to save thee.—Turn thy eyes,
And see; for thou art near his sacred sepulchre;
Thou canst not move a step, but where he trod!
Thou tremblest—Oh! admit me to thy soul;
Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted father;
Take not thus soon, again, the life thou gavest him:
Shame not thy mother—nor renounce thy God.
'Tis past—Repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes;
I see bright truth descending to thy heart,
And now, my long-lost child is found for ever!
Ner. Oh, doubly blest! a sister, and a soul,
To be redeemed together!
Zar. Oh, my father!
Dear author of my life! inform me, teach me,
What should my duty do?
Lus. By one short word,
To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
Say thou art a Christian———
Zar. Sir—I am a Christian.
Lus. Receive her, gracious Heaven! and bless her for it.

Enter ORASMIN.

Oras. Madam, the sultan ordered me to tell you,
That he expects you instant quit this place,
And bid your last farewell to these vile Christians.
You, captive Frenchmen, follow me; for you,
It is my task to answer.——
Chat. Still new miseries!
How cautious man should be, to say, I'm happy!
Lus. These are the times, my friends, to try our firmness,
Our Christian firmness.———
Zar. Alas, sir! Oh!
Lus. Oh, you!—I dare not name you!
Farewell—but, come what may, be sure remember
You keep the fatal secret! for the rest,
Leave all to Heaven—be faithful, and be blest.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter OSMAN *and* ORASMIN.

Osm. ORASMIN, this alarm was false and groundless;
Lewis no longer turns his arms on me;
The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
And famish on Arabia's desart sands.
Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas;
And Lewis, hovering o'er the coast of Cyprus,
Alarms the fears of Asia—But I've learnt,
That, steering wide from our unmenaced ports,
He points his thunder at the Egyptian shore.
There let him war, and waste my enemies;
Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.
Release those Christians—I restore their freedom;
'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me;
Transport them at my cost, to find their king;
I wish to have him know me: carry thither
This Lusignan, whom, tell him, I restore,
Because I cannot fear his fame in arms;
But love him for his virtue and his blood.
Tell him, my father, having conquered twice,
Condemned him to perpetual chains; but I
Have set him free, that I might triumph more.
Oras. The Christians gain an army in his name.
Osm. I cannot fear a sound.——
Oras. But, sir——should Lewis——
Osm. Tell Lewis, and the world—it shall be so:
Zara proposed it, and my heart approves:
Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love!
Why wilt thou force me to confess it all?
Though I to Lewis send back Lusignan,
I give him but to Zara—I have grieved her;
And owed her the atonement of this joy.
Thy false advices, which but now misled
My anger, to confine those helpless Christians,
Gave her a pain; I feel for her and me:
But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.
For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials;
But, 'tis not lost, that hour! 'twill be all hers!
She would employ it in a conference
With that Nerestan, whom thou know'st—that Christian.
Oras. And have you, sir, indulged that strange desire?
Osm. What meanest thou? They were infant slaves together;
Friends should part kind, who are to meet no more.
When Zara asks, I will refuse her nothing:
Restraint was never made for those we love.
Down with those rigours of the proud seraglio:
I hate its laws—where blind austerity
Sinks virtue to necessity.—My blood

Disclaims your Asian jealousy;—I hold
The fierce, free plainness of my Scythian ancestors,
Their open confidence, their honest hate,
Their love unfearing, and their anger bold.
Go—the good Christian waits—conduct him to her;
Zara expects thee—What she wills, obey.
[*Exit Osman.*
Oras. Ho! Christian! enter—wait a moment here.

Enter NERESTAN.

Zara will soon approach—I go to find her.
[*Exit Oras.*
Ner. In what a state, in what a place, I leave her?
Oh, faith! oh, father! oh, my poor lost sister!
She's here——

Enter ZARA.

Thank Heaven, it is not, then, unlawful
To see you, yet once more, my lovely sister!
Not all so happy!——We, who met but now,
Shall never meet again——for Lusignan——
We shall be orphans still, and want a father.
Zar. Forbid it Heaven!
Ner. His last sad hour's at hand——
That flow of joy, which followed our discovery,
Too strong and sudden for his age's weakness,
Wasting his spirits, dried the source of life,
And nature yields him up to time's demand.
Shall he not die in peace?—Oh! let no doubt
Disturb his parting moments with distrust;
Let me, when I return to close his eyes,
Compose his mind's impatience too, and tell him,
You are confirmed a Christian!
Zar. Oh! may his soul enjoy, in earth and heaven,
Eternal rest! nor let one thought, one sigh,
One bold complaint of mine, recall his cares!
But you have injured me, who still can doubt.—
What! am I not your sister? and shall you
Refuse me credit? You suppose me light;
You, who should judge my honour by your own,
Shall you distrust a truth I dared avow,
And stamp apostate on a sister's heart!
Ner. Ah! do not misconceive me!—if I erred,
Affection, not distrust, misled my fear;
Your will may be a Christian, yet not you;
There is a sacred mark—a sign of faith,
A pledge of promise, that must firm your claim,
Wash you from guilt, and open Heaven before you.
Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
By all the martyred saints, who call you daughter,
That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
By that mysterious rite which waits your call.
Zar. I swear by Heaven, and all its holy host,
Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
And the dread presence of its living author,
To have no faith but yours;—to die a Christian!
Now, tell me what this mystic faith requires.
Ner. To hate the happiness of Osman's throne,
And love that God, who, through his maze of woes,
Has brought us all, unhoping, thus together.
For me—I am a soldier, uninstructed,
Nor daring to instruct, though strong in faith:
But I will bring the ambassador of Heaven,
To clear your views, and lift you to your God!
Be it your task to gain admission for him.——
But where? for whom?—Oh! thou immortal Power!
Whence can we hope it, in this cursed seraglio?
Who is this slave of Osman? Yes, this slave!
Does she not boast the blood of twenty kings?
Is not her race the same with that of Lewis?
Is she not Lusignan's unhappy daughter?
A Christian, and my sister?—yet a slave!
A willing slave!—I dare not speak more plainly.
Zar. Cruel! go on—Alas! you do not know me!
At once, a stranger to my secret fate,
My pains, my fears, my wishes, and my power;
I am—I will be Christian—will receive
This holy priest, with his mysterious blessing;
I will not do, nor suffer, aught unworthy
Myself, my father, or my father's race.
But, tell me——nor be tender on this point——
What punishment your Christian laws decree
For an unhappy wretch, who, to herself
Unknown, and all abandoned by the world,
Lost and enslaved, has, in her sovereign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touched his heart, and given him all her own?
Ner. The punishment of such a slave should be
Death in this world—and pain in that to come.
Zar. I am that slave—strike here—and save my shame!
Ner. Destruction to my hopes! Can it be you?
Zar. It is—Adored by Osman, I adore him:
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.
Ner. What! marry Osman!—Let the world grow dark,
That the extinguished sun may hide thy shame!
Could it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee!
Zar. Strike, strike—I love him—yes, by Heaven I love him.
Ner. Death is thy due—but not thy due from me:
Yet, were the honour of our house no bar——
My father's fame, and the too gentle laws
Of that religion which thou hast disgraced——
Did not the God thou quittest hold back my arm——
Not there—I could not there—but, by my soul,
I would rush, desperate, to the sultan's breast,
And plunge my sword in his proud heart, who damns thee!
Oh! shame! shame! shame! at such a time as this!
When Lewis! that awakener of the world,
Beneath the lifted cross makes Egypt pale,

And draws the sword of Heaven to spread our faith,
Now to submit to see my sister doomed
A bosom slave to him, whose tyrant heart
But measures glory by the Christian's woe!
Yes—I will dare acquaint our father with it;
Departing Lusignan may live so long,
As just to hear thy shame, and die to escape it.
Zar. Stay—my too angry brother—stay—perhaps,
Zara has resolution great as thine:
'Tis cruel—and unkind.—Thy words are crimes;
My weakness but misfortune. Dost thou suffer?
I suffer more;—Oh! would to Heaven this blood
Of twenty boasted kings would stop at once,
And stagnate in my heart!—It then no more
Would rush, in boiling fevers, through my veins,
And every trembling drop be filled with Osman.
How has he loved me! how has he obliged me!
I owe thee to him! What has he not done,
To justify his boundless power of charming?
For me, he softens the severe decrees
Of his own faith;—and is it just that mine
Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me?
No——I will be a Christian——but preserve
My gratitude as sacred as my faith;
If I have death to fear for Osman's sake,
It must be from his coldness, not his love.
Ner. I must at once condemn and pity thee;
I cannot point thee out which way to go,
But Providence will lend its light to guide thee.
That sacred rite, which thou shalt now receive,
Will strengthen and support thy feeble heart,
To live an innocent, or die a martyr:
Here, then, begin performance of thy vow;
Here, in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
Promise thy king, thy father, and thy God,
Not to accomplish thy detested nuptials,
Till first the reverend priest has cleared your eyes,
Taught you to know, and given you claim to Heaven.
Promise me this——
Zar. So, bless me, Heaven! I do.——
Go—hasten the good priest, I will expect him;
But first return—cheer my expiring father,
Tell him I am, and will be, all he wishes me:
Tell him, to give him life 'twere joy to die.
Ner. I go—Farewell—farewell, unhappy sister!
[*Exit Nerestan.*
Zar. I am alone—and now be just, my heart!
And tell me, wilt thou dare betray thy God?
What am I? What am I about to be?
Daughter of Lusignan—or wife to Osman?
Am I a lover most, or most a Christian?
Would Selima were come! and yet 'tis just,
All friends should fly her who forsakes herself.
What shall I do?—What heart has strength to bear
These double weights of duty?—Help me, Heaven!
To thy hard laws I render up my soul:
But, oh! demand it back—for now 'tis Osman's.

Enter Osman.

Osm. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara!
Impatient eyes attend—the rites expect thee;
And my devoted heart no longer brooks
This distance from its softener!—all the lamps
Of nuptial love are lighted, and burn pure,
As if they drew their brightness from thy blushes:
The holy mosque is filled with fragrant fumes,
Which emulate the sweetness of thy breathing:
My prostrate people all confirm my choice,
And send their souls to Heaven in prayers for blessings.
Thy envious rivals, conscious of thy right,
Approve superior charms, and join to praise thee;
The throne, that waits thee, seems to shine more richly,
As all its gems, with animated lustre,
Feared to look dim beneath the eyes of Zara!
Come, my slow love! the ceremonies wait thee;
Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.
Zar. Oh, what a wretch am I! Oh, grief! Oh, love!
Osm. Come——come——
Zar. Where shall I hide my blushes?
Osm. Blushes—here, in my bosom, hide them.
Zar. My lord!
Osm. Nay, Zara—give me thy hand, and come——
Zar. Instruct me, Heaven!
What should I say—Alas! I cannot speak.
Osm. Away——this modest, sweet reluctant trifling
But doubles my desires, and thy own beauties.
Zar. Ah, me!
Osm. Nay—but thou shouldst not be too cruel.
Zar. I can no longer bear it—Oh, my lord—
Osm. Ha!—What?—whence?—how?——
Zar. My lord! my sovereign!
Heaven knows this marriage would have been a bliss
Above my humble hopes!—yet, witness love!
Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,
But from the pride of calling Osman mine.
Would you had been no emperor! and I
Possessed of power and charms deserving you!
That, slighting Asia's thrones, I might alone
Have left a proffered world, to follow you
Through deserts, uninhabited by men,
And blessed with ample room for peace and love:
But, as it is——these Christians——
Osm. Christians! What!
How start two images into thy thoughts,
So distant——as the Christians and my love!
Zar. That good old Christian, reverend Lusignan,
Now dying, ends his life and woes together.
Osm. Well! let him die—What has thy heart to feel,

Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death
Of an old wretched Christian?—Thank our prophet,
Thou art no Christian!—Educated here,
Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:
Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mis-timed.
What! though an aged sufferer dies unhappy,
Why should his foreign fate disturb our joys?
Zar. Sir, if you love me, and would have me think
That I am truly dear——
Osm. Heaven! if I love!
Zar. Permit me——
Osm. What?
Zar. To desire——
Osm. Speak out.
Zar. The nuptial rites
May be deferred till——
Osm. What!—Is that the voice
Of Zara?
Zar. Oh, I cannot bear his frown!
Osm. Of Zara!
Zar. It is dreadful to my heart,
To give you but a seeming cause for anger;
Pardon my grief—Alas! I cannot bear it;
There is a painful terror in your eye,
That pierces to my soul—hid from your sight,
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.
[*Exit disordered.*
Osm. I stand immoveable, like senseless marble;
Horror had frozen my suspended tongue;
And an astonished silence robbed my will
Of power to tell her that she shocked my soul!
Spoke she to me?—Sure I misunderstood her!
Could it be me she left?—What have I seen!

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, what a change is here!—She's gone,
And I permitted it, I know not how.
Oras. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault
Of innocence, too modest oft in love.
Osm. But why, and whence those tears?—those looks? that flight?
That grief, so strongly stamped on every feature?
If it has been that Frenchman!—What a thought!
How low, how horrid a suspicion that!
The dreadful flash at once gives light and kills me;
My too bold confidence repelled my caution—
An infidel! a slave!—a heart like mine
Reduced to suffer from so vile a rival!
But tell me, didst thou mark them at their parting?
Didst thou observe the language of their eyes?
Hide nothing from me——Is my love betrayed?
Tell me my whole disgrace: nay, if thou trembleest,
I hear thy pity speak, though thou art silent.
Oras. I tremble at the pangs I see you suffer.
Let not your angry apprehension urge
Your faithful slave to irritate your anguish;
I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears;
But they were tears of charity and grief:
I cannot think there was a cause deserving
This agony of passion——
Osm. Why no—I thank thee——
Orasmin, thou art wise! It could not be
That I should stand exposed to such an insult.
Thou know'st, had Zara meant me the offence,
She wants not wisdom to have hid it better:
How rightly didst thou judge!—Zara shall know it,
And thank thy honest service—After all,
Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her?
What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave,
Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
Nay, who resolves, to see these climes no more.
Oras. Why did you, sir, against our country's custom,
Indulge him with a second leave to come?
He said, he should return once more to see her.
Osm. Return! the traitor! he return!—Dares he
Presume to press a second interview?
Would he be seen again?—He shall be seen;
But dead.—I'll punish the audacious slave,
To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.
Be still, my transports; violence is blind:
I know my heart at once is fierce and weak;
I feel that I descend below myself;
Zara can never justly be suspected;
Her sweetness was not formed to cover treason:
Yet, Osman must not stoop to woman's follies;
Their tears, complaints, regrets, and reconcilements,
With all their light, capricious roll of changes,
Are arts too vulgar to be tried on me.
It would become me better to resume
The empire of my will. Rather than fall
Beneath myself, I must, how dear soe'er
It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara!——
Away—but mark me—these seraglio doors,
Against all Christians be they henceforth shut,
Close as the dark retreats of silent death.
[*Exit Orasmin.*
What have I done, just Heaven! thy rage to move,
That thou shouldst sink me down, so low to love?
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

ZARA, SELIMA.

Sel. Ah, madam! how at once I grieve your fate,
And how admire your virtue!—Heaven permits,
And Heaven will give you strength, to bear misfortune;
To break these chains, so strong, and yet so dear.
Zar. Oh, that I could support the fatal struggle!
Sel. The Eternal aids your weakness, sees your will,
Directs your purpose, and rewards your sorrows.
Zar. Never had wretch more cause to hope he does.
Sel. What! though you here no more behold your father!
There is a Father to be found above,
Who can restore that father to his daughter.
Zar. But I have planted pain in Osman's bosom;
He loves me, even to death! and I reward him
With anguish and despair.—How base! how cruel!
But I deserved him not; I should have been
Too happy, and the hand of Heaven repelled me.
Sel. What! will you then regret the glorious loss,
And hazard thus a victory bravely won?
Zar. Inhuman victory!—thou dost not know
This love so powerful, this sole joy of life,
This first, best hope of earthly happiness,
Is yet less powerful in my heart than Heaven!
To him who made that heart I offer it;
There, there, I sacrifice my bleeding passion;
I pour before him every guilty tear;
I beg him to efface the fond impression,
And fill with his own image all my soul:
But, while I weep and sigh, repent and pray,
Remembrance brings the object of my love,
And every light illusion floats before him.
I see, I hear him, and again he charms!
Fills my glad soul, and shines 'twixt me and Heaven!
Oh, all ye royal ancestors! Oh, father!
Mother! You Christians, and the Christians' God!
You who deprive me of this generous lover!
If you permit me not to live for him,
Let me not live at all, and I am blessed:
Let me die innocent; let his dear hand
Close the sad eyes of her he stooped to love,
And I acquit my fate, and ask no more.
But he forgives me not—regardless now,
Whether or how I live, or when I die.
He quits me, scorns me—and I yet live on,
And talk of death as distant!——
Sel. Ah! despair not;
Trust your eternal helper, and be happy.
Zar. Why—what has Osman done, that he too should not?
Has Heaven so nobly formed his heart to hate it?
Generous and just, beneficent and brave,
Were he but Christian—What can man be more?
I wish, methinks, this reverend priest were come,
To free me from these doubts, which shake my soul:
Yet know not why I should not dare to hope,
That Heaven, whose mercy all confess and feel,
Will pardon and approve the alliance wished:
Perhaps it seats me on the throne of Syria,
To tax my power for these good Christians' comfort.
Thou know'st the mighty Saladine, who first
Conquered this empire from my father's race,
Who, like my Osman, charmed the admiring world,
Drew breath, though Syrian, from a Christian mother.
Sel. What mean you, madam! Ah! you do not see—
Zar. Yes, yes—I see it all; I am not blind:
I see my country and my race condemn me;
I see, that spite of all, I still love Osman.
What if I now go throw me at his feet,
And tell him there sincerely what I am?
Sel. Consider—that might cost your brother's life,
Expose the Christians, and betray you all.
Zar. You do not know the noble heart of Osman.
Sel. I know him the protector of a faith,
Sworn enemy to ours—The more he loves,
The less he will permit you to profess
Opinions which he hates: to-night the priest,
In private introduced, attends you here;
You promised him admission——
Zar. Would I had not!
I promised, too, to keep this fatal secret;
My father's urged command required it of me;
I must obey, all dangerous as it is;
Compelled to silence, Osman is enraged,
Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Madam! there was a time when my charmed heart
Made it a virtue to be lost in love;
When, without blushing, I indulged my flame,
And every day still made you dearer to me.
You taught me, madam, to believe my love
Rewarded and returned—nor was that hope,
Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors,
Who chuse to sigh devoted at the feet
Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,
Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:

But 'twere prophane to think of power in love.
Dear as my passion makes you, I decline
Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
By coarse reproaches, giving pain to you,
And shaming my own greatness. Wounded deeply,
Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
I come——to tell you——
Zar. Give my trembling heart
A moment's respite——
Osm. That unwilling coldness
Is the just prize of your capricious lightness;
Your ready arts may spare the fruitless pains
Of colouring deceit with fair pretences;
I would not wish to hear your slight excuses;
I cherish ignorance, to save my blushes.
Osman in every trial shall remember
That he is emperor. Whate'er I suffer,
'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
And to my injured bosom take despair,
Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
Convinced those sighs were never meant for me—
Go, madam—you are free—from Osman's power—
Expect no wrongs, but see his face no more.
Zar. At last, 'tis come—the feared, the murdering moment
Is come—and I am cursed by earth and heaven!
[*Throws herself on the ground.*
If it is true that I am loved no more——
If you——
Osm. It is too true, my fame requires it;
It is too true that I unwilling leave you:
That I at once renounce you and adore——
Zara!——you weep!
Zar. If I am doomed to lose you,
If I must wander o'er an empty world,
Unloving and unloved——Oh! yet, do justice
To the afflicted——do not wrong me doubly:
Punish me, if it is needful to your peace,
But say not, I deserved it—This, at least,
Believe——for not the greatness of your soul
Is truth more pure and sacred—no regret
Can touch my bleeding heart, for I have lost
The rank of her you raise to share your throne.
I know I never ought to have been there;
My fate and my defects require I lose you.
But ah! my heart was never known to Osman.
May Heaven, that punishes, for ever hate me,
If I regret the loss of aught but you.
Osm. Rise—rise, this means not love?
Zar. Strike——Strike me, Heaven!
Osm. What! is it love to force yourself to wound
The heart you wish to gladden? But I find
Lovers least know themselves; for I believed,
That I had taken back the power I gave you;
Yet see! you did but weep, and have resumed me!
Proud as I am——I must confess, one wish
Evades my power——the blessing to forget you.
Zara—thy tears were formed to teach disdain,
That softness can disarm it.——'Tis decreed,
I must for ever love—but from what cause,
If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,
Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me?
Speak! Is it levity——or, is it fear?
Fear of a power that, but for blessing thee,
Had, without joy, been painful. Is it artifice?
Oh! spare the needless pains——Art was not made
For Zara.——Art, however innocent,
Looks like deceiving——I abhorred it ever.
Zar. Alas! I have no art; not even enough
To hide this love, and this distress you give me.
Osm. New riddles! Speak with plainness to my soul;
What canst thou mean?
Zar. I have no power to speak it.
Osm. It it some secret dangerous to my state?
Is it some Christian plot grown ripe against me?
Zar. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you!
Osman is blessed beyond the reach of fear:
Fears and misfortunes threaten only Zara.
Osm. Why threaten Zara?
Zar. Permit me, at your feet,
Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.
Osm. A favour! Oh, you guide the will of Osman.
Zar. Ah! would to Heaven our duties were united,
Firm as our thoughts and wishes! But this day,
But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
Alone, and far divided from your eye,
To cover my distress, lest you, too tender,
Should see and share it with me—from to-morrow,
I will not have a thought concealed from you.
Osm. What strange disquiet, from what stranger cause!
Zar. If I am really blessed with Osman's love,
He will not then refuse this humble prayer.
Osm. If it must be, it must.—Be pleased, my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent
Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go——but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.
Zar. It gives me more than pain to make you feel it.
Osm. And——can you, Zara, leave me?
Zar. Alas, my lord! [*Exit Zara.*
Osm. [*Alone.*] It should be yet, methinks, too soon to fly me!
Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith.
The more I think, the less I can conceive,
What hidden cause should raise such strange despair!
Now, when her hopes have wings, and every wish
Is courted to be lively! When I love,

And joy and empire press her *to* their bosom;
When not alone beloved, but even a lover:
Professing and accepting; blessed and blessing;
To see her eyes, through tears, shine mystic love!
'Tis madness! and I were unworthy power,
To suffer longer the capricious insult!
Yet, was I blameless? No—I was too rash;
I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her;
I have distrusted her—and still she loves:
Generous atonement that! and 'tis my duty
To expiate, by a length of soft indulgence,
The transports of a rage, which still was love.
Henceforth, I never will suspect her false;
Nature's plain power of charming dwells about her,
And innocence gives force to every word.
I owe full confidence to all she looks,
For in her eyes shines truth, and every beam
Shoots confirmation round her. I remarked,
Even while she wept, her soul a thousand times
Sprung to her lips, and longed to leap to mine,
With honest, ardent utterance of her love.
Who can possess a heart so low, so base,
To look such tenderness, and yet have none?

Enter MELIDOR *with* ORASMIN.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world!
Addressed to Zara, and in private brought,
Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,
And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.
Osm. Come nearer, give it me.—To Zara!—Rise.
Bring it with speed——Shame on your flattering distance——
[*Advancing, and snatching the letter.*
Be honest——and approach me like a subject,
Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.
Mel. One of your Christian slaves, whom late your bounty
Released from bondage, sought with heedful guile,
Unnoticed to deliver it.———Discovered,
He waits, in chains, his doom from your decree.
Osm. Leave me! I tremble, as if something fatal
Were meant me from this letter——should I read it?
Oras. Who knows but it contains some happy truth,
That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart?
Osm. Be it as 'twill—it shall be read—my hands
Have apprehension that out-reaches mine!
Why should they tremble thus?— 'tis done—and now, [*Opens the letter.*
Fate, be thy call obeyed——Orasmin, mark——

'There is a secret passage toward the mosque;
'That way you might escape; and unperceived,
'Fly your observers, and fulfil our hope;
'Despise the danger, and depend on me,
'Who wait you, but to die if you deceive.

Hell! tortures! death! and woman!—What, Orasmin!
Are we awake? Heardst thou? Can this be Zara?
Oras. Would I had lost all sense—for what I heard
Has covered my afflicted heart with horror.
Osm. Thou seest how I am treated!
Oras. Monstrous treason!
To an affront like this you cannot——must not
Remain insensible——You, who but now,
From the most slight suspicion, felt such pain,
Must, in the horror of so black a guilt,
Find an effectual cure, and banish love.
Osm. Seek her this instant—go, Orasmin, fly
Shew her this letter—bid her read and tremble:
Then, in the rising horrors of her guilt,
Stab her unfaithful breast, and let her die.
Say, while thou strikest———Stay, stay, return and pity me;
I will think first a moment—Let that Christian
Be strait confronted with her—Stay—I will,
I will—I know not what———Would I were dead!
Would I had died, unconscious of this shame!
Oras. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong.
Osm. See here detected this infernal secret!
This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart
Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain!
Why! what a reach has woman to deceive!
Under how fine a veil of grief and fear
Did she propose retirement 'till to-morrow!
And I, blind dotard! gave the fool's consent,
Soothed her, and suffered her to go!——She parted,
Dissolved in tears; and parted to betray me!
Oras. Reflection serves but to confirm her guilt.
At length resume yourself; awaken thought;
Assert your greatness; and resolve like Osman.
Osm. Nerestan, too—Was this the boasted honour
Of that proud Christian, whom Jerusalem
Grew loud in praising! whose half-envied virtue
I wondered at myself; and felt disdain
To be but equal to a Christian's greatness!
And does he thank me thus? base infidel!
Honest, pretending, pious, praying villain?
Yet Zara is a thousand times more base,
More hypocrite, than he. A slave! a wretch!
So low, so lost, that even the vilest labours,
In which he lay condemned, could never sink him
Beneath his native infamy——Did she not know
What I have done, what suffered—for her sake?
Oras. Could you, my gracious lord, forgive my zeal,
You would———
Osm. I know it—thou art right—I'll see her—
I'll tax her in thy presence;—I'll upbraid her—
I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.
Oras. Alas, my lord! disordered as you are,
What can you wish to say?

Osm. I know not, now—
But I resolve to see her—lest she think
Her falsehood has, perhaps, the power to grieve me.
Oras. Believe me, sir, your threatenings, your complaints,
What will they all produce, but Zara's tears
To quench this fancied anger! Your lost heart,
Seduced against itself, will search but reasons
To justify the guilt, which gives it pain:
Rather conceal from Zara this discovery;
And let some trusty slave convey the letter,
Reclosed, to her own hand—then shall you learn,
Spite of her frauds, disguise, and artifice,
The firmness, or abasement of her soul.
Osm. Thy counsel charms me! We'll about it now.
'Twill be some recompence, at least, to see
Her blushes when detected.
Oras. Oh, my lord!
I doubt you in the trial! for your heart——
Osm. Distrust me not—my love, indeed, is weak,
But honour and disdain more strong than Zara.
Here, take this fatal letter—chuse a slave,
Whom yet she never saw, and who retains
His tried fidelity—Dispatch—begone——
[*Exit Orasmin.*
Now, whither shall I turn my eyes and steps,
The surest way to shun her: and give time
For this discovering trial?—Heaven! she's here!

Enter ZARA.

So, Madam! fortune will befriend my cause,
And free me from your fetters.—You are met
Most aptly, to dispel a new-risen doubt,
That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.
Unhappy each by other, it is time
To end our mutual pain, that both may rest:
You want not generosity, but love;
My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,
My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,
Touching your gratitude, provoked regard;
'Till, by a length of benefits besieged,
Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love:
But you deceived yourself and injured me.
There is, I'm told, an object more deserving
Your love than Osman——I would know his name:
Be just, nor trifle with my anger: tell me
Now, while expiring pity struggles faint,
While I have yet, perhaps, the power to pardon:
Give up the bold invader of my claim,
And let him die to save thee. Thou art known;
Think and resolve—While I yet speak, renounce him;
While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it;
Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul,
That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.
Zar. Can it be Osman speaks, and speaks to Zara?
Learn, cruel! learn, that this afflicted heart,
This heart, which Heaven delights to prove by tortures,
Did it not love, has pride and power to shun you.
Alas! you will not know me! what have I
To fear, but that unhappy love you question?
That love, which only could outweigh the shame
I feel, while I descend to weep my wrongs.
I know not whether Heaven, that frowns upon me,
Has destined my unhappy days for yours;
But, be my fate or blessed or cursed, I swear
By honour, dearer even than life or love,
Could Zara be but mistress of herself,
She would, with cold regard, look down on kings,
And, you alone excepted, fly them all.
Would you learn more, and open all my heart?
Know, then, that spite of this renewed injustice,
I do not—cannot wish to love you less:
That, long before you looked so low as Zara,
She gave her heart to Osman; yours, before
Your benefits had bought her, or your eye
Had thrown distinction round her; never had,
Nor ever will acknowledge other lover:——
And to this sacred truth, attesting Heaven,
I call thy dreadful notice! If my heart
Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from, Osman.
Osm. What! does she yet presume to swear sincerity!
Oh, boldness of unblushing perjury!
Had I not seen, had I not read such proof,
Of her light falsehood as extinguished doubt,
I could not be a man, and not believe her.
Zar. Alas, my lord! what cruel fears have seized you?
What harsh, mysterious words were those I heard?
Osm. What fears should Osman feel, since Zara loves him?
Zar. I cannot live and answer to your voice,
In that reproachful tone; your angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.
Osm. Since Zara loves him!
Zar. Is it possible
Osman should disbelieve it?—Again, again
Your late-repented violence returns——
Alas! what killing frowns you dart against me!
Can it be kind? Can it be just to doubt me?
Osm. No! I can doubt no longer—You may retire. [*Exit Zara.*

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscovered power of seeming;
She's at the topmost point of shameless artifice;
An empress at deceiving! Soft and easy,
Destroying like a plague, in calm tranquillity:
She's innocent, she swears—so is the fire;
It shines in harmless distance, bright and pleasing,
Consuming nothing till it first embraces.
Say, hast thou chosen a slave?—Is he instructed?
Haste to detect her vileness and my wrongs.

Oras. Punctual I have obeyed your whole command:
But have you armed, my lord, your injured heart,
With coldness and indifference? Can you hear,
All painless and unmoved, the false one's shame?
Osm. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.
Oras. My lord! my emperor! forbid it, Heaven!
Osm. I have discerned a gleam of distant hope;
This hateful Christian, the light growth of France,
Proud, young, vain, amorous, conceited, rash,
Has misconceived some charitable glance,
And judged it love in Zara: he alone,
Then, has offended me. Is it her fault,
If those she charms are indiscreet and daring?
Zara, perhaps, expected not this letter;
And I, with rashness groundless as its writer's,
Took fire at my own fancy, and have wronged her.
Now hear me with attention—Soon as night
Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;
When this Nerestan, this ungrateful Christian,
Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
Be watchful that our guards surprise and seize him;
Then, bound in fetters, and o'erwhelmed with shame,
Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:—
But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
Mindful to what supreme excess I love.
[*Exit Orasmin.*
On this last trial all my hopes depend;
Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
Dispel the doubts that rack my anxious breast,
If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's blest.
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Zar. SOOTHE me no longer with this vain desire;
To a recluse like me, who dares henceforth
Presume admission!——the seraglio's shut——
Barred and impassable——as death to time!
My brother ne'er must hope to see me more:—
How now! what unknown slave accosts us here?

Enter MELIDOR.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
In secret witness I am wholly yours.
[*Zara reads the letter.*
Sel. [*Aside.*] Thou everlasting ruler of the world!
Shed thy wished mercy on our hopeless tears;
Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
And save my princess from the breast of Osman.
Zar. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your counsel.
Sel. Retire—you shall be called—wait near—
Go, leave us. [*Exit Melidor.*
Zar. Read this, and tell me what I ought to answer:
For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.
Sel. Say rather you would hear the voice of Heaven.
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your God.
Zar. I know it, nor resist his awful will;
Thou knowest that I have bound my soul by oath;
But can I—ought I—to engage myself,
My brother, and the Christians, in this danger?
Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul;
I know your heart of strength to hazard all,
But it has let in traitors, who surrender,
On poor pretence of safety:—Learn at least,
To understand the weakness that deceives you:
You tremble to offend your haughty lover,
Whom wrongs and outrage but endear the more;
Yes—you are blind to Osman's cruel nature,
That Tartar's fierceness, that obscures his bounties;
This tyger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness;
Yet, cannot your neglected heart efface
His fated, fixed impression!
Zar. What reproach
Can I with justice make him? I, indeed,
Have given him cause to hate me!
Was not his throne, was not his temple ready?
Did he not court his slave to be a queen,
And have I not declined it?——I who ought
To tremble, conscious of affronted power!
Have not I triumphed o'er his pride and love?
Seen him submit his own high will to mine,
And sacrifice his wishes to my weakness?
Sel. Talk we no more of this unhappy passion:
What resolution will your virtue take?
Zar. All things combine to sink me to despair:
From the seraglio death alone will free me.
I long to see the Christians' happy climes;
Yet in the moment, while I form that prayer,
I sigh a secret wish to languish here.
How sad a state is mine! my restless soul
All ignorant what to do, or what to wish,
My only perfect sense is that of pain.
Oh, guardian Heaven! protect my brother's life,
For I will meet him, and fulfil his prayer:
Then, when from Solyma's unfriendly walls,
His absence shall unbind his sister's tongue,
Osman shall learn the secret of my birth,
My faith unshaken, and my deathless love;
He will approve my choice, and pity me.
I'll send my brother word he may expect me.
Call in the faithful slave——God of my fathers!
[*Exit Selima.*
Let thy hand save me, and thy will direct!

Enter SELIMA *and* MELIDOR.

Go——tell the Christian who intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fixed, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish.
Away——the sultan comes; he must not find us.
[*Exeunt Zara and Selima.*

Enter OSMAN *and* ORASMIN.

Osm. Swifter, ye hours, move on; my fury glows
Impatient, and would push the wheels of time.
How now! What message dost thou bring? Speak boldly——
What answer gave she to the letter sent her?
Mel. She blushed and trembled, and grew pale, and paused.
Then blushed, and read it; and again grew pale;
And wept, and smiled, and doubted, and resolved:
For after all this race of varied passions,
When she had sent me out, and called me back,
'Tell him,' she cried, 'who has intrusted thee,
'That Zara's heart is fixed, nor shrinks at dan-
'ger;
'And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
'Expect, and introduce him to his wish.'
Osm. Enough—begone—I have no ear for more.—
[*To the slave.*
Leave me, thou too, Orasmin.—Leave me, life,
[*To Orasmin.*
For every mortal aspect moves my hate:
Leave me to my distraction—I grow mad,
And cannot bear the visage of a friend.
Leave me to rage, despair, and shame, and wrongs!
Leave me to seek myself—and shun mankind.
[*Exit Orasmin.*
Who am I?—Heaven! Who am I? What resolve I?
Zara! Nerestan! sound these words like names
Decreed to join?—Why pause I?—Perish Zara—
Would I could tear her image from my heart!—
Twere happier not to live at all, than live
Her scorn, the sport of an ungrateful false one!
And sink the sovereign in a woman's property.

Re-enter ORASMIN:

Orasmin!—Friend! return, I cannot bear
This absence from thy reason: 'twas unkind,
'Twas cruel to obey me, thus distressed,
And wanting power to think, when I had lost thee.
How goes the hour? Has he appeared, this rival?
Perish the shameful sound—This villain Christian!
Has he appeared below?
Oras. Silent and dark,
The unbreathing world is hushed, as if it heard,
And listened to your sorrows.
Osm. Oh, treacherous night!
Thou lendst thy ready veil to every treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.
Orasmin, prophet, reason, truth, and love!
After such length of benefits, to wrong me!
How have I over-rated, how mistaken,
The merit of her beauty!—Did I not
Forget I was a monarch? Did I remember
That Zara was a slave?—I gave up all;
Gave up tranquillity, distinction, pride,
And fell the shameful victim of my love!
Oras. Sir, sovereign, sultan, my imperial master!
Reflect on your own greatness,
The distant provocation.
Osm. Hark! Heard'st thou nothing?
Oras. My lord!
Osm. A voice, like dying groans!
Oras. I listen, but can hear nothing.
Osm. Again!—look out—he comes——
Oras. Nor tread of mortal foot—nor voice I hear:
The still seraglio lies, profoundly plunged
In death-like silence. Nothing stirs.—The air
Is soft, as infant sleep; no breathing wing
Steals through the shadows, to awaken night.
Osm. Horrors a thousand times more dark than these,
Benight my suffering soul—Thou dost not know
To what excess of tenderness I loved her;
I knew no happiness, but what she gave me,
Nor could have felt a misery but for her!
Pity this weakness—mine are tears, Orasmin,
That fall not oft, nor lightly.——
Oras. Tears!—Oh, Heaven!
Osm. The first which ever yet unmanned my eyes!
Oh! pity Zara—pity me—Orasmin,
These but forerun the tears of destined blood.
Oras. Oh, my unhappy lord!—I tremble for you—
Osm. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love;
At my revenge too, tremble—for 'tis due,
And will not be deluded.
Oras. Hark! I hear
The steps of men, along the neighbouring wall!
Osm. Fly—seize him—'tis Nerestan! Wait no chains,
But drag him down to my impatient eye.
[*Exit Orasmin.*

Enter ZARA *and* SELIMA, *in the dark.*

Zar. Where art thou, Selima? Give me thy hand.
It is so dark, I tremble as I step,
With fears and startings, never felt till now!
Osm. Damnation! 'tis her voice! the well-known sound,
That has so often charmed me into baseness!
Oh, the perfidious hypocrite!—she goes
To meet the inviting infidel!——now, now,
[*Drawing a dagger.*
Revenge, stand firm, and intercept his wishes;—

Revenge! On whom?—No matter—Earth and Heaven
Would blush, should I forbear: now—Zara, now!
[*Drops the dagger.*
I must not, cannot strike! the starting steel,
Unwilling, flies my hand, and shuns to wound her.
Zar. This is the private path—come nearer, lead me——
Are we not noticed, think'st thou?
Sel. Fear not, madam;
It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.
Osm. That word has given me back my ebbing rage— [*Recovers the dagger.*
Zar. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes.
Who's there?—Nerestan! Is it you?—O welcome—
Osm. [*Stabbing her.*] This to thy heart——
'Tis not the traitor meets thee,
'Tis the betrayed—who writes it in thy blood.
Zar. Oh, gracious Heaven! receive my parting soul,
And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy—
[*Dies.*
Osm. Soul!—then revenge has reached thee—I will now
Haste from this fatal place—I cannot leave her!
Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?
Swallow me, earth!—She's silent—Zara's dead!
And should I live to see returning day,
'Twill shew me but her blood!—shew me left joyless,
In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,
But penitence and pain—And yet 'twas just:—
Hark!——Destiny has sent her lover to me,
To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy.

Enter ORASMIN *with* NERESTAN.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than cursed! come near——
Thou, who, in gratitude for freedom gained,
Hast given me miseries beyond thy own!
Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!
Go—reap thy due reward! prepare to suffer,
Whate'er inventive malice can inflict,
To make thee feel thy death, and perish slow.
Are my commands obeyed?
Oras. All is prepared.
Osm. Thy wanton eyes look round, in search of her,
Whose love, descending to a slave like thee,
From my dishonoured hand received her doom.
See, where she lies!
Ner. Oh fatal, rash mistake!
Osm. Dost thou behold her, slave?
Ner. Unhappy sister!
Osm. Sister!——Didst thou say sister? If thou didst,
Bless me with deafness, Heaven!
Ner. Tyrant! I did———
She was my sister——All that now is left thee,
Dispatch—From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal Christian blood:
Old Lusignan, expiring in my arms,
Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,
To his now murdered daughter!——
Would I had seen the bleeding innocent!
I would have lived to speak to her in death;
Would have awakened, in her languid heart,
A livelier sense of her abandoned God:
That God, who, left by her, forsook her too,
And gave the poor lost sufferer to thy rage.
Osm. Thy sister!—Lusignan her father!—Selima!
Can this be true?—and have I wronged thee, Zara?
Sel. Thy love was all the cloud 'twixt her and Heaven!
Osm. Be dumb——for thou art base, to add distraction
To my already more than bleeding heart.
And was thy love sincere?—What then remains?
Ner. Why should a tyrant hesitate on murder?
There now remains but mine, of all the blood,
Which, through thy father's cruel reign and thine,
Has never ceased to stream on Syria's sands.
Restore a wretch to his unhappy race;
Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
Can force one feeble groan to feast thy anger.
I waste my fruitless words in empty air;
The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.
Osm. Oh Zara!———
Oras. Alas! my lord, return—whither would grief
Transport your generous heart?——This Christian dog——
Osm. Take off his fetters, and observe my will:
To him, and all his friends, give instant liberty:
Pour a profusion of the richest gifts
On these unhappy Christians; and, when heaped
With varied benefits, and charged with riches,
Give them safe conduct to the nearest port.
Oras. But, sir———
Osm. Reply not, but obey.———
Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command,
Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves thee!
Go—lose no time—farewell—begone—and thou!
Unhappy warrior—yet less lost than I——
Haste from our bloody land—and to thy own
Convey this poor, pale object of my rage.
Thy king, and all his Christians, when they hear
Thy miseries, shall mourn them with their tears;
But, if thou tell'st them mine, and tell'st them truly,
They, who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.
Take, too, this poniard with thee, which my hand
Has stained with blood far dearer than my own:
Tell them—with this I murdered her I loved;
The noblest and most virtuous among women!

The soul of innocence, and pride of truth:
Tell them I laid my empire at her feet:
Tell them I plunged my dagger in her blood;
Tell them, I so adored—and thus revenged her.
[*Stabs himself.*
Reverence this hero—and conduct him safe. [*Dies.*

Ner. Direct me, great inspirer of the soul!
How should I act, how judge in this distress?
Amazing grandeur! and detested rage!
Even I, amidst my tears, admire this foe,
And mourn his death, who lived to give me woe.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

FATAL CURIOSITY.

BY

LILLO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
OLD WILMOT.	AGNES, *wife to Old Wilmot.*
YOUNG WILMOT, *his son.*	CHARLOTTE, *beloved of Young Wilmot.*
EUSTACE, *Young Wilmot's friend.*	MARIA, *her attendant.*
RANDAL, *the faithful attendant of Old Wilmot.*	

Scene,—Penryn, in Cornwall.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Wilmot's House.*

Old WILMOT *alone.*

THE day is far advanced. The chearful sun
Pursues with vigour his repeated course:
No labour lessens, nor no time decays
His strength, or splendour: evermore the same,
From age to age his influence sustains
Dependent worlds, bestows both life and motion
On the dull mass, that forms their dusky orbs,
Chears them with heat, and gilds them with his brightness.
Yet man, of jarring elements composed,
Who posts from change to change, from the first hour
Of his frail being to his dissolution,
Enjoys the sad prerogative above him,
To think and to be wretched!—What is life
To him, that's born to die!
Or, what the wisdom, whose perfection ends
In knowing, we know nothing!
Mere contradiction all! A tragic farce,
Tedious, though short, elaborate without art,
Ridiculously sad——

Enter RANDAL.

Where hast been, Randal?

Rand. Not out of Penryn, sir; but to the strand,
To hear what news from Falmouth, since the storm
Of wind last night.

O. Wilm. It was a dreadful one.

Rand. Some found it so. A noble ship from India,
Entering the harbour, run upon a rock,
And there was lost.

O. Wilm. What became of those on board her?

Rand. Some few are saved, but much the greater part,
'Tis thought, are perished.

O. Wilm. They are past the fear
Of future tempests, or a wreck on shore:
Those, who escaped, are still exposed to both.
Where is your mistress?

Rand. I saw her pass the High-street, towards the Minster.

O. Wilm. She is gone to visit Charlotte. She doth well.
In the soft bosom of that gentle maid
There dwells more goodness than the rigid race
Of moral pedants e'er believed, or taught.
With what amazing constancy and truth,
Doth she sustain the absence of our son,

Whom more than life she loves! How shun for him,
Whom we shall ne'er see more, the rich and great;
Who own her charms, and sigh to make her happy!
Since our misfortunes we have found no friend,
None who regarded our distress, but her;
And she, by what I have observed of late,
Is wearied, or exhausted. Curst condition!—
To live a burden to one only friend,
And blast her youth with our contagious woe!—
Who, that had reason, soul, or sense, would bear it
A moment longer? Then this honest wretch!—
I must dismiss him—Why should I detain
A grateful, generous youth to perish with me?
His service may procure him bread elsewhere,
Though I have none to give him.—Prithee, Randal!
How long hast thou been with me?

Rand. Fifteen years.
I was a very child, when first you took me,
To wait upon your son, my dear young master.
I oft have wished I'd gone to India with him,
Though you, desponding, give him o'er for lost.—
[*Old Wilmot wipes his eyes.*
I am to blame: this talk revives your sorrow
For his long absence.

O. Wilm. That cannot be revived,
Which never died.

Rand. The whole of my intent
Was to confess your bounty, that supplied
The loss of both my parents: I was long
The object of your charitable care.

O. Wilm. No more of that: Thou hast served me longer since
Without reward; so that account is balanced,
Or rather I'm thy debtor. I remember,
When poverty began to show her face
Within these walls, and all my other servants,
Like pampered vermin from a falling house,
Retreated with the plunder they had gained,
And left me, too indulgent and remiss
For such ungrateful wretches, to be crushed
Beneath the ruin they had helped to make,
That you, more good than wise, refused to leave me.

Rand. Nay, I beseech you, sir!—

O. Wilm. With my distress,
In perfect contradiction to the world,
Thy love, respect, and diligence, increased.
Now, all the recompence within my power,
Is to discharge thee, Randal, from my hard,
Unprofitable service.

Rand. Heaven forbid!
Shall I forsake you in your worst necessity?—
Believe me, sir! my honest soul abhors
The barbarous thought.

O. Wilm. What! canst thou feed on air?
I have not left wherewith to purchase food
For one meal more.

Rand. Rather than leave you thus,
I'll beg my bread, and live on others bounty,
While I serve you.

O. Wilm. Down, down my swelling heart,
Or burst in silence! 'Tis thy cruel fate
Insults thee by his kindness—He is innocent
Of all the pain it gives thee.—Go thy ways:
I will no more suppress thy youthful hopes
Of rising in the world.

Rand. 'Tis true, I'm young,
And never tried my fortune, or my genius,
Which may perhaps find out some happy means,
As yet unthought of, to supply your wants.

O. Wilm. Thou torturest me: I hate all obligations
Which I can ne'er return.—And who art thou,
That I should stoop to take them from thy hand!
Care for thyself, but take no thought for me;
I will not want thee—trouble me no more.

Rand. Be not offended, sir, and I will go.
I ne'er repined at your commands before;
But, Heaven's my witness, I obey you now
With strong reluctance, and a heavy heart!
Farewell, my worthy master! [*Going.*

O. Wilm. Farewell!—Stay!
As thou art yet a stranger to the world,
Of which, alas! I've had too much experience,
I should, methinks, before we part, bestow
A little counsel on thee.—Dry thy eyes:
If thou weepest thus, I shall proceed no farther.
Dost thou aspire to greatness, or to wealth?
Quit books, and the unprofitable search
Of wisdom there, and study human kind:
No science will avail thee without that;
But that obtained, thou needest not any other.
This will instruct thee to conceal thy views,
And wear the face of probity and honour,
Till thou hast gained thy end: which must be ever
Thy own advantage, at that man's expence,
Who shall be weak enough to think thee honest.

Rand. You mock me, sure!

O. Wilm. I never was more serious.

Rand. Why should you counsel what you scorned to practise?

O. Wilm. Because that foolish scorn has been my ruin.
I've been an idiot, but would have thee wiser,
And treat mankind, as they would treat thee, Randal,
As they deserve, and I've been treated by them:
Thou'st seen by me, and those who now despise me,
How men of fortune fall, and beggars rise.
Shun my example; treasure up my precepts;
The world's before thee: be a knave, and prosper!
What, art thou dumb? [*After a long pause.*

Rand. Amazement ties my tongue!
Where are your former principles?

O. Wilm. No matter:
Suppose I have renounced them: I have passions,

And love thee still; therefore would have thee think,
The world is all a scene of deep deceit,
And he, who deals with mankind on the square,
Is his own bubble, and undoes himself.
Farewell, and mark my counsel, boy. [*Exit.*
Rand. Amazement!
Is this the man I thought so wise and just?
What! teach and counsel me to be a villain!
Sure grief has made him frantic, or some fiend
Assumed his shape! I shall suspect my senses.
High-minded he was ever, and improvident;
But pitiful and generous to a fault.
Pleasure he loved, but honour was his idol.
O fatal change! O horrid transformation!
So a majestic temple, sunk to ruin,
Becomes the loathsome shelter and abode
Of lurking serpents, toads, and beasts of prey;
And scaly dragons hiss, and lions roar,
Where wisdom taught, and music charmed, before! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Charlotte's House.*

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* MARIA.

Char. What terror and amazement must they feel,
Who die by ship-wreck!
Mar. 'Tis a dreadful thought!
Char. Aye! is it not, Maria?—To descend,
Living and conscious, to the watery tomb!——
Alas! had we no sorrows of our own,
The frequent instances of others woe
Must give a generous mind a world of pain.
But you forget you promised me to sing.
Though cheerfulness and I have long been strangers,
Harmonious sounds are still delightful to me.
There's sure no passion in the human soul,
But finds its food in music. I would hear
The song, composed by that unhappy maid,
Whose faithful lover 'scaped a thousand perils,
From rocks, and sands, and the devouring deep;
And, after all, being arrived at home,
Passing a narrow brook, was drowned there,
And perished in her sight.

SONG.

Mar. *Cease, cease, heart-easing tears!*
Adieu, you flattering fears,
Which seven long tedious years
Taught me to bear.
Tears are for lighter woes;
Fear no such danger knows,
As fate remorseless shews,
Endless despair!
Dear cause of all my pain,
On the wide stormy main,
Thou wast preserved in vain,
Though still adored.
Hadst thou died there unseen,
My wounded eyes had been
Saved from the direst scene
Maid e'er deplored.

[*Charlotte finds a letter.*
Char. What's this?—A letter superscribed to me!
None could convey it here but you, Maria.
Ungenerous, cruel maid! to use me thus!
To join with flattering men to break my peace,
And persecute me to the last retreat!
Mar. Why should it break your peace, to hear the sighs
Of honourable love? This letter is——
Char. No matter whence; return it back unopened:
I have no love, no charms, but for my Wilmot,
Nor would have any.
Mar. Alas! Wilmot's dead!
Or, living, dead to you.
Char. I'll not despair: Patience shall cherish hope;
Nor wrong his honour by unjust suspicion.
I know his truth, and will preserve my own.
But, to prevent all future importunity,
Know, thou incessant foe to my repose,
Whether he sleeps secure from mortal cares,
In the deep bosom of the boisterous main,
Or, tost with tempest, still endures its rage;
No second choice shall violate my vows;
High Heaven, which heard them, and abhors the perjured,
Can witness, they were made without reserve;
Never to be retracted, ne'er dissolved
By accident or absence, time or death.
Mar. And did your vows oblige you to support
His haughty parents, to your utter ruin?——
Well may you weep to think on what you've done!
Char. I weep to think, that I can do no more
For their support. What will become of them!
The hoary, helpless, miserable pair!
Mar. What I can't praise, you force me to admire,
And mourn for you, as you lament for them.
Your patience, constancy, and resignation,
Merit a better fate.
Char. So pride would tell me,
And vain self-love; but I believe them not:
And if, by wanting pleasure, I have gained
Humility, I'm richer for my loss.
Mar. You have the heavenly art still to improve
Your mind by all events.—But here comes one,
Whose pride seems to increase with her misfortunes.
Her faded dress, unfashionably fine,
As ill conceals her poverty, as that
Strained complaisance her haughty, swelling heart.
Though perishing with want, so far from asking,
She ne'er receives a favour uncompelled,
And, while she ruins, scorns to be obliged:
Let me depart; I know she loves me not.
[*Exit Maria.*

Enter AGNES.

Char. This visit's kind.
Agn. Few else would think it so:
Those who would once have thought themselves much honoured
By the least favour, though 'twere but a look,
I could have shewn them, now refuse to see me.
'Tis misery enough to be reduced
To the low level of the common herd,
Who, born to beggary, envy all above them;
But 'tis the curse of curses, to endure
The insolent contempt of those we scorn.
Char. By scorning, we provoke them to contempt,
And thus offend, and suffer in our turns.
We must have patience.
Agn. No, I scorn them yet!
But there's no end of suffering: Who can say,
Their sorrows are complete? My wretched husband,
Tired with our woes, and hopeless of relief,
Grows sick of life,
And, urged by indignation and despair,
Would plunge into eternity at once,
By foul self-murder!
Char. Gracious Heaven support him!
Agn. His fixed love for me,
Whom he would fain persuade to share his fate,
And take the same, uncertain, dreadful course,
Alone withholds his hand.
Char. And may it ever!
Agn. I've known with him the two extremes of life,
The highest happiness, and deepest woe,
With all the sharp and bitter aggravations
Of such a vast transition—Such a fall
In the decline of life!—I have as quick,
As exquisite, a sense of pain as he,
And would do any thing, but die, to end it;
But there my courage fails. Death is the worst
That fate can bring, and cuts off every hope.
Char. We must not chuse, but strive to bear our lot
Without reproach, or guilt. By one rash act
Of desperation, we may overthrow
The merit we've been raising all our days,
And lose our whole reward. And now, methinks,
Now, more than ever, we have cause to fear,
And be upon our guard. The hand of Heaven
Spreads clouds on clouds o'er our benighted heads,
And, wrapt in darkness, doubles our distresses.
I had, the night last past, repeated twice,
A strange and awful dream. I would not yield
To fearful superstition, nor despise
The admonition of a friendly power,
That wished my good.
Agn. I have certain plagues enough,
Without the help of dreams, to make me wretched.
Char. I would not stake my happiness or duty
On their uncertain credit, nor on aught
But reason, and the known decrees of Heaven.
Yet dreams have sometimes shewn events to come,
And may excite to vigilance and care.
My vision may be such, and sent to warn us
(Now we are tried by multiplied afflictions),
To mark each motion of our swelling hearts,
Lest we attempt to extricate ourselves,
And seek deliverance by forbidden ways——
To keep our hopes and innocence entire,
Till we're dismist to join the happy dead,
Or Heaven relieves us here.
Agn. Well, to your dream.
Char. Methought I sat, in a dark winter's night,
On the wide summit of a barren mountain;
The sharp bleak winds pierced through my shivering frame,
And storms of hail, and sleet, and driving rains,
Beat, with impetuous fury, on my head,
Drenched my chilled limbs, and poured a deluge round me.
On one hand, ever-gentle Patience sat,
On whose calm bosom I reclined my head;
And, on the other, silent Contemplation.
At length, to my unclosed and watchful eyes,
That long had rolled in darkness, dawn appeared;
And I beheld a man, an utter stranger,
But of a graceful and exalted mien,
Who pressed, with eager transport, to embrace me.
I shunned his arms. But at some words he spoke,
Which I have now forgot, I turned again;
But he was gone. And, oh! transporting sight!
Your son, my dearest Wilmot! filled his place.
Agn. If I regarded dreams, I should expect
Some fair event from yours.
Char. But what's to come,
Though more obscure, is terrible indeed.
Methought we parted soon, and when I sought him,
You, and his father—Yes, you both were there—
Strove to conceal him from me. I pursued you
Both with my cries, and called on Heaven and earth
To judge my wrongs, and force you to reveal
Where you had hid my love, my life, my Wilmot!
Agn. Unless you mean to offend me, spare the rest.
'Tis just as likely Wilmot should return,
As we become your foes.
Char. Far be such thought
From Charlotte's breast! But when I heard you name
Self-murder, it revived the frightful image
Of such a dreadful scene!——
Agn. You will persist!——
Char. Excuse me: I have done. Being a dream,
I thought, at least, it could not give offence.
Agn. You could not think so, had you thought at all.
But I take nothing ill from thee. Adieu!

I have tarried longer than I first intended,
And my poor husband mourns the while alone.
[*Exit Agnes.*
Char. She's gone abruptly, and I fear displeased.
The least appearance of advice or caution,
Sets her impatient temper in a flame.
When grief, that well might humble, swells our pride,
And pride, encreasing, aggravates our grief,
The tempest must prevail, till we are lost.
Heaven grant a fairer issue for her sorrows!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Town and Port of Penryn.*

Enter Young WILMOT *and* EUSTACE *in Indian habits.*

Y. Wilmot. Welcome, my friend, to Penryn! Here we're safe.
Eust. Then we're delivered twice: first from the sea,
And then from men, who, more remorseless, prey
On shipwrecked wretches, and who spoil, and murder
Those, whom fell tempests and devouring waves,
In all their fury, spared.
Y. Wilm. It is a scandal,
(Though malice must acquit the better sort)
The rude unpolished people here in Cornwall
Have long lain under, and with too much justice:
For 'tis an evil grown almost inveterate,
And asks a bold and skilful hand to cure.
Eust. Your treasure's safe, I hope.
Y. Wilm. 'Tis here, thank Heaven!
Being in jewels, when I saw our danger,
I hid it in my bosom.
Eust. I observed you,
And wonder how you could command your thoughts,
In such a time of terror and confusion.
Y. Wilm. My thoughts were then at home.—O England! England!
Thou seat of plenty, liberty, and health!
With transport I behold thy verdant fields,
Thy lofty mountains rich with useful ore,
Thy numerous herds, thy flocks, and winding streams!
After a long and tedious absence, Eustace!
With what delight we breathe our native air,
And tread the genial soil that bore us first!
'Tis said, the world is every wise man's country;
Yet after having viewed its various nations,
I am weak enough still to prefer my own
To all I've seen beside—You smile, my friend!
And think, perhaps, 'tis instinct more than reason.
Why be it so: Instinct preceded reason,
Even in the wisest men, and may sometimes
Be much the better guide. But be it either,
I must confess, that even death itself
Appeared to me with twice its native horrors,
When apprehended in a foreign land.
Death is, no doubt, in every place the same;
Yet nature casts a look towards home, and most,
Who have it in their power, chuse to expire
Where they first drew their breath.
Eust. Believe me, Wilmot,
Your grave reflections were not what I smiled at;
I own the truth. That we're returned to England
Affords me all the pleasure you can feel.
Yet I must think a warmer passion moves you:
Thinking of that I smiled.
Y. Wilm. O Eustace! Eustace!
Thou knowest, for I have confest to thee, I love;
But having never seen the charming maid,
Thou canst not know the fierceness of my flame.
My hopes and fears, like the tempestuous seas
That we have past, now mount me to the skies,
Now hurl me down from that stupendous height,
And drive me to the centre. Did you know
How much depends on this important hour,
You would not be surprised to see me thus.
The sinking fortune of our ancient house
Compelled me young to leave my native country,
My weeping parents, and my lovely Charlotte,
Who ruled, and must for ever rule, my fate.
——O! should my Charlotte, doubtful of my truth,
Or in despair ever to see me more,
Have given herself to some more happy lover!—
Distraction's in the thought! Or should my parents,
Grieved for my absence, and opprest with want,
Have sunk beneath their burden and expired,
While I too late was flying to relieve them;
The end of all my long and weary travels,
The hope that made success itself a blessing,
Being defeated and for ever lost——
What were the riches of the world to me?
Eust. The wretch, who fears all that is possible,
Must suffer more than he, who feels the worst
A man can feel, yet lives exempt from fear.
A woman may be false, and friends are mortal;
And yet your aged parents may be living;
And your fair mistress constant.
Y. Wilm. True, they may;
I doubt, but I despair not. No, my friend!
My hopes are strong and lively as my fears;
They tell me, Charlotte is as true as fair;
That we shall meet never to part again;
That I shall see my parents, kiss the tears
From their pale hollow cheeks, cheer their sad hearts,
And drive that gaping phantom, meagre want,
For ever from their board; their days to come
Crown all with peace, with pleasure and abundance;
Receive their fond embraces and their blessings,
And be a blessing to them.
Eust. 'Tis our weakness:
Blind to events, we reason in the dark,
And fondly apprehend what none e'er found,

Or ever shall, pleasure and pain unmixt;
And flatter and torment ourselves by turns,
With what shall never be.
Y. Wilm. I'll go this instant
To seek my Charlotte, and explore my fate.
Eust. What, in that foreign habit!
Y. Wilm. That's a trifle,
Not worth my thoughts.
Eust. The hardships you've endured,
And your long stay beneath the burning zone,
Where one eternal sultry summer reigns,
Have marred the native hue of your complexion:
Methinks you look more like a sun-burnt Indian,
Than a Briton.
Y. Wilm. Well, 'tis no matter, Eustace!
I hope my mind's not altered for the worse,
And for my outside—But inform me, friend,
When I may hope to see you.
Eust. When you please:
You'll find me at the inn.
Y. Wilm. When I have learned my doom, expect me there.
'Till then, farewell!
Eust. Farewell! Success attend you!
[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Charlotte's House.*

Enter Charlotte thoughtful; and soon after a Servant from the other side.

Serv. Madam, a stranger in a foreign habit desires to see you.
Char. In a foreign habit!
'Tis strange, and unexpected. But admit him.
[*Exit Servant.*
Who can this stranger be! I know no foreigner——

Enter Young WILMOT.

Nor any man like this.
Y. Wilm. Ten thousand joys!
[*Going to embrace her.*
Char. Sir, you are too bold—Forbear, and let me know
What business brought you here, or leave the place.
Y. Wilm. Perfidious maid! Am I forgot, or scorned?
Char. Can I forget a man I never knew!
Y. Wilm. My fears are true; some other has her heart:
She's lost: My fatal absence has undone me.
[*Aside.*
O! could thy Wilmot have forgot thee, Charlotte!
Char. Ha! Wilmot! say! what do your words import?
O gentle stranger! ease my swelling heart;
What dost thou know of Wilmot?
Y. Wilm. This I know:
When all the winds of heaven seemed to conspire
Against the stormy main, and dreadful peals
Of rattling thunder deafened every ear,
And drowned the affrighted mariners' loud cries;
When livid lightning spread its sulphurous flames
Through all the dark horizon, and disclosed
The raging seas incensed to his destruction;
When the good ship, in which he was embarked,
Broke, and, o'erwhelmed by the impetuous surge,
Sunk to the oozy bottom of the deep,
And left him struggling with the warring waves;
In that dread moment, in the jaws of death,
When his strength failed, and every hope forsook him,
And his last breath pressed towards his trembling lips,
The neighbouring rocks, that echoed to his moan,
Returned no sound articulate but—*Charlotte.*
Char. The fatal tempest, whose description strikes
The hearer with astonishment, is ceased;
And Wilmot is at rest. The fiercer storm
Of swelling passions, that o'erwhelms the soul,
And rages worse than the mad foaming seas
In which he perished, ne'er shall vex him more.
Y. Wilm. Thou seemest to think he's dead; enjoy that thought;
Persuade yourself that what you wish is true,
And triumph in your falsehood. Yes, he's dead;
You were his fate. The cruel winds and waves,
That cast him pale and breathless on the shore,
Spared him for greater woes—to know his Charlotte,
Forgetting all her vows to him and heaven,
Had cast him from her thoughts—Then, then he died;
But never can have rest. Even now he wanders,
A sad, repining, discontented ghost,
The unsubstantial shadow of himself,
And pours his plaintive groans in thy deaf ears,
And stalks, unseen, before thee.
Char. 'Tis enough:
Detested falsehood now has done its worst.
And art thou dead? And wouldst thou die, my Wilmot!
For one thou thought'st unjust? Thou soul of truth!
What must be done? Which way shall I express
Unutterable woe? Or how convince
Thy dear departed spirit of the love,
The eternal love, and never-failing faith,
Of thy much injured, lost, despairing Charlotte?
Y. Wilm. Be still, my fluttering heart; hope not too soon!
Perhaps I dream, and this is all illusion. [*Aside.*

Char. If, as some teach, the spirit after death,
Free from the bounds and ties of sordid earth,
Can trace us to our most concealed retreat,
See all we act, and read our very thoughts;
To thee, O Wilmot! kneeling I appeal.
If e'er I swerved in action, word, or thought,
Or ever wished to taste a joy on earth
That centred not in thee, since last we parted;
May we ne'er meet again, but thy loud wrongs
So close the ear of mercy to my cries,
That I may never see those bright abodes,
Where truth and virtue only have admission,
And thou inhabitest now!

Y. Wilm. Assist me, Heaven!
Preserve my reason, memory, and sense!
O moderate my fierce tumultuous joys,
Or their excess will drive me to distraction.
O Charlotte! Charlotte! lovely, virtuous maid!
Can thy firm mind, in spite of time and absence,
Remain unshaken, and support its truth;
And yet thy frailer memory retain
No image, no idea of thy lover?
Why dost thou gaze so wildly? Look on me;
Turn thy dear eyes this way; observe me well.
Have scorching climates, time, and this strange habit,
So changed and so disguised thy faithful Wilmot,
That nothing in my voice, my face, or mein,
Remains to tell my Charlotte I am he!

[*After viewing him some time, she approaches weeping, and gives him her hand; and then turning towards him, sinks upon his bosom.*]

Why dost thou weep? Why dost thou tremble thus?
Why doth thy panting heart and cautious touch
Speak thee but half convinced? Whence are thy fears?
Why art thou silent? Canst thou doubt me still?

Char. No, Wilmot! no; I'm blind with too much light,
O'ercome with wonder, and oppressed with joy.
This vast profusion of extreme delight,
Rising at once, and bursting from despair,
Defies the aid of words, and mocks description.
But for one sorrow, one sad scene of anguish,
That checks the swelling torrent of my joys,
I could not bear the transport.

Y. Wilm. Let me know it:
Give me my portion of thy sorrow, Charlotte!
Let me partake thy grief, or bear it for thee.

Char. Alas! my Wilmot! these sad tears are thine;
They flow for thy misfortunes. I am pierced
With all the agonies of strong compassion,
With all the bitter anguish you must feel,
When you shall hear your parents———

Y. Wilm. Are no more!

Char. You apprehend me wrong.

Y. Wilm. Perhaps I do;
Perhaps you mean to say, the greedy grave
Was satisfied with one, and one is left
To bless my longing eyes. But which, my Charlotte?

Char. Afflict yourself no more with groundless fears:
Your parents both are living. Their distress,
The poverty, to which they are reduced,
In spite of my weak aid, was what I mourned:
That poverty in age, to them whose youth
Was crowned with full prosperity, I fear,
Is worse, much worse, than death.

Y. Wilm. My joy's complete!
My parents living, and possessed of thee!—
From this blest hour, the happiest of my life,
I'll date my rest. My anxious hopes and fears,
My weary travels, and my dangers past,
Are now rewarded all: Now I rejoice
In my success, and count my riches gain.
For know, my soul's best treasure! I have wealth
Enough to glut even avarice itself:
No more shall cruel want, or proud contempt,
Oppress the sinking spirits, or insult
The hoary heads, of those who gave me being.

Char. 'Tis now, O riches, I conceive your worth:
You are not base, nor can you be superfluous,
But when misplaced in base and sordid hands.
Fly, fly, my Wilmot! leave thy happy Charlotte!
Thy filial piety, the sighs and tears
Of thy lamenting parents, call thee hence.

Y. Wilm. I have a friend, the partner of my voyage,
Who, in the storm last night, was shipwrecked with me.

Char. Shipwrecked last night!—O you immortal powers!
What have you suffered! How were you preserved?

Y. Wilm. Let that, and all my other strange escapes
And perilous adventures, be the theme
Of many a happy winter night to come.
My present purpose was to intreat my angel,
To know this friend, this other better Wilmot,
And come with him this evening to my father's:
I'll send him to thee.

Char. I consent with pleasure.

Y. Wilm. Heavens! what a night! How shall I bear my joy!
My parents', your's, my friend's, all will be mine.
If such the early hopes, the vernal bloom,
The distant prospect of my future bliss,
Then what the ruddy autumn! What the fruit,
The full possession of thy heavenly charms!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A street in Penryn.*

Enter RANDAL.

Rand. Poor! poor! and friendless! whither shall I wander,
And to what point direct my views and hopes?
A menial servant!—No—What! shall I live,

Here, in this land of freedom, live distinguished,
And marked the willing slave of some proud subject!——
To swell his useless train for broken fragments,
The cold remains of his superfluous board?—
I would aspire to something more and better.
Turn thy eyes then to the prolific ocean,
Whose spacious bosom opens to thy view:
There deathless honour, and unenvied wealth,
Have often crowned the brave adventurer's toils.
This is the native uncontested right,
The fair inheritance, of every Briton,
That dares put in his claim—My choice is made:
A long farewell to Cornwall, and to England!
If I return—But stay, what stranger's this,
Who, as he views me, seems to mend his pace?

Enter Young WILMOT.

Y. Wilm. Randal!—The dear companion of my youth!—
Sure lavish fortune means to give me all
I could desire, or ask for, this blessed day,
And leave me nothing to expect hereafter.
Rand. Your pardon, sir! I know but one on earth
Could properly salute me by the title
You're pleased to give me, and I would not think
That you are he—that you are Wilmot.
Y. Wilm. Why?
Rand. Because I could not bear the disappointment,
If I should be deceived.
Y. Wilm. I am pleased to hear it:
Thy friendly fears better express thy thoughts
Than words could do.
Rand. O! Wilmot! O! my master!
Are you returned?
Y. Wilm. I have not yet embraced
My parents—I shall see you at my father's?
Rand. No, I'm discharged from thence—O sir! such ruin——
Y. Wilm. I've heard it all, and hasten to relieve them:
Sure Heaven hath blessed me to that very end:
I've wealth enough; nor shalt thou want a part.
Rand. I have a part already—I am blessed
In your success, and share in all your joys.
Y. Wilm. I doubt it not. But tell me, dost thou think,
My parents not suspecting my return,
That I may visit them, and not be known?
Rand. 'Tis hard for me to judge. You are already
Grown so familiar to me, that I wonder
I knew you not at first: yet it may be;
For you're much altered, and they think you dead.
Y. Wilm. This is certain, Charlotte beheld me long,
And heard my loud reproaches, and complaints,
Without remembering she had ever seen me.
My mind at ease grows wanton: I would fain
Refine on happiness. Why may I not
Indulge my curiosity, and try
If it be possible, by seeing first
My parents as a stranger, to improve
Their pleasure by surprise?
Rand. It may indeed
Enhance your own, to see from what despair
Your timely coming, and unhoped success,
Have given you power to raise them.
Y. Wilm. I remember,
E'er since we learned together, you excelled
In writing fairly, and could imitate
Whatever hand you saw with great exactness.
I therefore beg you'll write, in Charlotte's name
And character, a letter to my father;
And recommend me, as a friend of hers,
To his acquaintance.
Rand. Sir, if you desire it—
And yet——
Y. Wilm. Nay, no objections! 'Twill save time,
Most precious with me now. For the deception,
If doing what my Charlotte will approve,
'Cause done for me and with a good intent,
Deserves the name, I'll answer it myself.
If this succeeds, I purpose to defer
Discovering who I am till Charlotte comes,
And thou, and all who love me. Ev'ry friend
Who witnesses my happiness to-night,
Will, by partaking, multiply my joys.
Rand. You grow luxurious in imagination.
Could I deny you aught, I would not write
This letter. To say true, I ever thought
Your boundless curiosity a weakness.
Y. Wilm. What canst thou blame in this?
Rand. Your pardon, sir!
Perhaps I spoke too freely;
I'm ready to obey your orders.
Y. Wilm. I am much thy debtor,
But I shall find a time to quit thy kindness.
O Randal! but imagine to thyself
The floods of transport, the sincere delight,
That all my friends will feel, when I disclose
To my astonished parents my return,
And then confess, that I have well contrived,
By giving others joy, to exalt my own.

SCENE III.—*Old Wilmot's House discovered.*

Old WILMOT *and* AGNES,

O. Wilm. Here, take this Seneca: this haughty pedant,
Who, governing the master of mankind,
And awing power imperial, prates of patience;
And praises poverty—possessed of millions:
—Sell him, and buy us bread. The scantiest meal
The vilest copy of his book e'er purchased,
Will give us more relief in this distress,
Than all his boasted precepts.—Nay, no tears;
Keep them to move compassion when you beg.
Agn. My heart may break, but never stoop to that.

O. Wilm. Nor would I live to see it—But dispatch. [*Exit Agnes.*
Where must I charge this length of misery,
That gathers force each moment as it rolls,
And must at last o'erwhelm me, but on hope:
Vain, flattering, delusive, groundless hope,
That has for years deceived me?—Had I thought
As I do now, as wise men ever think,
When first this hell of poverty o'ertook me,
That power to die implies a right to do it,
And should be used when life becomes a pain,
What plagues had I prevented!—True, my wife
Is still a slave to prejudice and fear——
I would not leave my better part, the dear
[*Weeps.*
Faithful companion of my happier days,
To bear the weight of age and want alone.
—I'll try once more—

Enter AGNES, *and after her Young* WILMOT.

O. Wilm. Returned, my life! so soon!—
Agn. The unexpected coming of this stranger
Prevents my going yet.
Y. Wilm. You are, I presume,
The gentleman to whom this is directed.
[*Gives a letter.*
What wild neglect, the token of despair,
What indigence, what misery, appears
In this once happy house! What discontent,
What anguish and confusion fill the faces
Of its dejected owners!
O. Wilm. [*Having read the letter.*]
—Sir, such welcome
As this poor house affords, you may command.
Our ever friendly neighbour—Once we hoped
To have called fair Charlotte by a dearer name,
But we have done with hope—I pray excuse
This incoherence—We had once a son. [*Weeps.*
Agn. That you are come from that dear virtuous maid,
Revives in us the memory of a loss,
Which, though long since, we have not learned to bear.
Y. Wilm. The joy to see them, and the bitter pain
It is to see them thus, touches my soul
With tenderness and grief, that will overflow.
——They know me not, and yet I shall, I fear,
Defeat my purpose, and betray myself. [*Aside.*
O. Wilm. The lady calls you here her valued friend;
Enough, though nothing more should be implied,
To recommend you to our best esteem;
—A worthless acquisition! May she find
Some means that better may express her kindness!
But she, perhaps, has purposed to enrich
You with herself, and end her fruitless sorrow
For one, whom death alone can justify
For leaving her so long. If it be so,
May you repair his loss, and be to Charlotte
A second, happier Wilmot! Partial nature,
Who only favours youth, as feeble age
Were not her offspring or below her care,
Has sealed our doom: No second hope shall spring,
To dry our tears, and dissipate despair.
Agn. The last and most abandoned of our kind,
By heaven and earth neglected or despised,
The loathsome grave, that robbed us of our son,
And all our joys in him, must be our refuge.
Y. Wilm. Let ghosts unpardoned, or devoted fiends,
Fear without hope, and wail in such sad strains;
But grace defend the living from despair!
The darkest hours precede the rising sun,
And mercy may appear, when least expected.
O. Wilm. This I have heard a thousand times repeated,
And have, believing, been as oft deceived.
Y. Wilm. Behold in me an instance of its truth.
At sea twice shipwrecked, and as oft the prey
Of lawless pirates; by the Arabs thrice
Surprized, and robbed on shore; and once reduced
To worse than these, the sum of all distress
That the most wretched feel on this side hell,
Ev'n slavery itself: Yet here I stand,
Except one trouble, that will quickly end,
The happiest of mankind.
O. Wilm. A rare example
Of fortune's changes; apter to surprise
Or entertain, than comfort or instruct.
If you would reason from events, be just,
And count, when you escaped, how many perished;
And draw your inference thence.
Agn. Alas! Who knows,
But we were rendered childless by some storm.
In which you, though preserved, might bear a part?
Y. Wilm. How has my curiosity betrayed me
Into superfluous pain! I faint with fondness;
And shall, if I stay longer, rush upon them,
Proclaim myself their son, kiss and embrace them,
'Till, with the excess of pleasure and surprise,
Their souls, transported, their frail mansions quit,
And leave them breathless in my longing arms.
By circumstances then and slow degrees,
They must be let into a happiness,
Too great for them to bear at once, and live:
That Charlotte will perform. I need not feign
To ask an hour for rest. [*Aside.*] Sir, I intreat
The favour to retire, where for a while
I may repose myself. You will excuse
This freedom, and the trouble that I give you.
'Tis long since I have slept, and nature calls.
O. Wilm. I pray no more: Believe we're only troubled,
That you should think any excuse were needful.
Y. Wilm. The weight of this to me is some incumbrance,
[*Takes a casket out of his bosom, and gives it to his mother.*
And its contents of value: If you please

To take the charge of it 'till I awake,
I shall not rest the worse. If I should sleep
'Till I am asked for, as perhaps I may,
I beg that you would wake me.
Agn. Doubt it not:
Distracted as I am with various woes,
I shall remember that. [*Exit, with Old Wilmot.*
Y. Wilm. Merciless grief!
What ravage has it made! how has it changed
Her lovely form and mind! I feel her anguish,
And dread I know not what from her despair.
My father too——O grant them patience, Heaven!
A little longer, a few short hours more,
And all their cares, and mine, shall end for ever.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Scene continues.*

Enter AGNES *alone, with the casket in her hand.*

Agn. WHO should this stranger be? And then this casket—
He says it is of value, and yet trusts it,
As if a trifle, to a stranger's hand—
His confidence amazes me—Perhaps
It is not what he says—I am strongly tempted
To open it, and see—No, let it rest!
Why should I pry into the cares of others,
Who have so many sorrows of my own?
With how much ease the spring gives way—Surprising!
My eyes are dazzled, and my ravished heart
Leaps at the glorious sight. How bright's the lustre,
And how immense the worth, of these fair jewels!
Ay, such a treasure would expel for ever
Base poverty, and all its abject train;
Famine; the cold neglect of friends; the scorn,
Or more provoking pity, of the world.
Plenty, content, and power might take their turn,
And lofty pride bare its aspiring head
At our approach, and once more bend before us.
A pleasing dream! 'Tis past; and now I wake.
For sure it was a happiness to think,
Though but a moment, such a treasure mine.
Nay, it was more than thought——I saw and touched
The bright temptation, and I see it yet—
'Tis here—'tis mine—I have it in possession—
Must I resign it? Must I give it back?
Am I in love with misery and want,
To rob myself, and court so vast a loss?
Retain it then—But how? There is a way—
Why sinks my heart? Why does my blood run cold?
Why am I thrilled with horror? 'Tis not choice,
But dire necessity suggests the thought.

Enter Old WILMOT.

O. Wilm. The mind contented, with how little pains
The wandering senses yield to soft repose!
He's fallen asleep already—Happy man!
What dost thou think, my Agnes, of our guest?
He seems to me a youth of great humanity:
Just ere he closed his eyes, that swam in tears,
He wrung my hand, and pressed it to his lips;
And with a look, that pierced me to the soul,
Begged me to comfort thee: And—dost thou hear me?
What art thou gazing on? Fie, 'tis not well.
This casket was delivered to you closed:
Why have you opened it? Should this be known,
How mean must we appear!
Agn. And who shall know it?
O. Wilm. There is a kind of pride, a decent dignity
Due to ourselves; which, spite of our misfortunes,
May be maintained, and cherished to the last.
To live without reproach, and without leave
To quit the world, shews sovereign contempt,
And noble scorn of its relentless malice.
Agn. Shews sovereign madness, and a scorn of sense.
Pursue no farther this detested theme:
I will not die; I will not leave the world
For all that you can urge, until compelled.
O. Wilm. To chase a shadow, when the setting sun
Is darting his last rays, were just as wise
As your anxiety for fleeting life,
Now the last means for its support are failing:
Were famine not as mortal as the sword,
Your warmth might be excused—But take thy choice:
Die how you will, you shall not die alone.
Agn. Nor live, I hope.
O Wilm. There is no fear of that.
Agn. Then, we'll live both.
O. Wilm. Strange folly? where the means?
Agn. There—those jewels!
O. Wilm. Ha! Take heed!
Perhaps thou dost but try me—yet take heed!
There's nothing so monstrous but the mind of man,
In some conditions, may be bought to approve:
Theft, sacrilege, treason, and parricide,
When flattering opportunity enticed,
And desperation drove, have been committed
By those, who once would start to hear them named.
Agn. And add to these detested suicide,
Which, by a crime much less, we may avoid.
O. Wilm. How couldst thou form a thought so very damning?
So advantageous, so secure, and easy;
And yet so cruel, and so full of horror!

Agn. 'Tis less impiety, less against nature,
To take another's life, than end our own.
O. Wilm. No matter which, the less or greater crime:
Howe'er we may deceive ourselves or others,
We act from inclination, not by rule,
Or none could act amiss: and that all err,
None but the conscious hypocrite denies.
O! what is man, his excellence and strength,
When in an hour of trial and desertion,
Reason, his noblest power, may be suborned
To plead the cause of vile assassination!
Agn. You're too severe: Reason may justly plead
For our own preservation.
O. Wilm. Rest contented:
Whate'er resistance I may seem to make,
I am betrayed within: My will's seduced,
And my whole soul infected. The desire
Of life returns, and brings with it a train
Of appetites, that rage to be supplied!
Whoever stands to parley with temptation,
Parleys to be o'ercome.
Agn. Then nought remains
But the swift execution of a deed,
That is not to be thought on, or delayed—
O. Wilm. Generous unhappy man! O! what could move thee
To put thy life and fortune in the hands
Of wretches mad with anguish!
Agn. By what means
Shall we effect his death?
O. Wilm. Why, what a fiend!
How cruel, how remorseless and impatient
Have pride and poverty made thee!
Agn. Barbarous man!
Whose wasteful riots ruined our estate,
And drove our son, ere the first down had spread
His rosy cheeks, spite of my sad presages,
Earnest intreaties, agonies, and tears,
To seek his bread amongst strangers, and to perish
In some remote, inhospitable land;
The loveliest youth, in person and in mind,
That ever crowned a groaning mother's pains!
Where was thy pity, where thy patience then?
Thou cruel husband! thou unnatural father!
Thou most remorseless, most ungrateful man!
To waste my fortune, rob me of my son,
To drive me to despair, and then reproach me
For being what thou hast made me!
O. Wilm. Dry thy tears:
I ought not to reproach thee. I confess
That thou hast suffered much: So have we both.
But chide no more; I am wrought up to thy purpose.
The poor, ill-fated, unsuspecting victim,
Ere he reclined him on the fatal couch,
From which he's ne'er to rise, took off the sash,
And costly dagger that thou saw'st him wear,
And thus, unthinking, furnished us with arms
Against himself. Steal to the door,
And bring me word, if he be still asleep.
[*Exit Agnes.*
Or I'm deceived, or he pronounced himself
The happiest of mankind. Deluded wretch!
Thy thoughts are perishing, thy youthful joys,
Touched by the icy hand of grisly death,
Are withering in their bloom—But, thought extinguished,
He'll never know the loss,
Nor feel the bitter pangs of disappointment—
Then I was wrong in counting him a wretch:
To die well pleased,
Is all the happiest of mankind can hope for.
To be a wretch, is to survive the loss
Of every joy, and even hope itself,
As I have done—Why do I mourn him then?
For, by the anguish of my tortured soul,
He's to be envied, if compared with me.

Enter AGNES *with* YOUNG WILMOT'S *dagger.*

Agn. The stranger sleeps at present; but so restless
His slumbers seem, they can't continue long.
Here, I've secured his dagger.
O. Wilm. O Agnes! Agnes! if there be a hell,
'Tis just we should expect it.
[*Goes to take the dagger, but lets it fall.*
Agn. Shake off this panic, and be more yourself!
O. Wilm. What's to be done? On what had we determined?
Agn. You're quite dismayed.
[*Takes up the dagger.*
O. Wilm. Give me the fatal steel.
'Tis but a single murder,
Necessity, impatience, and despair,
The three wide mouths of that true Cerberus,
Grim poverty, demand: they shall be stopped.
Ambition, persecution, and revenge,
Devour their millions daily: And shall I—
But follow me, and see how little cause
You had to think, there was the least remain
Of manhood, pity, mercy, or remorse,
Left in this savage breast.
[*Going the wrong way.*
Agn. Where do you go?
The street is that way.
O. Wilm. True! I had forgot.
Agn. Quite, quite confounded!
O. Wilm. Well, I recover.—I shall find the way. [*Exit.*
Agn. O softly! softly! The least noise undoes us.
What are we doing? Misery and want
Are lighter ills than this! I cannot bear it!—
Stop, hold thy hand!—Inconstant, wretched woman!
What! doth my heart recoil!——O Wilmot! Wilmot!
What power shall I invoke to aid thee, Wilmot?
[*Exit.*

Enter CHARLOTTE, EUSTACE, *and* RANDAL.

Char. What strange neglect! The doors are all unbarred,
And not a living creature to be seen!

Enter Old WILMOT *and* AGNES.

Char. Sir, we are come to give and to receive
A thousand greetings—Ha! what can this mean!
Why do you look with such amazement on us?
Are these your transports for your son's return?
Where is my Wilmot?—Has he not been here?
Would he defer your happiness so long,
Or could a habit so disguise your son,
That you refused to own him?

Agn. Heard you that?—
What prodigy of horror is disclosing,
To render murder venial!

O. Wilm. Prithee, peace!
The miserable damned suspend their howling,
And the swift orbs are fixed in deep attention.

Rand. What mean these dreadful words, and frantic air!
That is the dagger my young master wore.

Eust. My mind misgives me. Do not stand to gaze
On these dumb phantoms of despair and horror!
Let us search further; Randal, shew the way.
[*Exeunt.*

Agn. Let life forsake the earth, and light the sun,
And death and darkness bury in oblivion
Mankind and all their deeds, that no posterity
May ever rise to hear our horrid tale,
Or view the grave of such detested parricides!

O. Wilm. Curses and deprecations are in vain:
The sun will shine, and all things have their course,
When we, the curse and burden of the earth,
Shall be absorbed, and mingled with its dust.
Our guilt and desolation must be told,
From age to age, to teach desponding mortals,
How far beyond the reach of human thought
Heaven, when incensed, can punish—Die thou first. [*Stabs Agnes.*
I durst not trust thy weakness.

Agn. Ever kind,
But most in this!

O. Wilm. I will not long survive thee.

Agn. Do not accuse thy erring mother, Wilmot,
With too much rigour when we meet above!
To give thee life for life, and blood for blood,
Is not enough. Had I ten thousand lives,
I'd give them all to speak my penitence,
Deep, and sincere, and equal to my crime.
Oh Wilmot! oh my son! my son! [*Dies.*

Enter RANDAL *and* EUSTACE.

Eust. O Wilmot! Wilmot!
Are these the fruits of all thy anxious cares
For thy ungrateful parents?——Cruel fiends!

O. Wilm. What whining fool art thou, who would'st usurp
My sovereign right of grief!—Was he thy son?—
Say! Canst thou shew thy hands reeking with blood,
That flowed, through purer channels, from thy loins?
Compute the sands that bound the spacious ocean,
And swell their number with a single grain;
Increase the noise of thunder with thy voice;
Or, when the raging wind lays nature waste,
Assist the tempest with thy feeble breath;
But name not thy faint sorrow, with the anguish
Of a curst wretch, who only hopes from this
[*Stabbing himself.*
To change the scene, but not relieve his pain!

Rand. A dreadful instance of the last remorse!
May all your woes end here!

O. Wilm. O would they end
A thousand ages hence, I then should suffer
Much less than I deserve. Yet let me say,
You'll do but justice to inform the world,
This horrid deed, that punishes itself,
Was not intended, thinking him our son;
For that we knew not, 'till it was too late.
Proud, and impatient under our afflictions,
While Heaven was labouring to make us happy,
We brought this dreadful ruin on ourselves.
Mankind may learn——but——oh—— [*Dies.*

Rand. Heaven grant they may!
And may thy penitence atone thy crime!
'Tend well the hapless Charlotte, and hear hence
These bleeding victims of despair and pride;
Toll the death bell! and follow to the grave
The wretched parents and ill-fated son.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

BY

LILLO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

THE MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM.
ARDEN, *a gentleman of Feversham.*
FRANKLIN, *his friend.*
MICHAEL, *servant to Arden.*
GREEN, *enemy to Arden.*
MOSBY, *criminally attached to Alicia.*
BRADSHAW.
BLACK WILL, } *ruffians.*
GEORGE SHAKEBAG, }
LORD CHEYNEY.
ADAM FOWL, *an inn-keeper.*
A Servant to Arden.
Officers, &c.

WOMEN.

ALICIA, *wife to Arden.*
MARIA, *sister to Mosby.*

Scene—Feversham, in Kent.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The street before* ARDEN'S *door.*

Enter MOSBY.

Mos. THE morning's dark, and horrid as my purpose.
Thrice have my snares been laid for Arden's life,
And thrice hath he escaped. I am not safe:
The living may revenge. Oh! could I win
Alicia to conspire her husband's fall,
Then might I say, security, thou'rt mine,
And laugh at all to come. For other instruments,
There's Green: he bears him hard about this suit
For the abbey-lands, to which the hot youth pleads
Some fancied right. Michael, the trencher favourite,
A bastard, bred of Arden's charity,
He has been privy to our secret joys,
And, on that trust presuming, loves my sister—
Winks at adultery, and may at murder.
Maria is his price. I've placed her here,
Companion of my sweet Alicia's hours,
To spread her charms for ever in his eye:
To her are all my visits. But Alicia—
She must, she shall comply: when to my arms
Her honour she resigned, her fond reluctance whispered,
She could deny me nothing. This to try.
[*Exit into Arden's house.*

SCENE II.—*A chamber.*

Enter ARDEN *in his night-gown.*

Ard. Unhappy Arden, whither canst thou wander
To lay thy heavy load of sorrows down!
Will change of place relieve the afflicted mind,
Or does all nature yield a balm to cure
The pangs of slighted love and broken faith?
Ungrateful false Alicia! false with Mosby,

The vile dependent of my foe professed,
Lord Clifford's full-fed flatterer! O damned!
Come, Franklin, come: Arden, thy friend, invites thee;
And let me pour my griefs into thy bosom,
And find in friendship what I've lost in love.

Enter ALICIA.

Alic. Why, Arden, do you leave your bed thus early?
Have cold and darkness greater charms than I?
There was a time, when winter nights were short,
And Arden chid the morn, that called him from me.
Ard. This deep dissembling, this hypocrisy,
(The last worst state of a degenerate mind)
Speaks her in vice determined and mature. [*Aside.*
Alic. What maid, that knows man's variable nature,
Would sell her free estate for marriage bonds?
From vows and oaths, and every servile tye,
The tyrant man at pleasure is set free;
The holy nuptial bond leaves him at large;
Yet vests him with a power, that makes us slaves.
'Tis heavenly this—
Ard. To stop my just reproach,
Art thou the first to tax the marriage state?
Alic. Are you not jealous? do you not give ear
To vain surmises and malicious tongues,
That hourly wound my yet untainted fame?
Ard. And wouldst thou make me author of the shame,
Thy guilt has brought on us!—I'll bear no longer.
The traitor Mosby, cursed, detested Mosby,
Shall render an account for both your crimes.
Alic. What do I hear! [*Aside.*
Ard. The base mechanic slave
Shall answer with his blood.
Alic. O hear me speak!
Ard. No, I am deaf: As thou hast ever been
To fame, to virtue, and my just complaints.
Alic. Thus on my knees—
Ard. Adultress! dost thou kneel
And weep, and pray, and bend thy stubborn heart
(Stubborn to me) to sue for him? Away!
Away this instant, lest I kill thee too.
[*Recovering himself.*
No—not the hell, thou hast kindled in this bosom,
Shall make me shed thy blood.
Alic. I do not hope it.
Ard. For me, be as immortal as thy shame.
Alic. I see your cruel purpose: I must live,
To see your hand and honour stained with blood,
Your ample fortune seized on by the state,
Your life a forfeit to the cruel laws.
O Arden, blend compassion with your rage,
And kindly kill me first!
Ard. Not for my sake
Are all thy tears; then had you felt them sooner;
Plead not the ruin you have made; but say,
Why have you driven me to these extremes?
Why sacrificed my peace, and your own fame,
By corresponding with a menial slave?
Alic. Thou canst not think, that I have wronged thy bed?
Ard. Would I could not!
Alic. By Heaven—
Ard. No perjuries.
But now, as you lay slumbering by my side,
I still awake, anxious and full of thought,
(For thou hast banished sleep from these sad eyes)
With gentle accents, thrilling with desire,
You called on Mosby. Love made me doubt my ears,
And question, if the dark and silent night
Conspired not with my fancy to deceive me:
But soon I lost the painful pleasing hope;
Again you called upon your minion Mosby.
Confirmed, I strove to fly your tainted bed,
But, wanting strength, sunk lifeless on my pillow.
You threw your eager arms about my neck,
You pressed my bloodless cheeks with your warm lips,
Which glowed, adultress! with infernal heat;
And called, a third time, on the villain Mosby.
Alic. A dream indeed, if I e'er called on him.
Ard. Thy guilty dreams betray thy waking thoughts.
Alic. I know I'm simple, thoughtless, and unguarded;
And what is carelessness you construe guilt.
Yet were I weak as those fantastic visions,
Sure I could never have condemned you, Arden,
On circumstances and an idle dream.
Ard. But such a dream!—
Alic. Yet was it but a dream,
Which, though I not remember, I abhor,
And mourn with tears, because it gives you pain.
Arden, you do not wish me innocent,
Or on suspicions could you doom me guilty?
Ard. Not wish thee innocent! do sinking mariners,
When struggling with the raging seas for life,
Wish the assistance of some friendly plank?
'Tis that, and that alone, can bring me comfort.
Alic. O jealousy! thou fierce remorseless fiend,
Degenerate, most unnatural child of love!
How shall I chase thee from my Arden's bosom?
Ard. There is a way, an easy way, Alicia.
Alic. O name it—speak.
Ard. What's past may be forgotten.
Your future conduct—
Alic. You distract me, Arden.
Say, how shall I convince you of my truth?
Ard. I ask but this: never see Mosby more!
[*He starts.*
By Heaven, she's dumb!
Alic. O how shall I conceal
My own confusion, and elude his rage? [*Aside.*
Ard. Thou'rt lost, Alicia!—lost to me—and Heaven.
Alic. Indeed I'm lost, if you unkindly doubt me.

Ard. Wilt thou, then, ne'er converse with Mosby more?
Alic. If I e'er do, may Heaven, and you, forsake me!
Ard. You'll keep your word, Alicia! Prithee, say—
Alic. You'll break my heart.
Ard. I'd rather break my own.
Then thou art innocent, and lov'st me still?
Alic. And ever will.
Ard. Give me thy hand—thy heart!
O give me that!
Alic. That always was your own.
Ard. Thou flatterer—then whence this cruel strife?
Still art thou cold: nor warm are thy embraces,
Nor sparkle in thine eyes the fires of love:
Cold, cold, and comfortless.
Alic. Indeed you fright me.
Ard. 'Tis possible——
Alic. What?
Ard. That thou may'st yet deceive me.
Alic. O! I am wretched!
Ard. Both perhaps are so.
But, if thou ever lov'dst, thou'lt not despise me,
And wilt forgive me, if indeed I've wronged thee,
As I've forgiven thee—Pity, I'm sure, I need.
[*Exit Arden.*
Alic. Thou hast it, Arden, even from her, that wrongs thee.
All, all shall pity thee, and curse Alicia.
Can I feel this, and further tempt the stream
Of guilty love! O whither am I fallen!

Enter MARIA.

Mar. An happy day, Alicia; and may each morn
Of coming life be ushered with like joy.
Franklin, from court returned, has brought the grant
Of the abbey-lands, confirmed by the young king,
To Arden for his life: nor will deliver,
But to himself, the deed.
Alic. A worthy friend!
The grant is not more welcome to my husband,
Than Franklin's company.
Mar. He's flown to meet him.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, your brother Mosby—
Alic. Where is Mosby?
Serv. He waits below.
Alic. O haste, and lead me to him!
Serv. Madam, he but desires to see his sister.
Alic. His sister! what! did he not ask for me?
Mar. Perhaps——
Alic. Pray, give me leave—looks he in health?
Serv. He seems in health.
Alic. Here, and not ask for me!
Seems he or angry then, or melancholy?
Answer me, stock, stone.
Serv. Truly I can't say.
Alic. Thou canst say nothing.—Get thee from my sight!
Yet stay—no matter. I'll myself go seek him.
[*Exeunt Alicia and Servant.*
Mar. Where reason is, can passion thus prevail?
[*Exit Maria.*

SCENE III.—*A parlour in* ARDEN'S *house.*

Enter ALICIA, *meeting* MOSBY.

Alic. Mosby, that brow befits our wayward fate.
The evil hour, long feared, is fallen upon us,
And we shall sink beneath it. Do not frown—
If you're unkind, to whom shall I complain?
Mos. Madam, it was my sister I expected.
Alic. Am I forgotten then? Ungrateful man!
This only could have added to my woes.
Did you but know what I have borne for you,
You would not thus, unmoved, behold my tears.
Mos. Madam, you make me vain.
Alic. Insult not, Mosby:
You were the first dear object of my love;
And could my heart have made a second choice,
I had not been the object of your scorn:
But duty, gratitude, the love of fame,
And pride of virtue, were too weak to erase
The deep impression of our early vows.
Mos. Therefore you kindly chose to wed another.
Alic. Reproach me not with what I deemed my duty.
Oh! had I thought I could assume the name,
And never know the affection of a wife,
I would have died ere given my hand to Arden.
Mos. You gave him all.——
Alic. No, no, I gave him nothing:
Words without truth—an hand without a heart!
But he has found the fraud; the slumbering lion
At length hath roused himself.
Mos. And I must fall
The victim——
Alic. No; he knows not yet his wrongs.
Mos. But quickly will.
Alic. That, that's my greatest fear.
Mos. Then, branded with a strumpet's hated name,
The cause abhorred of shame, of blood, and ruin,
Thou'lt be exposed, and hooted through the world!
Alic. O hide the dreadful image from my view!
Chaste matrons, modest maids, and virtuous wives,
Scorning a weakness which they never knew,
Shall blush, with indignation, at my name!
Mos. My death—but that, though certain—
Alic. Labour not
To drive me to despair. Fain would I hope—
Mos. You may, and be deceived. For me, I know
My fate resolved—and thee the instrument,
The willing instrument, of Mosby's ruin!
Inconstant, false Alicia!

Alic. False indeed,
But not to thee, cruel, injurious Mosby!
Mos. Injurious! false one! might not all these dangers,
That threaten to involve us both in ruin,
Ere this have been prevented?
Alic. Ha! say on.
Mos. And, not preventing, art not thou the cause?
Alic. Ah! whither, Mosby, whither wouldst thou drive me?
Mos. Nay, didst thou love, or wouldst secure thy fame,
Preserve my life, and bind me yours for ever—
'Tis yet within your power.
Alic. By Arden's death!
Meanest thou not so? Speak out, and be a devil.
Mos. Yes, 'tis for thee I am so. But your looks
Declare, my death would please you better, madam!
Alic. Exaggerating fiend! be dumb for ever!
His death! I must not cast a glance that way.
Mos. Is there another way? O think, Alicia!
Alic. I will, for that will make me mad: And madness
Were some excuse. Come, kind distraction! come,
And Arden dies! My husband dies for Mosby!
[*Shrieks, and runs to Mosby.*

Enter ARDEN *and* FRANKLIN.

He's here! O save me! tell me, did he hear?
Ard. [*Starting.*] Franklin, support your friend! I shake with horror!
Frank. What moves you thus?
Ard. See!—Mosby with my wife!
Mos. But, madam, I shall spare your farther trouble;
In happy time behold my neighbour here!
[*As taking leave of Alicia.*
Alic. Mischief and wild confusion have begun,
And desolation waits to close the scene!
[*Exit Alicia.*
Mos. Sir, I would gladly know, whether your grant,
Of the rich abbey-lands of Feversham,
Be yet confirmed or not?
Ard. What if I tear
Her faithless heart, even in the traitor's sight,
Who taught it falsehood! [*Aside.*
Frank. He is lost in thought.
But I can answer that: It is confirmed.
I brought the deed, with the great seal annexed,
Signed by our pious Edward, and his council.
Mos. I'm satisfied.
Ard. So am not I. By hell,
There's justice in the thought!—I'm strangely tempted. [*Aside.*
Mos. My friend seems wrapt in thought.—I came to advise him,
That Green, by virtue of a former grant
His father long enjoyed———
Ard. For my estate,
The law, and this good seal, is my security;
To them I leave Green, and his groundless claim.
But my just right to false Alicia's heart
(So dearly purchased with a husband's name,
And sacred honour of a gentleman),
I shall assert myself, and thus secure
From further violation, [*Draws.*
Mos. Her known virtue
Renders the injury, your fancy forms,
A thing of air.
Frank. Impossible to thought!
Whence, Arden, comes this sudden madness on thee,
That your Alicia, ever dear esteemed,
And deeply loved——
Ard. Out on the vile adultress!
But thou, demure, insinuating slave,
Shalt taste my vengeance first. Defend thyself!
Mos. I scorn to take advantage of your rage.
Ard. A coward too! O my consummate shame!
Mos. This I can bear from you.
Ard. Or any man!
Why hangs that useless weapon by thy side,
Thou shame to manhood? Draw! Will nothing move thee! [*Strikes him.*
Frank. Hold! Whither would your mad revenge transport you?
Ard. Shall shameful cowardice protect a villain?
Mos. You chuse a proper place to shew your courage!
Ard. Go on. I'll follow to the ocean's brink,
Or to the edge of some dread precipice,
Where terror and despair shall stop thy flight,
And force thy trembling hand to guard thy life!
Mos. What I endure to save a lady's honour! [*To Frank.*
Frank. Your longer stay will but incense him more;
Pray quit the house.
Mos. Sir, I shall take your counsel.
[*Exit Mosby.*
Ard. He hath escaped me then. But for my wife—
Frank. What has she done?
Ard. Done! must I tell my shame?
Away! begone! lest, from my prey withheld,
I turn, and tear the officious hand, that lets me—
Soft! art thou Franklin? Pardon me, sweet friend———
My spirits fail——I shake——I must retire.
Frank. To your Alicia.
Ard. To my lonely couch;
For I must learn to live without her, Franklin.
Frank. Pray Heaven forbid!
Ard. To hate her, to forget her, if I can:
No easy task for one, who doats like me.
From what an height I'm fallen! Once smiling love
Of all its horrors robbed the blackest night,
And gilt with gladness every ray of light;
Now, tyrant-like, his conquest he maintains,
And o'er his groaning slave with rods of iron reigns! [*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter GREEN *and* MOSBY.

Green. You pity me, and know not my estate.
I'm ruined, Mosby; thoughtless, and ill-advised,
My riotous youth will leave my age a beggar.
These abbey-lands were all the hopes I'd left;
My whole support.
Mos. Base and ungenerous Arden,
To force a man, born equal to himself,
To beg, or starve!
Green. By Heaven, I will do neither:
I'll let the proud oppressor know———
Mos. How blind is rage!
Who threats his enemy, lends him a sword
To guard himself.
Green. Robbed of the means of life,
What's life itself?—an useless load, a curse!
Which yet I'll dearly sell to my revenge!
Mos. You mean to kill him, then?
Green. I do, by Heaven!
Mos. Suppose you fail.
Green. I can but lose my life.
Mos. Then where is your revenge, when he, secure,
Riots, unbounded, in his ill-got wealth?
Green. What can I do?
Mos. 'Tis plain you wish him dead.
Green. Each moment of his life is to my soul
A tedious age of pain; for, while he lives,
Contempt, and all the ills a lazar knows,
Must be my wretched lot, and lengthen out
The miserable hours. What grovelling wretch
Would wish to hold his life on such conditions?
Mos. But change the scene: suppose but Arden dead,
Your land restored, and fortune in your power;
Honour, respect, and all the dear delights,
That wait on wealth, shall wing the joyful hours,
And life contracted seem one happy day.
I hate this Arden, and have stronger motives
Than any you can urge to wish his death.
He has accused, insulted, struck me!
Nay, his fair virtuous wife, on my account——
Green. If fame speaks true, you're to be envied there.
Mos. The world will talk; but be that as it may:
I want not cause nor will, not means nor friends——
Green. Nor opportunity shall long be wanting.
Mos. Enough: his fate is fixed. See! Bradshaw's here!

Enter BRADSHAW.

Brad. Save, save you, gentlemen!
Mos. We thank you, neighbour.
But whither in such haste?
Brad. To the isle of Shippey,
To wait on good lord Cheyney. As he holds
In high esteem our worthy townsman, Arden,
I shall first call on him. 'Tis well I met you,
For yonder two were but bad road-companions.
Green. They seem of desperate fortunes.
Mos. Have they names?
Brad. One I know not; but judge him from his comrade.
The foremost of the two I knew at Boulogne,
Where, in the late king's reign, I served myself.
He was a corporal then; but such a villain—
Beneath a soldier's name; a common cut-throat,
That preys on all mankind, and knows no party.
Mos. An horrid character you give him, Bradshaw.
Brad. No worse than he deserves.
Mos. [*Aside.*] An useful hint:
He shall not want employment: What's his name?
Brad. Black Will. His family-name I never heard.
Mos. [To *Green.*] A word—write you a letter to Alicia:
Disguise your hand. This honest fool may bear it.
Hint at these men. In case her courage fail,
She will be glad to shift the deed on them.
Green. I am instructed.

Enter BLACK WILL *and* SHAKEBAG.

B. Will. What! comrade Bradshaw! How fare you, man? S'blood! dost not remember honest Black Will? Why, thou art grown purse-proud sure.
Brad. Why, you're not easily forgotten, Will. But, prithee, what brings thee to Feversham?
B. Will. A soldier, you know, is at home, wherever he comes. *Omne solum forti patria!* There's Latin—Give's a tester.
Brad. In time of peace, we should apply to some honest creditable business, and not turn the name of soldier into vagabond.
B. Will. Yes, as you have done. I'm told you keep a goldsmith's shop here in Feversham, and, like a mechanical rogue, live by cheating. I have more honour.
Brad. Would thou hadst honesty.
B. Will. Where do our honesties differ? I take a purse behind a hedge, and you behind a counter.
Brad. Insolent slave!
B. Will. You *cent. per cent.* rascal! I may find a time to teach you better manners.
Brad. Go, mend thy own.
B. Will. Thou wert always a sneaking fellow, Bradshaw, and couldst never swear, nor get drunk. Come, shall I and my comrade Shakebag taste your ale?

Brad. My house entertains no such guests—
Farewell, gentlemen.
Mos. Along with Bradshaw,
And leave the management of these to me.
[*Aside to Green.*
Green. It shall be done. Bradshaw, a word with thee.
Brad. Your pardon, gentlemen.
[*Exeunt Green and Bradshaw.*
B. Will. He was a cadet in the last French war, like other soldiers, then; but now he has got a nest, and feathered it a little, he pretends to reputation. S'blood! had this been a fit place, he had not escaped me so. You have surveyed us well. [*To Mosby.*] How do you like us?
Mos. Methinks I read truth, prudence, secrecy,
And courage, writ upon your manly brows.
B. Will. What hellish villainy has this fellow in hand, that makes him fawn upon us? [*Aside.*
Mos. I fear the world's a stranger to your merit.
If this may recommend me to your friendship—
[*Gives a purse.*
B. Will. Of what damned deed is this to be the wages?
Shake. Hast ever an elder brother's throat to cut?
B. Will. Or an old peevish father to be buried?
Mos. Neither of these.
Shake. A rival then mayhap——
Mos. There you come nearer to me.
Shake. Then speak out.
We're honest, sir.
B. Will. Trusty, and very poor.
Mos. Metal too fit for me. [*Aside.*] Then hear me, sirs.
But you must both, ere I disclose my purpose,
Promise, and bind that promise by your oaths—
Never—[*They both laugh.*] Why this unseasonable mirth?
B. Will. You'd have us swear?——
Mos. Else why did I propose it?
B. Will. There's the jest. Are men, who act in despite of all law, honour, and conscience; who live by blood (as it is plain you think we do) are we free-thinkers, like silly wenches and canting priests, to be confined by oaths?
Shake. Would you bind us, let the price equal the purchase, and we'll go to hell for you with pleasure.
Mos. Horrid! they shake even me, who would employ them. [*Aside.*
I apprehend—The business then is this:
In Feversham their lives a man, called Arden;
In general esteem, and ample means;
And has a wife, the very pride of nature.
I have been happy long in her affections,
And, he once dead, might with her share his fortunes.
He's jealous too of late, and threatens me.
Love, interest, self-defence, all ask his death.—
B. Will. This man you'd have dispatched?
Mos. I would.
B. Will. Rich, say you?
Mos. Immensely so.
B. Will. And much beloved?
Mos. By all degrees of men.
B. Will. George! this will be a dangerous piece of work.
Shake. Damned dangerous. A man so known; and his reputation too.
B. Will. And then the power and number of his friends must be considered.
Mos. What! does your courage shrink already, sirs?
Shake. No.
B. Will. This is ever the curse of your men of true valour; to be the tools of crafty cowardly knaves, who have not the heart to execute what their heads have projected. It is a damned ungrateful world—What money have you more about you?
Mos. Ten pieces.
B. Will. I've had as much for stealing a dog.
Mos. I give you that as a retaining fee:
When the deed's done, each shall have twice that sum,
And a good horse to further his escape.
B. Will. Sir, will you have him murdered in a church?
Shake. Or on the altar; say the word, and it shall be done.
Mos. Some safer place, the street, highway, or fields,
Will serve my turn as well.
Shake. Just as you please.
Mos. Where may I find you, gentlemen?
B. Will. At Adam Fowl's, the Flower-de-luce.
Mos. I have confederates in this design;
When we have contrived the manner of his death,
I'll send you word.
B. Will. You'll find us always ready.
Mos. And determined?
B. Will. Ay, fear it not. Farewell.
[*Exeunt several ways.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in Arden's house.*

Enter ALICIA, *with a letter.*

Alic. He doubts me; yet he dares not tell me so,
But thus, by Green, whets my unsettled mind.
[*Reads.*
'Strike home, or not at all. In case you fail,
'We have found instruments by means of Bradshaw.'
He shall not find me undetermined now.
Hark! Michael's on the watch. If Arden sleeps,
(For so he seemed disposed,) he'll bring me word.
That, that's the safest time. This promised marriage
With Mosby's sister has removed his qualms.

Enter MICHAEL.

Why dost thou break upon me unawares?
What of your master?
Mich. He's scarce sunk to rest,
But full of meditated rage against Mosby.
Alic. He'll sleep in peace ere long.——
Mich. Think not on that.
O did Maria bless me with her smiles,
As you do Mosby, had I twenty lives,
I'd risk them all to win her to my arms.
Alic. I prithee leave me, Michael. [*Exit Michael.*] What is nature!
There is a power in love, subdues to itself
All other passions in the human mind.
This wretch, more fearful than the lonely murderer,
Whom with inquiring eyes some stranger views,
Would meet the king of terrors undismayed,
For her he loves, and dare him to the combat.
And shall not I preserve my Mosby's life?
And shall not I—A husband!—What's a husband?
I have a soul above the unnatural tie,
That tells me, I'm his right, and only his,
Who won my virgin heart. Ye tender parents,
Whose cruel kindness made your child thus wretched,
Turn not your eyes towards earth to view this scene;
'Twill make you sad in Heaven! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Room.* ARDEN *sleeping on a couch.*

Enter ALICIA, *with a dagger in her hand.*

Alic. See! Jealousy, o'erwatched, is sunk to rest,
While fearful guilt knows no security,
But in repeated crimes. My weary eyes,
Each moment apprehensive of his vengeance,
Must seek for rest in vain till his are closed.
Then for our mutual peace, and Mosby's love.
[*Approaching to stab him, starts.*
He wakes—Defend me from his just revenge!
And yet he sees me not, nor moves a finger,
To save his threatened life. Then whence that voice
That pierced my ears, and cried, 'Alicia, hold!'
Can mimic fancy cheat the outward sense,
And form such sounds? If these heart-racking thoughts
Precede the horrid act, what must ensue?
Worse plague I cannot fear from Arden's death;
But from his life—the death of him I love.
Perish the hated husband! Wherefore hated?
Is he not all, that my vain sex could wish?
My eyes, while they survey his graceful form,
Condemn my heart, and wonder how it strayed.
He sighs; he starts; he groans. His body sleeps,
But restless grief denies his mind repose.
Perhaps he dreams of me; perhaps he sees me,
Thus like a fury, broke from deepest hell,
Lust in my heart, and murder in my hand——
[*Alicia drops the dagger.* ARDEN *starts up.*
Ard. Her dagger, Michael—seize it, and I'm safe.
How strong she is! Oh! What a fearful dream!
Before me still! speak, vision—art thou Alicia,
Or but the coinage of my troubled brain?
Alic. O Arden—husband—lord—
Ard. Art thou my wife?
Thou'rt substance——I am wrapped in wonder—hence——
Hast lost all sense of fear, as well as shame,
That thou dar'st haunt me thus, asleep and waking,
Thou idol, and thou torment of my soul?
Alic. My bleeding heart!
Ard. Away! begone and leave me!
Lest, in the transports of unbounded rage,
I rush upon thee, and deface these charms,
That first enslaved my soul; mangle that face,
Where, spite of falsehood, beauty triumphs still;
Mar that fair frame, and crush thee into atoms.
Avoid me, and be safe—Nay now you drive me hence. [*Alicia kneels, he turns away.*
Cruel and false as thou hast been to me,
I cannot see thee wring thy suppliant hands,
And weep, and kneel in vain. [*Exit Arden.*
Alic. This, this is he
I came prepared to murder. Curst Alicia!
[*Takes up the dagger.*
In thy own bosom plunge the fatal steel,
Or his, who robbed thee of thy fame and virtue.
It will not be—Fear holds my dastard hand:
Those chaster powers, that guard the nuptial bed
From foul pollution, and the hand from blood,
Have left their charge, and I am lost for ever.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A road or highway near Feversham.*

BLACK WILL *and* SHAKEBAG.

Shake. Damnation! posted as you were, to let him escape!
B. Will. I pray thee, peace.
Shake. Green and I beheld him pass carelessly by within reach of your dagger. If you had held it but naked in your hand, he would have stabbed himself as he walked.
B. Will. I had not power to do it: a sudden damp came over me; I never felt so in my life. A kind of palsy seized me.
Shake. Palsy! when you're upon your duty! Go, go and sleep, or drink away your fears. You tremble still

B. Will. I tremble! my courage was never yet called in question, villain. When I fought at Boulogne under the late king, both armies knew, and feared me.

Shake. That might be, because they did not know you. Dog, I'll shake you off to your old trade of filching in a throng—Murder's too genteel a business for your capacity.—Sirrah, I have taken more gold at noon-day, than ever you filched copper by candle-light.

B. Will. Cowardly slave, you lye.

Shake. A coward! S'blood! that shall be proved. Come on.

B. Will. To thy heart's blood.

Shake. To thine. [*They fight.*

Enter GREEN.

Green. What are you mad! For shame! put up your swords,

Shake. Not till I've had his life.

B. Will. Fool, guard thy own.

Green. Pray hear me, gentlemen!

B. Will. Stand farther off!

Shake. Away!

Green. This broil will ruin all.

Shake. He begun it.

B. Will. Ay, and will end it too.

Green. Arden, you know, returns, and will you let him
Escape a second time?

Shake. Who did the first?

Green. No matter, that may be repaired.

B. Will. Brand me with cowardice!

Green. Come, come, you're both to blame. Speak, will you lay aside this senseless broil?

B. Will. Nay, let him speak.

Shake. Why, rather than lose this opportunity—
[*Puts up his sword.*

B. Will. Ay—We'll defer it, 'till Arden's dead. I'm for doing business first, and then for play.

Shake. Challenge me, when thou darest.

Green. The night draws on. Are you resolved?

Shake. We are.

Green. Enough.—See where he comes. I must withdraw;
But when you've done the deed, and sent his soul
No matter where—I'll come to you again.
[*Exit Green.*

B. Will. Something rises in my throat—I can scarce breathe—I'd rather poison half a dozen cardinals, than kill this honest man, but—I'll do't, for my reputation.

Shake. He comes. Retire a little. Let him advance, then bury your dagger in his heart. If you fail, I'll second you.

B. Will. Stand further off, I shall not need your aid.

Shake. Now strike—

Enter ARDEN *first, and then Lord* CHEYNEY *attended.*

B. Will. Again prevented! Ten thousand devils take them all!

L. Chey. Arden, well met. You're to the isle of Shippey
Grown quite a stranger. Shall we see you there?

Ard. I purposed soon to have waited on your lordship.

L. Chey. Well, will you sup with me to night at Shorlow?

Ard. Franklin, my lord, who is my guest at present,
Expects me at my house.

L. Chey. Then will you dine with me to morrow?

Ard. I'll not fail your lordship.

L. Chey. Believe me, worthy friend, I'm glad to see you.
Walk you towards Feversham?

Ard. So please your lordship.
[*Exeunt Lord Cheyney, and Arden.*

B. Will. Just as I'd taken aim too!—S'blood, I could kill myself for vexation,

Enter GREEN.

Green. Well, Arden is at last dispatched?

Shake. Yes, safe to Feversham.

Green. Safe, say you! his good fortune mocks us all.
These strange escapes have almost staggered me;
But thinking of my wrongs, I'm more confirmed.

B. Will. Well said, my man of resolution! A gentleman commits a murder with double the satisfaction for such a heart.—We must lay our snares more cunning for the future.

Green. We should consult with Michael, Arden's man;
The pigmy-hearted wretch, though long ago
He swore his master dead, acts with reluctance.

Shake. The coward must be spurred.—He does it, or he dies.

Green. I wonder at his absence, as he knew
Of this attempt, and promised to be here.

Enter MICHAEL.

Mich. I saw my master and lord Cheyney pass.
And my heart leaped for joy. [*Apart.*

B. Will. What says the villain?

Mich. Would I were gone. [*Aside.*] Sir, if I give offence— [*Going.*

Green. Michael, come back; you must not leave us so.

Mich. What is your pleasure?

Green. Why, we understand
You are in love with Mosby's beauteous sister.

Mich. Suppose I am?

B. Will. You deal too mildly with the peasant. You swore to kill your master, villain. Be an honest man of your word, and do it then, white-liver!

Mich. Sir, I repented.

B. Will. Repented! what's that? Dog, know your rank, and act as we command, or your heart's blood——

Mich. What must I do? [*Frighted.*

B. Will. Do! you must shew us the house, appoint the time and place, and lure your master thither—We'll take care of him, without your trouble.

Green. So shall you purchase noble Mosby's friendship,
And, by his friendship, gain his sister's love.

Mich. They'll murder me too, should I not comply—— [*Aside.*

Green. Think on your love, your interest.

B. Will. Or your death.

Mich. To-night, soon as the abbey-clock strikes ten, [*Trembling.*
Come to his house: I'll leave the doors unbarred:
The left hand stairs lead to my master's chamber;
There take him, and dispose him as you please.

Green. This cannot fail.

Shake. Unless this love-sick coward thinks to deceive us.

Mich. I will not, by Heaven!

B. Will. I believe thee; for by hell thou darest not. [*Exeunt.*

Mich. Master, thy constant love and daily bounty
Deserve more grateful offices from Michael.
[*Exit weeping.*

SCENE II.

A room in Arden's *house.*

Alicia *alone.*

Alic. When vice has spread her poison through the soul,
How lifeless, slow, confused, and insincere
Are our resolves in the pursuit of virtue!
What wonder, then, Heaven should refuse its aid
To thoughts that only blossom for a time,
Look blooming to the eye, but yield no fruit?

Enter Mosby.

Mos. I come, Alicia, to partake thy griefs;
For fire divided burns with lesser force.

Alic. I know thee: thou art come to fan the flame
Thy breath hath kindled here, till it consume us.
But tears and sighs shall stifle in my heart
The guilty passion——

Mos. ——Is heroic love,
That formed the bright examples of thy sex,
Made their lives glorious, and their fame immortal,
A crime in thee? Art thou not mine by oaths,
By mutual sufferings, by contract mine?

Alic. Why do you urge a rash, a fatal promise,
I had no right to make, or you to ask?
Why did you practise on my easy heart?
Why did I ever listen to your vows?
In me, 'twas foolish guilt and disobedience;
In you, 'twas avarice, insolence, and pride.

Mos. 'Twas love in me, and gratitude in you.

Alic. 'Twas insolence in you, meanness in me,
And madness in us both. My careful parents,
In scorn of your presumption and my weakness,
Gave me in marriage to a worthy gentleman,
Of birth and fortune equal to my own.
Three years I lived with him without reproach,
And made him in that time the happy father
Of two most lovely children. I too was happy;
At least I lived in hopes I might be so:
For time, and gratitude, and Arden's love,
I hoped might quench my guilty flame for you,
And make my heart a present worthy him.

Mos. And dost thou glory in thy perjuries?
In love, inconstancy alone is a crime.
Think on the ardour of our youthful passion;
Think how we played with love; nor thought it guilt,
Till thy first falsehood; call it not obedience!
Thy marriage with this Arden made me desperate;
Think on the transports of our love renewed,
And——

Alic. Hide the rest, lest listening winds should hear,
And publish to the world our shameful tale!
Here let remembrance of our follies die.

Mos. Shall our loves wither in their early bloom?

Alic. Their harvest else will be to both our shames.
Hast thou not made a monster of me, Mosby?
You should abhor me, I abhor myself.
When unperceived I stole on Arden's sleep,
(Hell steeled my heart, and death was in my hand,)
Pale anguish brooded on his ashy cheek,
And chilly sweats stood shivering on his brow.
Relentless murder, at a sight so sad,
Gave place to pity; and as he waked, I stood
Irresolute, and drowned in tears.

Mos. She's lost,
And I in vain have stained my soul with blood.
[*Aside.*

Alic. Give o'er in time: in vain are your attempts
Upon my Arden's life; for Heaven, that wrested
The fatal weapon from my trembling hand,
Still has him in its charge.

Mos. Little she thinks, [*Aside*
That Arden's dead ere now.—It must be so;
I've but that game to play, ere it be known.

Alic. I know our dangerous state; I hesitate:
I tremble for your life; I dread reproach;
But we've offended, and must learn to suffer.

Mos. Then Arden lives, in his Alicia blest,
And Mosby wretched! Yet should chance or nature
Lay Arden gently in a peaceful grave,
Might I presume to hope? Alicia, speak.

Alic. How shall I look into my secret thoughts,

And answer what I fear to ask myself?
[*A long pause.*
Mos. Silence speaks best for me. His death once known,
I must forswear the fact, and give these tools
To public justice, and not live in fear. [*Aside.*
Thy heart is mine. I ask but for my own.
[*To her.*
Truth, gratitude, and honour bind you to me,
Or else you never loved.
Alic. Then why this struggle?
Not loved! O had my love been justly placed,
As sure it was exalted and sincere,
I should have gloried in it, and been happy.
But I'll no longer live the abject slave
Of loose desire; I disclaim the thought.
Mos. I'll ask no more what honour should deny;
By Heaven, I never will.
Alic. Well then remember,
On that condition only, I renew
My vows. If time and the event of things
[*Giving her hand.*
Should ever make it lawful, I'll be yours.
Mos. Oh my full joys!——
Alic. Suppress thy frantic transports!
My heart recoils; I am betrayed! O give me back
My promised faith!
Mos. First, let the world dissolve.
Alic. There is no joy, nor peace for you, or me:
All our engagements cannot but be fatal.
Mos. The time may come, when you'll have other thoughts;
'Till then, farewell.—[*Aside.*] Now, fortune, do thy worst.
[*Exit.*
Alic. Mosby, return——He's gone, and I am wretched.
I should have banished him my sight for ever.
You happy fair ones, whose untainted fame
Has never yet been blasted with reproach,
Fly from the appearance of dishonour far.
Virtue is arbitrary, nor admits debate:
To doubt is treason in her rigid court;
But, if ye parley with the foe, you're lost. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another room in Arden's house.*

ARDEN *and* FRANKLIN *sitting together on a couch:* ARDEN *thoughtful.*

Frank. Nay, wonder not. Though every circumstance
Thus strangely met to prove the lady false,
And justify the husband's horrid vengeance,
Yet it appears to every honest eye,
Too late for the poor lady, she was wronged.
Ard. Is it possible?
Frank. Ay very possible:
He lives, that proves it so. Concealed from justice,
He pines with ceaseless sorrow for his guilt,
And each hour bends him lower towards his grave.
Ard. I know thy friendship, and perceive its drift.
I'll bear my wrongs, for sure I have been wronged.
Do I but think so then! What fools are men,
Whom love and hatred, anger, hope, and fear,
And all the various passions, rule by turns,
And in their several turns alike deceive?
Frank. To cast away, and on suspicion only,
A jewel, like Alicia, were to her
Unjust, and cruel to yourself. [*Clock strikes ten.*] Good night,
The clock has strucken ten.
Ard. I thought it more.
Frank. I thought it not so much.
Ard. Why, thus it is:
Our happy hours are few, and fly so swift,
That they are past ere we begin to count them:
But, when with pain and misery oppress,
Anticipating Time's unvarying pace,
We think each heavy moment is an age.
Frank. Come, let us to rest. Impartial as the grave,
Sleep robs the cruel tyrant of his power,
Gives rest and freedom to the o'erwrought slave,
And steals the wretched beggar from his wants.
Droop not, my friend; sleep will suspend thy cares,
And time will end them.
Ard. True, for time brings death,
The only certain end of human woes.
Sleep interrupts, but, waking, we're restored
To all our griefs again. Watching and rest,
Alternately succeeding one another,
Are all the idle business of dull life.
What shall we call this undetermined state,
This narrow isthmus 'twixt two boundless oceans,
That, whence we came, and that, to which we tend?
Is it life chequered with the sleep of death?
Or death enlivened by our waking dreams?
But we'll to bed. Here, Michael, bring the lights!

Enter MICHAEL *with lights.*

Heaven send you good repose.
[*Gives Franklin a candle.*
Frank. The like to you.
Mich. Shall I attend you, sir?
Frank. No, no, I choose to be alone. Good night.
[*Exit Franklin. Michael attends his master with the other light, and returns.*]
Mich. I, who should take my weapon in my hand,
And guard his life with hazard of my own,
With fraudful smiles have led him, unsuspecting,
Quite to the jaws of death. But I've an oath.
Mosby has bound me with an horrid vow,
Which if I break, these dogs have sworn my death.
I've left the doors unbarred. Hark! 'twas the latch.

They come—I hear their oaths, and see their daggers
Insulting o'er my master's mangled body,
While he for mercy pleads.—Good master, live!
I'll bar the doors again. But should I meet them—
What's that?—I heard them cry, 'Where is this 'coward?'
Arden once dead, they'll murder me for sport.
Help—call the neighbours—Master—Franklin—help!

Enter ARDEN *and* FRANKLIN, *undressed at several doors.*

Ard. What dismal outcry is this?
Frank. What frights thee, Michael?
Mich. My master!—Franklin!
Ard. Why dost thou tremble so?
Mich. I dreamed the house was full of thieves and murderers. [*Trembling.*
Ard. Dreamed! what, awake! Are all the doors made fast?
Mich. I think they are.
Ard. I'll go and see myself. [*Exit Arden.*
Frank. You made a fearful noise.
Mich. Did I?——
Ard. [*within.*] Why, Michael!
Frank. You tremble still.—Has any one been here?
Mich. No, I hope not. My master will be angry.

Enter ARDEN.

Ard. This negligence not half contents me, sir:
The doors were all left open.
Mich. Sir——
Ard. To bed,
And, as you prize my favour, be more careful.
[*Exit Michael.*
Frank. 'Tis very cold. Once more, my friend—
Ard. Good night. [*Exit Arden.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to the street before Arden's door; the door shut.*

Enter BLACK WILL, *and* SHAKEBAG.

B. Will. Zounds! Michael has betrayed us;
The doors are fast. Away, away—Disperse.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Inn, the Flower-de-Luce.*

MOSBY *and* MICHAEL.

Mich. Though I with oaths appealed to conscious Heaven,
That Arden rose, and shut the doors himself,
Yet, but for Green, these bloody rogues had killed me.
We must desist—Franklin and sweet Maria
Have promised, at Alicia's own request,
To interfere.
Mos. Such ever be the employ
Of him I hate!
Mich. The mourning fair, all changed,
By me conjures you (and with tears she spake it),
Not to involve yourself, and her, in ruin,
By seeking to renew a correspondence,
She has renounced for ever.
Mos. How! confusion!
Mich. And hopes, as Heaven, in answer to her prayers,
Hath reconciled her duty and affection,
You will approve her resolution——
Mos. Doubtless!
Mich. And learn, by her example, to subdue
Your guilty passion.
Mos. Ha, ha, ha! exquisite woman!
So! rather than not change, she'll love her husband!
But she will not persevere.
Mich. Yes, sure she will.
Mos. Have I, then, slighted her whole sighing sex,
Bid opportunity and fortune wait;
And all to be forsaken for a husband!
By Heaven, I am glad he has so oft escaped,
That I may have him murdered in her sight!

Enter GREEN.

Green. How strange a providence attends this man!
'Tis vain to strive with Heaven.—Let's give it o'er.
Mos. No; when I do, may I be curst for ever,
Hopeless to love, and hate without revenge!
May I ne'er know an end of disappointment,
But, prest with hard necessity, like thee,
Live the contempt of my insulting foe!
Green. I scorn the abject thought. Had he a life
Hung on each hair, he dies!—If we succeed,
[*To Michael.*
This very night Maria shall be thine.
Mich. I am a man again.
Mos. I've thought a way,
That may be easy under friendship's mask,
Which to a foe suspected may be hard.
Green. Friendship! impossible.
Mos. You know him not.
You, with your ruffians, in the street shall seek him.
I follow at some distance. They begin
(No matter how) a quarrel, and at once
Assault him with their swords.—Straight I appear,
Forget all wrongs, and draw in his defence;

Mark me, be sure, with some slight wound; then fly,
And leave the rest to me.
Mich. I know his temper.
This seeming benefit will cancel all
His former doubts, and gain his easy heart.
Green. Perhaps so—yet——
Mos. Further debates are needless. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A room in* ARDEN'S *house.*

Enter FRANKLIN *and* MARIA.

Frank. Well, in what temper did you find Alicia?
Mar. Never was anguish, never grief, like hers:
She eats, nor sleeps. Her lovely downcast eyes,
That used to gladden each beholder's heart,
Now wash the flinty bosom of the earth.
Her troubled breast heaves with incessant sighs,
Which drink the purple streams of life, and blast
Her bloom, as storms the blossoms of the spring.
But sure her prayers must quickly reach high Heaven,
Relenting Arden kindly soothe her sorrows,
And her lost peace restore.
Frank. Their mutual peace, Maria!
For his can ne'er be found but in Alicia.
Ashamed to view the face of man or day,
As Mosby's name was written on his brow,
He cheerless wanders; seeks the darkest gloom,
To hide his drooping head, and grieves alone.
With a full heart, swoln eyes, and faltering tongue,
He sometimes, seeking to beguile his grief,
Begins a mournful tale: But straight a thought
Of his imagined wrongs, crossing his memory,
Ends his sad story, ere the half be told.
O may our pains, with wished success, be crowned!

Enter ARDEN.

Ard. No, Franklin, no; your friendly cares are vain:
Were I but certain she had wronged my bed,
I then might hate her, and shake off my woes;
But thus perplexed, can never taste of comfort!
Frank. O Jealousy! thou bane of social joys!
Oh! she's a monster, made of contradictions!
Let truth, in all her native charms, appear,
And, with the voice of harmony itself,
Plead the just cause of innocence traduced;
Deaf as the adder, blind as upstart greatness,
She sees nor hears! And yet let Slander whisper,
Or evil-eyed Suspicion look oblique,
Rumour has fewer tongues than she has ears;
And Argus's hundred eyes are dim and slow,
To piercing Jealousy's!——
Ard. No more, no more:
I know its plagues; but where's the remedy?
Mar. In your Alicia.
Frank. She shall heal these wounds.
Ard. She's my disease, and can she be my cure?
My friends should rather teach me to abhor her,
To tear her image from my bleeding heart!
Mar. We leave that hateful office to the fiends.
Frank. If you e'er loved, you'll not refuse to see her:
You promised that.
Ard. Did I?
Frank. Indeed you did.
Ard. Well, then, some other time.
Frank. No; see her now.
Ard. Franklin, I know my heart, and dare not see her.
I have a husband's honour to maintain,
I fear the lover's weakness may betray.
Let me not do what honour must condemn,
And friendship blush to hear.
Frank. That Arden never will.
Mar. Did you but know her grief——
Ard. Am I the cause?
Have I, just Heaven! have I e'er injured her?
Yet I'm the coward. O preposterous fear!
See where she comes! Armed with my numerous wrongs,
I'll meet, with honourable confidence,
The offending wife, and look the honest husband.
Frank. Maria, we'll withdraw: even friendship here
Would seem impertinence.
[*Exeunt Franklin and Maria.*
Ard. Be still, my heart!

ALICIA *enters, not seeing* ARDEN.

Alic. How shall I bear my Arden's just reproaches!
Or can a reconcilement long continue,
That's founded on deceit? Can I avow
My secret guilt!—No; at so mean a thought
Abandoned infamy herself would blush.
Nay, could I live with public loss of honour,
Arden would die to see Alicia scorned.
He's here! earth open! hide me from his sight!
Ard. Guilt chains her tongue! Lo! silent, self-condemned,
With tearful eyes, and trembling limbs, she stands.
Alic. Fain would I kiss his footsteps; but that look,
Where indignation seems to strive with grief,
Forbids me to approach him.
Ard. Who would think,
That anguish were not real?
Alic. I'm rooted here!
Ard. Those tears, methinks, even if her guilt were certain,
Might wash away her pains.
Alic. Support me, Heaven!
Ard. Curse on the abject thought! I shall relapse
To simple dotage. She steals on my heart,
She conquers with her eyes. If I but hear her voice,
Nor earth, nor Heaven, can save me from her snares!
O! let me fly—if I have yet the power.
Alic. O Arden! do not, do not leave me thus!
[*Kneels, and holds him.*

Ard. I pray thee, loose thy hold!
Alic. O never, never!
Ard. Why should I stay to tell thee of my wrongs,
To aggravate thy guilt, and wound thy soul?
Thyself, if all these agonizing struggles,
Of tears, of sighs, of groans, of speechless sorrow,
Be but sincere—thyself will do it better.
One thing I'll tell thee—for perhaps 'twill please thee;
Thou'st broke my heart, Alicia.
Alic. Oh! [*She falls to the ground.*
Ard. And canst thou,
Can woman pity, whom she hath undone?
Why dost thou grasp my knees? what wouldst thou say,
If thou couldst find thy speech?
Alic. O! mercy, mercy!
Ard. Thou hast had none on me; let go my hand!
Why dost thou press it to thy throbbing heart,
That beats—but not for me?
Alic. Then may it ne'er beat more!
Ard. At least, I'm sure it did not always so.
Alic. For that my soul is pierced with deep remorse,
For that I bow me to the dust before thee,
And die to be forgiven! O Arden! Arden!
Ard. Presumptuous fool! what business hast thou here?
Did I not know my weakness, and her power!
Rise, rise, Alicia.
Alic. No; here let me lie,
On the bare bosom of this conscious earth,
Till Arden speak the words of peace and comfort,
Or my heart break before him!
Ard. O Alicia,
Thou inconsistent spring of grief and joy,
Whence bitter streams, and sweet, alternate flow,
Come to my arms, and in this too fond bosom
Disburden all the fulness of thy soul!
Alic. Let me approach, with awe, that sacred temple,
Resume my seat, and dwell for ever there!
Ard. There ever reign, as on thy native throne,
Thou lovely wanderer!
Alic. Am I at last,
In error's fatal mazes long bewildered,
Permitted here to find my peace and safety!
Ard. Dry up thy tears; and tell me, truly tell me:
Has my long-suffering love at length prevailed,
And art thou mine indeed?
Alic. Heaven is my witness,
I love thee, Arden; and esteem thy love
Above all earthly good. Thy kind forgiveness
Speaks to my soul that peaceful calm confirmed,
Which reason and reflection had begun.
Ard. Thou'rt cheaply purchased with unnumbered sighs,
With many a bitter tear, and years of patience,
Thou treasure of more worth than mines of gold!
I will not doubt my happiness. Thou art,
Thou wilt be mine, ever, and only mine.
Alic. I am, I will. I ne'er knew joy till now.
Ard. This is our truest, happiest, nuptial day.
To-night, thou knowest, according to my custom,
Our yearly fair returning with St Valentine,
I treat my friends. I go to countenance
Their honest mirth, and cheer them with my bounty.
'Till happy night, farewell! My best Alicia,
How will our friends rejoice, our foes repine,
To see us thus! [*Exit.*
Alic. Thus ever may they see us!
The wandering fires, that have so long misled me,
Are now extinguished, and my heart is Arden's.
The flowery path of innocence and peace
Shines bright before, and I shall stray no longer.
Whence then these sighs, and why these floods of tears?
Sighs are the language of a broken heart,
And tears the tribute each enlightened eye
Pays, and must pay, for vice and folly past.
And yet the painfullest virtue hath its pleasure:
Though dangers rise, yet, peace restored within,
My soul collected shall undaunted meet them.
Though trouble, grief, and death, the lot of all,
On good and bad without distinction fall,
The soul, which conscious innocence sustains,
Supports with ease these temporary pains;
But stung with guilt, and loaded with despair,
Becomes itself a burden none can bear. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The street. People at a distance, as at a fair.*

Enter ARDEN *on one side, and* BLACK WILL *and* SHAKEBAG *on the other,* GREEN *directing them.*

B. Will. Shakebag, you'll second me—S'blood, give the way. [*Jostles Arden.*
Shakebag. May we not pass the streets?
Ard. I saw you not.
B. Will. Your sight perhaps is bad; your feeling may be better. [*Strikes him.*
Ard. Insolent villain! [*Draws.*
B. Will. Come, we'll teach you manners.
Ard. Both at once! barbarous cowards!

Enter MOSBY.

Mos. O bloody dogs! attempt a life so precious!
B. Will. This is a fury, George.
[*Black Will and Shakebag beaten off.*
Shake. I've pinked him though——
Ard. Villains, come back, and finish your design!
Mos. Shall I pursue them, sir?
Ard. Not for the world——
Mosby! amazing generosity!
Mos. I hope you are not hurt.
Ard. Pierced to the heart——

Mos. Forbid it, heaven! quick, let me fly for help.
Ard. With sharp reflection: Mosby, I can't bear
To be so far obliged to one I've wronged.
Mos. Who would not venture life to save a friend?
Ard. From you I've not deserved that tender name.
Mos. No more of that—would I were worthy of it!
Ard. I own my heart, by boiling passions torn,
Forgets its gentleness—yet is ever open
To melting gratitude. O say what price
Can buy your friendship?
Mos. Only think me yours.
Ard. Easy, indeed. I am too much obliged.
Why recked not your good sword its justice on me,
When, mad with jealous rage, in my own house,
I urged you to my ruin?
Mos. I loved you then
With the same warmth as now.
Ard. What's here! you bleed.
Let me bind up your wound.
Mos. A trifle, sir——
Ard. Your friendship makes it so. See, Franklin, see

Enter FRANKLIN.

The man I treated as a coward, bleeding,
Wretch that I am! for his defence of me.
Look to your wound. And, Mosby, let us hope
You'll sup with me. There will be honest Bradshaw,
And Franklin here, and——
Mos. Sir, I will not fail.
Frank. I shall not come.
Ard. Nay, Franklin, that's unkind.
Prithee——
Frank. Nay, urge me not. I have my reasons.
Mos. Avoids my company! So much the better.
His may not be so proper. [*Aside.*] An hour hence,
If you are not engaged, we'll meet at Fowl's.
Ard. I will be there.
Mos. 'Till then I take my leave. [*Exit Mosby.*
Ard. How have I been mistaken in this man?
Frank. How are you sure, you're not mistaken now?
Ard. No doubt he loves me; and I blush to think
How I've suspected him, and wronged Alicia.
Frank. May you be ever happy in your wife:
But——
Ard. Speak—But what? Let's have no riddles here.
Can she be innocent, and Mosby guilty?
Frank. To speak my thoughts, this new officious fondness
Makes me suspect: I like him worse than ever.
Ard. Because I like him better? What a churl!
Frank. You are credulous, and treat my serious doubts
With too much levity. You vex me, Arden. [*Exit.*
Ard. Believe me, friend, you'll laugh at this hereafter. [*Exit the other way.*

MOSBY, *having watched* FRANKLIN *out, re-enters with* GREEN.

Mos. The surly friend has left him—As I wished—
You see how eagerly the foolish fowl
Flies headlong to our snare: now to inclose him.
At eight the guests are bidden to his banquet,
And only Michael, of his numerous train,
Keeps home with his Alicia. He'll secure
The keys of all the doors, and let you in
With my two trusty bloodhounds. Alicia seems
Averse at present.
Green. She'll not dare betray us.
Mos. Not when the deed is done. We know too much.
She'll be our prisoner, and shall be observed.
Towards evening, then, upon a slight pretence
To pass an hour at draughts, (a game he loves)
I'll draw this husband home. You'll be prepared
In the inner room, (Michael will shew it you)
'Till, at a signal given, you all rush forth,
And strangle him.
Green. Good—'tis a death, that leaves
No bloody character to mark the place.
Mos. However, come all provided with your daggers.
Do you seek Michael, I'll instruct the rest.
Green. What shall the signal be?
Mos. These words in the game,
I take you now.
Green. Arden! thou'rt taken now indeed.
Mos. His body, thrown behind the abbey-wall,
Shall be descried by the early passenger,
Returning from the fair. My friend, thy hand;
Shakes it? Be firm, and our united strength
With ease shall cast dead Arden to the earth.
Green. Thanks to his foolish tenderness of soul!
Mos. True; he, who trusts an old inveterate foe,
Bares his own breast, and courts the fatal blow.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Arden's House.*

ALICIA *alone.*

What have I heard! Is this the house of Arden!
O! that the power, which has so often saved him,
Would send his guardian angel to him now,
To whisper in his ear his present danger!
Fly, Arden, fly! avoid this fatal roof,
Where murder lurks, and certain death awaits thee!
Wander——no matter where——Turn but from hence,
Thou canst not miss thy way—The house is theirs.
I am suspected—Michael guards the door—
And even Maria's absent. Bloody Mosby,
These are the fruits of thy detested lust.
But hark! the fiends approach. Green had humanity.

Enter GREEN, BLACK WILL, SHAKEBAG, *and* MICHAEL.

Could I prevail on him! O sir—
[*Talks apart with Green.*

B. Will. What a fair house! rich furniture! what piles of massy plate! And then yon iron chest! Good plunder, comrade.

Shake. And madam Arden there—A prize worth them all to me.

B. Will. And shall that fawning, white-livered coward, Mosby, enjoy all these?

Shake. No doubt he would, were we the fools he thinks us.

Green. Had he as many lives as drops of blood,
I'd have them all.—— [*To Alicia.*

Alic. But for one single night——

Green. I'd not defer his fate a single hour,
Though I were sure myself to die the next.
So, peace, irresolute woman—and be thankful
For thy own life.

Alic. O mercy, mercy!

Green. Yes,
Such mercy as the nursing lioness,
When drained of moisture by her eager young,
Shews to the prey that first encounters her.

B. Will. Who talks of mercy, when I am here?

Green. She would prevent us; but our steady courage
Laughs at her coward arts.
[*Knocking gently at the gate.*
Why, Michael!

Mich. Sir!

Green. Thou bloodless coward, what dost tremble at?
Dost thou not hear a knocking at the gate?
[*Exit Michael.*
Mosby, no doubt. How like a sly adulterer,
Who steals at midnight, and with caution gives
The appointed signal to his neighbour's wife!

B. Will. Which is the place, where we're to be concealed?

Green. This inner room.

B. Will. 'Tis well. The word is, *Now I take you.* [*Knocking louder than before.*

Green. Ay, there's authority. That speaks the master.
He seems in haste: 'Twere pity he should wait,
Now we're so well prepared for his reception.
[*Green, Black Will, and Shakebag, go into the inner room.*

Alic. Now, whither are they gone? The door's unbarred.
I hear the sound of feet. Should it be Arden,
And Mosby with him—I can't bear the doubt,
Nor would I be resolved. Be hushed, my fears!
'Tis Mosby, and alone. [*Enter Mosby.*] Sir, hear me, Mosby.

Mos. Madam, is this a time?

Alic. I will be heard,
And mark me, when I swear, never hereafter,
By look, word, act——

Mos. Be damned—your husband—

Alic. Ha! [*She screams.*

Enter ARDEN *and* MICHAEL.

Ard. Am I a monster, that I fright thee thus?
[*To Michael.*
Say, what has happened since I left the house?
Thou look'st, Alicia, as if wild amazement
Had changed thee to the image of herself.

Alic. Is Franklin with you?

Ard. No.

Alic. Nor Fowl, nor Bradshaw?

Ard. Neither, but both expected.

Alic. Merciful Heaven!

Ard. I meant to dedicate this happy night
To mirth and joy, and thy returning love.
[*She sighs.*
Make me not sad, Alicia: For my sake
Let discontent be banished from your brow,
And welcome Arden's friends with laughing eyes.
Amongst the first let Mosby be enrolled—

Alic. The villain!

Ard. Nay, I am too well convinced
Of Mosby's friendship, and Alicia's love,
Ever to wrong them more by weak suspicions.
I've been indeed to blame, but I will make thee
A large amends, Alicia. Look upon him,
As on the man, that gave your husband life.

Alic. Would take my husband's life!—I'll tell him all,
And cast this load of horror from my soul:
Yet, 'tis a dreadful hazard. Both must die.
A fearful thought! Franklin may come, or Bradshaw—
O let me not precipitate his fate! [*Aside.*

Mos. I see my presence is offensive there.
[*Going.*
Ard. Alicia! No—she has no will but mine.
Mos. It is not fit she should: and yet—perhaps—
'Twere better, sir—Permit me to retire.
Ard. No more—Our friendship, publicly avowed,
Will clear her injured virtue to the world.
Mos. Something there is in that—
Ard. It is a debt
I owe to both your fames, and pay it freely.
Mos. For her sake, then; not for my own.
Alic. [*Aside.*] O damned dissembler!
Ard. Come, take your seat; this shall not save your money.
Bring us the tables, Michael. [*They sit and play.*
Alic. [*Aside.*] O just Heaven!
Wilt thou not interpose?—How dread this pause!
When thousand terrors crowd the narrow space.
Ard. Your thoughts are absent, Mosby.
B. Will. Blood! why don't Mosby give the word? [*Aside.*
Mich. Give back, the game's against him.
Alic. Fly, Franklin! fly, to save thy Arden's life.
Murder herself, that chases him in view,
Beholding me, starts back, and, for a moment,
Suspends her thirst of blood. [*Aside.*
Ard. Come, give it up; I told you I should win. [*Rises.*
Mos. No, I see an advantage; move again.
Ard. There.
Mos. *Now I take you.*
[*Black Will throws a scarf over Arden's head, in order to strangle him; but Arden disengages himself, wrests a dagger from Shakebag, and stands on his defence, till Mosby getting behind, and seizing his arm, the rest assassinate him.*]
Alic. O Power omnipotent! make strong his arm!
Give him to conquer! Ha! my prayers are curses,
And draw down vengeance where they meant a blessing.
Ard. Inhospitable villain!
Alic. O! he dies!
Ard. O hold your bloody—Mosby too! Nay, then, [*Falling.*
I yield me to my fate. Is this, Alicia,
This the return for my unequalled love?
Alic. Or death, or madness, would be mercies now,
Therefore beyond my hopes.
Ard. O Mosby, Michael, Green!
Why have you drawn my blood upon your souls?
Mos. Behold her there, to whom I was betrothed,
And ask no further.
Green. Think on thy abbey-lands
From injured Green.
Ard. You now are your own judges,
But we shall meet again, where right and truth—
Who—who are these? But I forgive you all.
Thy hand, Alicia.
Alic. I'll not give it thee.
Ard. O wretched woman! have they killed thee, too?
A deadly paleness, agony, and horror,
On thy sad visage sit. My soul hangs on thee,
And, though departing—just departing—loves thee:
Is loth to leave, unreconciled to thee,
This useless mangled tenement of clay.
Dismiss her pleased, and say thou'rt innocent.
Alic. All hell contains not such a guilty wretch.
Ard. Then welcome death! though in the shape of murder.
How have I doated to idolatry!
Vain, foolish wretch, and thoughtless of hereafter,
Nor hoped, nor wished a heaven beyond her love.
Now, unprepared, I perish by her hate.
Alic. Though blacker, and more guilty, than the fiends,
My soul is white from this accursed deed.
O Arden! hear me—
Ard. Full of doubts, I come,
O thou Supreme, to seek thy awful presence.
My soul is on the wing. I own thy justice.
Prevent me with thy mercy. [*Dies.*
Alic. Turn not from me:
Behold me, pity me, survey my sorrows!
I, who despised the duty of a wife,
Will be thy slave. Spit on me, spurn me, sir,
I'll love thee still. O couldst thou court my scorn,
And now abhor me, when I love thee more,
If possible, than e'er thou lovedst Alicia!
Mos. Mad fool, he's dead, and hears thee not.
Alic. 'Tis false——
He smiles upon me, and applauds my vengeance.
[*Snatches a dagger, and strikes at Mosby.*
A knocking at the gate.
Mos. Damnation!
B. Will. 'Sdeath! we shall leave our work unfinished, and be betrayed at last. Let us hide the body.
Mos. Force her away.
Alic. Inhuman bloody villains!
[*She swoons, as she is forced from the body.*

Enter MARIA.

Mar. Mosby here!—
My sliding feet, as they move trembling forwards,
Are drenched in blood. O may I only fancy
That Arden there lies murdered——
Mos. How fares Alicia?
Alic. As the howling damned: and thou my hell—
Mar. Unhappy brother!
If thou hast done this deed, hope not to escape:
Mercy herself, who only seeks for crimes,
That she may pardon and reform the guilty,
Would change her nature at a sight like this.

Enter MICHAEL.

Mich. The guests are come—the servants all returned.

Mos. Alicia, be thyself; and mask thy heart [*Mosby lifts up Alicia.*
From every prying eye with courteous smiles.

Alic. Thou canst not think me mean enough to live?

Mos. You would not chuse an ignominious death?

Alic. That's all I dread—Might but the silent grave,
When it receives me to its dark abode,
Hide, with my dust, my shame!—O might that be,
And Arden's death revenged! 'Tis my sole prayer.
If not, may awful justice have her course! [*Exit Alicia.*

Mos. Sister! our lives are thine—

Mar. Though Mosby has shook off humanity,
I cannot be his accuser. [*Exit Maria.*

Mos. Follow them, Green, and watch Alicia's conduct.

Green. I will, but cannot answer for my own.
O Arden! Arden! could we change conditions! [*Exit Green.*

B. Will. Why, what a crew of cowards!
In the same moment murdering and repenting.

Mos. Give me the ring, that is on Arden's finger.

Shake. There. Will you have his purse too?

Mos. No, keep that.

B. Will. Thanks for our own: we should have kept the ring,
Were it not too remarkable.
But how must we dispose of the body?

Mos. Convey it through the garden, to the field
Behind the abbey-wall: Michael will shew the way.
The night is dark and cloudy—yet, take heed,
The house is full of company.

B. Will. Sir, if you doubt our conduct, do it yourself.

Mos. Nay, gentlemen—

Shake. Pretend to direct us!

Mos. For your own sakes—Arden will soon be mist.

Shake. We know our business, sir.

Mos. I doubt it not.
There's your reward. The horses both are saddled,
And ready for your flight.

B. Will. Use them yourself:
I hope we're as safe as you.

Mos. Why, gentlemen—Arden! I used thee worse. [*Aside.*

B. Will. We shall take care, however, for our own sakes.

Mos. 'Tis very well—I hope we all are friends.
So—softly—softly—Michael, not that door— [*Michael going out at the wrong door.*
So—make what speed you can: I'll wait you there. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A hall in* ARDEN'S *house.*

They must pass undescried: gardens and fields
Are dreary deserts now. Night-fowls and beasts of prey
Avoid the pinching rigour of the season,
Nor leave their shelter at a time like this.
And yet this night, this lingering winter night,
Hung with a weight of clouds, that stops her course,
Contracts new horrors, and a deeper black,
From this damned deed.—Mosby, thou hast thy wish.
Arden is dead; now count thy gains at leisure.
Dangers without, on every side suspicion;
Within, my starting conscience marks such wounds,
As hell can equal, only murderers feel. [*A pause.*
This, this the end of all my flattering hopes!
O! happiest was I in my humble state:
Though I lay down in want, I slept in peace:
My daily toil begat my night's repose;
My night's repose made day-light pleasing to me.
But now I've climbed the top-bough of the tree,
And sought to build my nest among the clouds:
The gentlest gales of summer shake my bed,
And dreams of murder harrow up my soul.
But hark!—Not yet:—'Tis dreadful being alone.
This awful silence, that, unbroken, reigns
Through earth and air, awakes attention more,
Than thunder bursting from ten thousand clouds:
S'death!—'tis but Michael—Say—

Enter MICHAEL.

Mich. Dead Arden lies
Behind the abbey—'tis a dismal sight!
It snowed apace while we disposed the body.

Mos. And not as you returned?

Mich. No, sir—

Mos. That's much—
Should you be questioned as to Arden's death,
You'll not confess?

Mich. No, so Maria's mine.

Mos. She's thine, if all a brother can—

Mich.———What's if?
I bought her dear, at hazard of my soul,
And force shall make her mine.—

Mos.———Why, how now, coward!

Enter MARIA.

Mar. The guests refuse to take their seats without you.
Alicia's grief too borders on distraction.
Thy presence may appease—

Mos. Increase it rather.

Mar. Michael, your absence too has been observed.

Mos. Say we are coming. [*Exit Maria.*

Mich. One thing I'd forgot. [*Returning.*
Soon as the company have left the house,
The ruffians will return.

Mos. What would the villains?

Mich. They muttered threats and curses,
And seemed not satisfied with their reward.
[*Exit Michael.*
Mos. Let them take all. Ambition, avarice, lust,
That drove me on to murder, now forsake me.
Oh Arden! if thy discontented ghost
Still hovers here to see thy blood revenged,
View, view the anguish of this guilty breast,
And be appeased! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A room in* ARDEN'S *house. A table spread for supper.*

GREEN, BRADSHAW, ADAM FOWL, ALICIA, MARIA, *&c.*

Brad. Madam, be comforted.
A. Fowl. Some accident, or business unforeseen, detains him thus.
Brad. I doubt not of his safety.
Alic. I thank you, gentlemen; I know you loved
My Arden well, and kindly speak your wishes.

Enter MOSBY.

Mos. I am ashamed I've made you wait: be seated.
Green. Madam, first take your place.
Alic. Make me not mad—
To me henceforth all places are alike. [*Sits.*
Mos. Come, since we want the master of the house,
I'll take his seat for once.
Alic. Dares he do this? [*Aside.*
Mos. I'm much afflicted, that he stays so late;
The times are perilous.
Green. And he has enemies.
Though no man, sure, did e'er deserve them less.
Mos. This day he was assaulted in the street.
Green. You saved him then.
Mos. Would I were with him now!
Mar. She starts, her looks are wild. [*Aside.*]
How fare you, madam?
Alic. I'm lost in admiration of your brother.
Mar. I fear her more than ever. [*Aside.*]—
Madam, be merry.
Mos. Michael, some wine. Health and long life to Arden, [*Rising.*
Alic. The good you wish, and have procured for Arden, [*Rising.*
Light on thyself!
Mar. For Heaven's sake!—
Alic. Give me way. [*Comes forward.*
Let them dispatch, and send me to my husband:
[*All rise.*
I've lived too long with falsehood and deceit.
[*Knocking at the gate.*
A. Fowl. What noise is that? [*Exit Michael.*
Brad. Pray Heaven, that all be right!
Mos. Bar all the doors.

Enter MICHAEL.

Mich. We are discovered, sir! [*To Mosby.*
The mayor with officers, and men in arms.

Enter MAYOR, *&c.*

Mayor. Go you with these, and do as I directed. [*Exeunt officers and others.*
I'm sorry that the duty of my office
Demands a visit so unseasonable.
Mos. Your worship doubtless were a welcome guest
At any hour; but wherefore thus attended?
Mayor. I have received a warrant from the council,
To apprehend two most notorious ruffians;
And information being made, on oath,
That they were seen to enter here to-night,
I'm come to search.
Green. I'm glad it is no worse. [*Aside.*
Mos. And can you think, that Arden entertains
Villains like those, you speak of? Were he here,
You'd not be thanked for this officiousness.
Mayor. I know my duty, sir, and that respect,
So justly due to our good neighbour's worth.—
But where is Arden?
Alic. Heavens! where indeed!
Mar. Alicia, for my sake—— [*Aside.*
Alic. If I were silent,
Each precious drop of murdered Arden's blood
Would find a tongue, and cry to Heaven for vengeance!
Mayor. What says the lady?
Mos. Oh! sir, heed her not;
Her husband has not been at home to-night,
And her misboding sorrow for his absence
Has almost made her frantic.
Mayor. Scarce an hour,
Since I beheld him enter here with you!
Mos. The darkness of the night deceived you, sir;
It was a stranger, since departed hence.
Mayor. That's most surprising! No man knows him better.
Frank. [*without*] Within there—ho—bar up your gates with care,
And set a watch. Let not a man go by——

FRANKLIN, *and others, enter with lights.*

And every tongue, that gave not its consent
To Arden's death, join mine, and cry aloud
To Heaven and earth for justice. Honest Arden,
My friend, is murdered!
Mayor. Murdered!
Green. How?
Mos. By whom?
Frank. How shall I utter what my eyes have seen!
Horrid, with many a gaping wound, he lies
Behind the abbey, a sad spectacle!
O vengeance! vengeance!
Mayor. Justly art thou moved.
Passion is reason in a cause like this.
Frank. Eternal Providence, to whose bright eye
Darkness itself is as the noon-day blaze,
Who brings the midnight murderer, and his deeds,

To light and shame, has, in his own security,
Found these.
Mayor. Here seize them all—this instant:
[*Alicia faints.*
Look to the lady. This may be but feigned.
Your charge but goes along with my suspicions.
Brad. And mine.
A. Fowl. And mine.
Frank. First hear me, and then judge,
Whether, on slight presumptions, I accuse them.
These honest men (neighbours and townsmen all)
Conducted me, dropping with grief and fear,
To where the body lay: with them I took these notes,
Not to be trusted to the faithless memory.

'Huge clots of blood, and some of Arden's hair,
'May still be seen upon the garden-wall;
'Many such rushes, as these floors are strewed with,
'Stick to his shoes and garments; and the prints
'Of several feet may in the snow be traced,
'From the stark body to the very door!'

These are presumptions he was murdered here,
And that the assassins, having borne his corpse
Into the fields, hither returned again.
Mos. Are these your proofs?
Green. These are but circumstances,
And only prove thy malice.
Frank. And this scarf,
Known to be Arden's, in the court was found,
All blood.——
Mayor. Search them.
Mich. I thought I'd thrown it down the well.
[*Aside.*
Mayor. [*To an Officer*] Enter that room, and search the lady there;
We may, perhaps, discover more.
[*Officer goes out, and re-enters; in the mean time, another Officer searches Mosby and Green.*
1. *Offi.* On Arden's wife I found this letter.
2. *Offi.* And I this ring on Mosby.
Mayor. Righteous Heaven!
Well may'st thou hang thy head, detested villain!
This very day did Arden wear this ring;
I saw it on his hand.
Mos. I freely yield me to my fate.

Enter another Officer.

Offi. We've seized two men behind some stalks of wood.
Mayor. Well, bring them in.

BLACK WILL *and* SHAKEBAG *brought in.*

They answer the description;
But let them wait, till I have done with these.
Heavens! what a scene of villany is here!
[*Having read the letter.*

B. Will. Since we are sure to die, though I could wish it were in better company (for I hate that fawning rascal, Mosby), I will tell the truth for once. He has been long engaged in an affair with Arden's wife there; but fearing a discovery, and hoping to get into his estate, hired us to hide him. That's all.
Mayor. And you the horrid deed performed?
Shake. We did, with his assistance, and Green's and Michael's.
Mayor. This letter proves Alicia, from the first,
Was made acquainted with your black design.
B. Will. I know nothing of that; but if she was, she repented of it afterwards. So, I think, you call a change of mind.
Mayor. That may avail her at the bar of heaven,
But is no plea at our's [*Alicia brought in*]. Bear them to prison;
Load them with irons, make them feel their guilt,
And groan away their miserable hours,
Till sentence of the law shall call them forth
To public execution.
Alic. I adore
The unerring hand of justice; and with silence
Had yielded to my fate, but for this maid,
Who, as my soul dreads justice on her crimes,
Knew not, or e'er consented, to this deed.
Mayor. But did she not consent to keep it secret?
Mos. To save a brother, and most wretched friend.——
Mayor. She has undone herself. Behold how innocence
May suffer in bad fellowship.—And Bradshaw,
My honest neighbour Bradshaw, too: I read it
With grief and wonder.——
Brad. Madam, I appeal
To you; as you are shortly to appear
Before a judge, that sees our secret thoughts,
Say, had I knowledge, or——
Alic. You brought the letter,
But well I hope, you knew not the contents.
Mayor. Hence with them all, till time and farther light
Shall clear these mysteries.
A. Fowl. If I'm condemned,
My blood be on his head, that gives the sentence.
I'm not accused, and only ask for justice.
Frank. You shall have justice all, and rigorous justice.
So shall the growth of such enormous crimes,
By their dread fate, be checked in future times.
Of avarice, Mosby a dread instance prove,
And poor Alicia of unlawful love!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

GUSTAVUS VASA,

THE

DELIVERER OF HIS COUNTRY.

BY

BROOKE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CRISTIERN, *king of Denmark and Norway, and usurper of Sweden.*
TROLLIO, *a Swede, archbishop of Upsal, and vice-gerent to Cristiern.*
PETERSON, *a Swedish nobleman, secretly of the Danish party, and friend to Trollio.*
LAERTES, *a young Danish nobleman, attendant to Cristina.*
GUSTAVUS, *formerly general of the Swedes, and first cousin to the deceased king.*
ARVIDA, *of the royal blood of Sweden, friend and cousin to Gustavus.*
ANDERSON, *chief lord of Dalecarlia.*
ARNOLDUS, *a Swedish priest, and chaplain in the copper-mines of Dalecarlia.*
SIVARD, *captain of the Dalecarlians.*

WOMEN.

CRISTINA, *daughter to Cristiern.*
AUGUSTA, *mother to Gustavus,* } *prisoners in*
GUSTAVA, *sister to Gustavus, a child,* } *Cristiern's camp.*
MARIANA, *attendant and confident to Cristina.*

Soldiers, Peasants, Messengers, and Attendants.

Scene—Dalecarlia, a northern province in Sweden.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The inside of the copper-mines of Dalecarlia.*

Enter ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, *and Servants, with torches.*

And. You tell me wonders!
Arn. Soft, behold, my lord,
[*Points behind the Scenes.*
Behold him stretched, where reigns eternal night!
The flint his pillow, and cold damps his covering!
Yet, bold of spirit, and robust of limb,
He throws inclemency aside, nor feels
The lot of human frailty.
And. What horrors hang around! the savage race
Ne'er hold their den, but where some glimmering ray
May bring the cheer of morn. What, then, is he?
His dwelling marks a secret in his soul,
And whispers somewhat more than man about him.
Arn. Draw but the veil of his apparent wretchedness,
And you shall find, his form is but assumed,
To hoard some wondrous treasure, lodged within.
And. Let him bear up to what thy praises speak him,
And I will win him, spite of his reserve,
Bind him, with sacred friendship, to my soul,
And make him half myself.

Arn. 'Tis nobly promised;
For worth is rare, and wants a friend in Sweden;
And yet I tell thee, in her age of heroes,
When nursed by freedom, all her sons grew great,
And every peasant was a prince in virtue:
I greatly err, or this abandoned stranger
Had stepped the first for fame—though now he seeks
To veil his name, and cloud his shine of virtues;
For there is danger in them.
And. True, Arnoldus;
Were there a prince, throughout the sceptered globe,
Who searched out merit, for its due preferment,
With half that care our tyrant seeks it out
For ruin; happy, happy were that state,
Beyond the golden fable of those pure
And early ages. Wherefore this, good Heaven?
Is it of fate, that, who assumes a crown,
Throws off humanity?
Arn. So Cristiern holds.
He claims our country as by right of conquest,
A right to every wrong. Even now, 'tis said,
The tyrant envies what our mountains yield
Of health, or aliment; he comes upon us,
Attended by a numerous host, to seize
These last retreats of our expiring liberty.
And. Say'st thou?
Arn. This rising day, this instant hour,
Thus chaced, we stand upon the utmost brink
Of steep perdition, and must leap the precipice,
Or turn upon our hunters.
And. Now, Gustavus!
Thou prop and glory of inglorious Sweden,
Where art thou, mightiest man?—Were he but here!—
I'll tell thee, my Arnoldus, I beheld him,
Then when he first drew sword, serene and dreadful,
As the browed evening ere the thunder break;
For soon he made it toilsome to our eyes
To mark his speed, and trace the paths of conquest.
In vain we followed, where he swept the field;
'Twas death alone could wait upon Gustavus.
Arn. He was, indeed, whate'er our wish could form him.
And. Arrayed and beauteous in the blood of Danes,
The invaders of his country, thrice he chaced
This Cristiern, this fell conqueror, this usurper,
With rout and foul dishonour at his heels,
To plunge his head in Denmark.
Arn. Nor ever had the tyrant known return,
To tread our necks, and blend us with the dust,
Had he not dared to break through every law
That sanctifies the nations, seized our hero,
The pledge of specious treaty, tore him from us,
And led him, chained, to Denmark.
And. Then we fell.
If still he lives, we yet may learn to rise,
But never can I dare to rest a hope
On any arm but his.
Arn. And yet, I trust,
This stranger, that delights to dwell with darkness,
Unknown, unfriended, compassed round with wretchedness,
Conceals some mighty purpose in his breast,
Now labouring into birth.
And. When came he hither?
Arn. Six moons have changed upon the face of night,
Since here he first arrived, in servile weeds,
But yet of mein majestic. I observed him,
And, ever as I gazed, some nameless charm,
A wondrous greatness not to be concealed,
Broke through his form, and awed my soul before him.
Amid these mines, he earns the hireling's portion;
His hands out-toil the hind; while, on his brow,
Sits Patience, bathed in the laborious drops
Of painful industry——I oft have sought,
With friendly tender of some worthier service,
To win him from his temper; but he shuns
All offers, yet declined with graceful act,
Engaging beyond utterance: and, at eve,
When all retire to some domestic solace,
He only stays, and, as you see, the earth
Receives him to her dark and cheerless bosom.
And. Has no unwary moment e'er betrayed
The labours of his soul, some favourite grief,
Whereon to raise conjecture?
Arn. I saw, as some bold peasants late deplored
Their country's bondage, sudden passion seized
And bore him from his seeming; strait his form
Was turn'd to terror, ruin filled his eye,
And his proud step appeared to awe the world:
When checked, as though an impotence of rage,
Damp sadness soon usurped upon his brow,
And the big tear rolled graceful down his visage.
And. Your words imply a man of much importance.
Arn. So I suspected, and at dead of night
Stole on his slumbers; his full heart was busy,
And oft his tongue pronounced the hated name
Of—bloody Cristiern——there he seemed to pause;
And, recollected to one voice, he cried,
'O Sweden! O my country! Yet I'll save thee.'
And. Forbear—he rises—Heavens, what majesty!

Enter GUSTAVUS.

And. Your pardon, stranger, if the voice of virtue,
If cordial amity from man to man,
And somewhat that should whisper to the soul,
To seek and cheer the sufferer, led me hither,

Impatient to salute thee. Be it thine
Alone to point the path of friendship out;
And my best power shall wait upon thy fortunes.
Gust. Yes, generous man! there is a wondrous test,
The truest, worthiest, noblest cause for friendship;
Dearer than life, than interest, or alliance,
And equal to your virtues.
And. Say——unfold.
Gust. Art thou a soldier, a chief lord in Sweden?
And yet a stranger to thy country's voice,
That loudly calls the hidden patriot forth?
But what's a soldier? What's a lord in Sweden?
All worth is fled, or fallen——nor has a life
Been spared, but for dishonour; spared to breed
More slaves for Denmark, to beget a race
Of new-born virgins for the unsatiated lust
Of our new masters. Sweden! thou'rt no more!
Queen of the North! thy land of liberty,
Thy house of heroes, and thy seat of virtues,
Is now the tomb, where thy brave sons lie speechless,
And foreign snakes engender.
And. O 'tis true.
But wherefore? To what purpose?
Gust. Think of Stockholm!
When Cristiern seized upon the hour of peace,
And drenched the hospitable floor with blood;
Then fell the flower of Sweden, mighty names!
Her hoary senators, and gasping patriots.
The tyrant spoke, and his licentious band
Of blood-trained ministry were loosed to ruin.
Invention wantoned in the toil of infants
Stabbed on the breast, or reeking on the points
Of sportive javelins. Husbands, sons, and sires,
With dying ears drank in the loud despair
Of shrieking chastity. The waste of war
Was peace and friendship to this civil massacre.
O heaven and earth! Is there a cause for this?
For sin without temptation, calm, cool villany,
Deliberate mischief, unimpassioned lust,
And smiling murder? Lie thou there, my soul;
Sleep, sleep upon it! image not the form
Of any dream but this, 'till time grows pregnant,
And thou canst wake to vengeance.
And. Thou hast greatly moved me. Ha! thy tears start forth.
Yes, let them flow, our country's fate demands them;
I too will mingle mine, while yet 'tis left us
To weep in secret, and to sigh with safety.
But wherefore talk of vengeance? 'Tis a word
Should be engraven on the new fallen snow,
Where the first beam may melt it from observance.
Vengeance on Cristiern! Norway and the Dane,
The sons of Sweden, all the peopled North,
Bends at his nod: my humbler boast of power
Meant not to cope with crowns.
Gust. Then what remains
Is briefly this; your friendship has my thanks,
But must not my acceptance: never——no——
First sink, thou baleful mansion, to the centre!
And be thy darkness doubled round my head,
'Ere I forsake thee for the bliss of paradise,
To be enjoyed beneath a tyrant's sceptre!
No, that were slavery—Freedom is
The brilliant gift of Heaven, 'tis reason's self,
The kin of Deity—I will not part it.
And. Nor I, while I can hold it; but alas!
That is not in our choice.
Gust. Why? where's that power whose engines are of force
To bend the brave and virtuous man to slavery?
Base fear, the laziness of lust, gross appetites,
These are the ladders, and the grovelling footstool,
From whence the tyrant rises on our wrongs,
Secure and sceptered in the soul's servility.
He has debauched the genius of our country,
And rides triumphant, while her captive sons
Await his nod, the silken slaves of pleasure,
Or fettered in their fears.
And. I apprehend you.
No doubt, a base submission to our wrongs
May well be termed a voluntary bondage;
But think the heavy hand of power is on us;
Of power, from whose imprisonment and chains
Not all our free-born virtue can protect us.
Gust. 'Tis there you err, for I have felt their force;
And had I yielded to enlarge these limbs,
Or share the tyrant's empire, on the terms
Which he proposed—I were a slave indeed.
No—in the deep and deadly damp of dungeons
The soul can rear her sceptre, smile in anguish,
And triumph o'er oppression.
And. O glorious spirit! think not I am slack
To relish what thy noble scope intends;
But then the means! the peril! and the consequence!
Great are the odds, and who shall dare the trial?
Gust. I dare.
O wert thou still that gallant chief,
Whom once I knew! I could unfold a purpose
Would make the greatness of thy heart to swell,
And burst in the conception.
And. Give it utterance.
Perhaps there lie some embers yet in Sweden,
Which, wakened by thy breath, might rise in flames,
And spread vindictive round—You say you know me;
But give a tongue to such a cause as this,
And, if you hold me tardy in the call,
You know me not—But thee I've surely known;
For there is somewhat in that voice and form,
Which has alarmed my soul to recollection;
But 'tis as in a dream, and mocks my reach.
Gust. Then name the man whom it is death to know,
Or knowing to conceal—and I am he.

And. Gustavus! Heavens! 'tis he! 'tis he himself!

Enter ARVIDA, *speaking to a servant.*

Arv. I thank you, friend, he's here, you may retire.

And. Good morning to my noble guest; you're early! [*Gustavus walks apart.*

Arv. I come to take a short and hasty leave:
'Tis said, that from the mountain's neighbouring brow,
The canvas of a thousand tents appears,
Whitening the vale—Suppose the tyrant there;
You know my safety lies not in the interview—
Ha! What is he, who in the shreds of slavery
Supports a step, superior to the state
And insolence of ermine?

Gust. Sure that voice,
Was once the voice of friendship and Arvida!

Arv. Ha! Yes——'tis he!—ye powers! it is Gustavus.

Gust. Thou brother of adoption! In the bond
Of every virtue wedded to my soul,
Enter my heart! it is thy property.

Arv. I'm lost in joy and wond'rous circumstance.

Gust. Yet, wherefore, my Arvida, wherefore is it,
That in a place, and at a time like this,
We should thus meet? Can Cristiern cease from cruelty?
Say, whence is this, my brother? How escaped you?
Did I not leave thee in the Danish dungeon?

Arv. Of that hereafter. Let me view thee first.
How graceful is the garb of wretchedness,
When worn by virtue! Fashions turn to folly;
Their colours tarnish, and their pomps grow poor
To her magnificence.

Gust. Yes, my Arvida.
Beyond the sweeping of the proudest train,
That shades a monarch's heel, I prize these weeds,
For they are sacred to my country's freedom.
A mighty enterprize has been conceived,
And thou art come auspicious to the birth,
As sent to fix the seal of Heaven upon it.

Arv. Point but thy purpose——let it be to bleed———

Gust. Your hands, my friends!

All. Our hearts.

Gust. I know they're brave.
Of such the time has need; of hearts like yours,
Faithful and firm, of hands inured and strong;
For we must ride upon the neck of danger,
And plunge into a purpose big with death.

And. Here let us kneel, and bind us to thy side,
By all———

Gust. No, hold—if we want oaths to join us,
Swift let us part, from pole to pole asunder.
A cause like ours is its own sacrament;
Truth, justice, reason, love, and liberty,
The eternal links that clasp the world, are in it,
And he, who breaks their sanction, breaks all law,
And infinite connection.

Arn. True, my lord.

And. And such the force I feel.

Arv. And I.

All. And all.

Gust. Know then, that ere our royal Stenon fell,
While thus my valiant cousin and myself,
By chains and treachery, lay detained in Denmark,
Upon a dark and unsuspected hour
The bloody Cristiern sought to take my head.
Thanks to the ruling power, within whose eye
Imbosomed ills and mighty treasons roll,
Prevented of their blackness, I escaped,
Led by a generous arm, and some time lay
Concealed in Denmark—for my forfeit head
Became the price of crowns, each port and path
Was shut against my passage—'till I heard
That Stenon, valiant Stenon, fell in battle,
And freedom was no more. O then, what bounds
Had power to hem the desperate! I o'erpassed them,
Traversed all Sweden, through ten thousand foes,
Impending perils, and surrounding tongues,
That from himself enquired Gustavus out.
Witness my country, how I toiled to wake
Thy sons to liberty! In vain—for fear,
Cold fear had seized on all—Here last I came,
And shut me from the sun, whose hateful beams
Served but to shew the ruins of my country.
When here, my friends, 'twas here at length I found,
What I had left to look for, gallant spirits,
In the rough form of untaught peasantry.

And. Indeed they once were brave; our Dalecarlians
Have oft been known to give a law to kings;
And as their only wealth has been their liberty,
From all the unmeasured graspings of ambition
Have held that gem untouched—though now 'tis feared——

Gust. It is not feared—I say they still shall hold it.
I've searched these men, and find them like the soil,
Barren without, and to the eye unlovely,
But they've their mines within; and this the day
In which I mean to prove them.

Arn. O Gustavus!
Most aptly hast thou caught the passing hour,
Upon whose critical and fated hinge
The state of Sweden turns.

Gust. And to this hour
I've therefore held me in this darksome womb,
That sends me forth as to a second birth
Of freedom, or through death to reach eternity.
This day, returned with every circling year,
In thousands pours the mountain peasants forth,
Each with his battered arms and rusty helm,

In sportive discipline well trained, and prompt
Against the day of peril—thus disguised,
Already have I stirred their latent sparks
Of slumbering virtue, apt as I could wish,
To warm before the lightest breath of liberty.
Arn. How will they kindle when, confessed to view,
Once more their loved Gustavus stands before them,
And pours his blaze of virtues on their souls!
Arv. It cannot fail.
And. It has a glorious aspect.
Arv. Now Sweden! rise and re-assert thy rights,
Or be for ever fallen.
And. Then be it so.
Arn. Lead on, thou arm of war,
To death or victory!.
Gust. Let us embrace.
Why thus, my friends, thus joined in such a cause,
Are we not equal to a host of slaves!
You say the foe's at hand—Why let them come,
Steep are our hills, nor easy of access,
And few the hours we ask for their reception.
For I will take these rustic sons of liberty
In the first warmth and hurry of their souls;
And should the tyrant then attempt our heights,
He comes upon his fate—Arise, thou sun!
Haste, haste to rouse thee to the call of liberty,
That shall once more salute thy morning beam,
And hail thee to thy setting!
Arn. O blessed voice!
Prolong that note but one short day through Sweden,
And though the sun and life should set together,
It matters not—we shall have lived that day.
Arv. Were it not worth the hazard of a life
To know if Cristiern leads his powers in person,
And what his scope intends? Be mine that task;
Even to the tyrant's tent I'll win my way,
And mingle with his councils.
Gust. Go, my friend.
Dear as thou art, whene'er our country calls,
Friends, sons, and sires should yield their treasure up,
Nor own a sense beyond the public safety.
But tell me, my Arvida, ere thou goest,
Tell me what hand has made thy friend its debtor,
And given thee up to freedom and Gustavus?
Arv. Ha! let me think of that! 'tis sure she loves him. [*Aside.*
Away, thou 'skance and jaundiced eye of jealousy,
That tempts my soul to sicken at perfection!
Away! I will unfold it——To thyself
Arvida owes his freedom.
Gust. How, my friend?
Arv. Some months are passed since in the Danish dungeon,
With care emaciate, and unwholsome damps
Sickening, I lay, chained to my flinty bed,
And called on death to ease me—strait a light
Shone round, as when the ministry of heaven
Descends to kneeling saints. But O! the form
That poured upon my sight—Ye angels speak!
For ye alone are like her; or present
Such visions pictured to the nightly eye
Of fancy, tranced in bliss. She then approached,
The softest pattern of embodied meekness—
For pity had divinely touched her eye,
And harmonized her motions——'Ah,' she cried,
'Unhappy stranger, art not thou the man,
'Whose virtues have endeared thee to Gustavus?'
Gust. Gustavus did she say?
Arv. Yes, yes, her lips
Breathed forth that name with a peculiar sweetness.
Loosed from my bonds, I rose, at her command,
When, scarce recovering speech, I would have kneeled;
But 'Haste thee, haste thee for thy life,' she cried;
'And O, if e'er thy envied eyes behold
'Thy loved Gustavus, say, a gentle foe
'Has given thee to his friendship.'
Gust. You've much amazed me! Is her name a secret?
Arv. To me it is——but you perhaps may guess.
Gust. No, on my word.
Arv. You too had your deliverer.
Gust. A kind, but not a fair one——Well, my friends!
Our cause is ripe, and calls us forth to action.
Tread ye not lighter? Swells not every breast
With ampler scope to take your country in,
And breathe the cause of virtue? Rise, ye Swedes!
Rise, greatly equal to this hour's importance.
On us the eyes of future ages wait,
And this day's arm strikes forth decisive fate;
This day, that shall for ever sink——or save;
And make each Swede a monarch——or a slave.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The camp.*

Enter CRISTIERN, *Attendants, &c.* TROLLIO *meets him.*

Troll. ALL hail, most mighty of the thrones of Europe!
The morn salutes thee with auspicious brightness,
No vapour frowns prophetic on her brow,
But the clear sun, who travels with thy arms,
Still smiles, attendant on thy growing greatness:
His evening eye shall see thee peaceful lord
Of all the north, of utmost Scandinavia;
Whence thou may'st pour thy conquests o'er the earth,
'Till farther India glows beneath thy empire,
And Lybia knows no regal name but yours.
Crist. Yes, Trollio, I confess the godlike thirst,
Ambition, that would drink a sea of glory.
But what from Dalecarlia?
Troll. Late last night,
I sent a trusty slave to Peterson,
And hourly wait some tidings.
Crist. Think you—Sure
The wretches will not dare such quick perdition.
Troll. I think they will not—Though of old I know them
All born to broils, the very sons of tumult;
Waste is their wealth, and mutiny their birthright,
And this the yearly fever of their blood,
Their holiday of war; a day apart,
Torn out from peace, and sacred to rebellion.
Oft has their battle hung upon the brow
Of yon wild steep, a living cloud of mischiefs,
Pregnant with plagues, and emptied on the heads
Of many a monarch.
Crist. Monarchs they were not,
Pageants of wax, the mouldings of the populace,
Tame paultry idols, sceptred up for shew,
And garnished into royalty—No, Trollio;
Kings should be felt, if they would find obedience;
The beast has sense enough to know his rider;
When the knee trembles, and the hand grows slack,
He casts for liberty: but bends and turns
For him that leaps with boldness on his back,
And spurs him to the bit.

Enter a Gentleman Usher, and several Peasants, who kneel and bow at a distance.

Crist. What slaves are those?
Gent. My gracious liege, your subjects.
Crist. Whence?
Gent. Of Sweden.
From Angermannia, from Helsingia some,
Some from the Gemtian and Nerician provinces.
Crist. Their business.
Gent. They come to speak their griefs.
Crist. Their griefs! their insolence!
Is not the camel mute beneath his burden?
Were they not born to bear? Away!—hold! come,
What would these murmurers?
Gent. Most royal Cristiern,
They say they have but one—one gracious king,
And yet are bowed beneath a host of tyrants,
Task-masters, soldiers, gatherers of subsidies,
All officers of rapine, rape, and murder;
Will-doing potentates, the lords of licence,
Who weigh their sweat and blood, and heavier shame,
Even as a feather puffed away in sport,
The pastime of a gale.
Crist. I'll hear no more.
I know ye, well I know ye, ye base supplicants!
Fear is the only worship of your souls;
And ever where ye hate, ye yield obeisance.
Wretches! shall I go poring on the earth,
Lest my imperial foot should tread on emmets?
Is it for you I must controul my soldiers,
And coop my eagles from their carrion? No—
Are ye not commoners, vile things in nature,
Poor priceless peasants? Slaves can know no property:
Out of my sight! [*Exeunt Peasants.*

Enter ARVIDA *guarded, and a Gentleman.*

Arv. Now, Fate, I'm caught, and what remains is obvious.
Gent. A prisoner, good my lord.
Crist. When taken?
Gent. Now, even here, before your tent;
I marked his careless action, but his eye
Of studied observation——then his port
And base attire, ill suiting——I enquired,
But found he was a stranger.
Crist. Ha! observe.
(Damned affectation) what a sullen scorn
Knits up his brow, and frowns upon our presence.
What—ay—thou wouldst be thought a mystery,
Some greatness in eclipse. Whence art thou, slave?
Silent! Nay, then—Bring forth the torture there—
A smile! Damnation!—How the wretch assumes
The wreck of state, the suffering soul of majesty!
What! have we no pre-eminence, no claim?
Dost thou not know thy life is in our power?
Arv. 'Tis therefore I despise it.
Crist. Matchless insolence!
What art thou? Speak!
Arv. Be sure no friend to thee;
For I'm a foe to tyrants.
Crist. Fiends and fire!——
A whirlwind tear thee, most audacious traitor!
Arv. Do, rage and chafe; thy wrath's beneath me, Cristiern.

How poor thy power, how empty is thy happiness,
When such a wretch, as I appear to be,
Can ride thy temper, harrow up thy form,
And stretch thy soul upon the rack of passion!
Crist. I'll know thee—I will know thee! Bear him hence!
Why, what are kings, if slaves can brave us thus?
Go, Trollio, hold him to the rack—Tear, search him,
Prove him through every poignance, sting him deep!
[*Exit Trollio with Arvida guarded.*

Enter a Messenger, as in haste.

Crist. What wouldst thou, fellow?
Mess. O my sovereign lord,
I am come fast and far, from even till morn,
Five times I've crossed the shade of sleepless night,
Impatient of thy presence.
Crist. Whence?
Mess. From Denmark;
Commended from the consort of thy throne
To speed and privacy.
Crist. Your words would taste of terror—Wretch, speak out,
Nor dare to tremble here—For, didst thou bear
Thy tidings from a thousand leagues around,
Unmoved, I move the whole, the cent'ring nave,
Where turns that mighty circle—Speak thy message.
Mess. A secret malady, my gracious liege,
Some factious vapour, risen from off the skirts
Of southmost Norway, has diffused its bane,
And rages now within the heart of Denmark.
Crist. It must not, cannot, 'tis impossible!
What, my own Danes! Nay, then, the world wants weeding.
I will not bear it—Hell! I'd rather see
This earth a desert, desolate and wild,
And, like the lion, stalk my lonely round,
Famished and roaring for my prey——Call Trollio!
I'll have men studied, deeply read in mischiefs.

Enter a Servant, who kneels and delivers a letter.

Crist. From whom?
Serv. From Peterson.
Crist. To Trollio—Right. [*Reads.*
How's this?—Be gone——
Go all—without there—wait my pleasure.
O curse! How hell has timed its plagues!

Enter TROLLIO.

Crist. Come near, my Trollio.
We've heard ill news from Denmark—that's a trifle——
But here's to blast thy eyes—read——
Troll. Ha! Gustavus!
So near us, and in arms!
Crist. What's to be done? Now, Trollio, now's the time
To subtilize thy soul, sound every depth,
And waken all the wondrous statesman in thee.
For I must tell thee, (spite of pride and royalty,
Of guarding armies, and of circling nations,
That bend beneath my nod) this cursed Gustavus
Invades my sinking spirits, awes my heart,
And sits upon my slumbers—All in vain
Has he been daring, and have I been vigilant;
Spite of himself he still evades the hunter,
And, if there's power in heaven or hell, it guards him.
When was I vanquished, but when he opposed me?
When have I conquered, but when he was absent?
His name's a host, a terror to my legions;
And by my tripled crown, I swear, Gustavus,
I'd rather meet all Europe for my foe,
Than see thy face in arms!
Troll. Be calm, my liege,
And listen to a secret big with consequence,
That gives thee back the second man on earth,
Whose valour could plant fears around thy throne:
Thy prisoner——
Crist. What of him?
Troll. The prince Arvida.
Crist. How!
Troll. The same.
Crist. My royal fugitive?
Troll. Most certain.
Crist. Now, then, 'tis plain who sent him hither.
Troll. Yes.
Pray give me leave, my lord—a thought comes cross me—
If so he must be ours—— [*Pauses.*
Your pardon for a question—Has Arvida
E'er seen your beauteous daughter, your Cristina?
Crist. Never—yes—possibly he might, that day
When the proud pair, Gustavus and Arvida,
Through Copenhagen drew a length of chain,
And graced my chariot wheels—but why the question?
Troll. I'll tell you. While even now he stood before us,
I marked his high demeanour, and my eye
Claimed some remembrance of him, though in clouds
Doubtful and distant; but a nearer view
Renewed the characters effaced by absence.
Yet, lest he might presume upon a friendship
Of ancient league between us, I dissembled,
Nor seemed to know him—On he proudly strode,
As who should say, back, Fortune, know thy distance!
Thus steadily he passed, and mocked his fate.
When, lo! the princess to her morning walk
Came forth attended—quick amazement seized
Arvida at the sight; his steps took root,

A tremor shook him; and his altering cheek
Now sudden flushed, then fled its wonted colour;
While with an eager and intemperate look
He bent his form, and hung upon her beauties.
Crist. Ha! Did our daughter note him?
Troll. No, my lord;
She passed regardless—Strait his pride fell from him,
And at her name he started.
Then heaved a sigh, and cast a look to Heaven,
Of such a mute, yet eloquent emotion,
As seemed to say, Now, Fate, thou hast prevailed,
And found one way to triumph o'er Arvida!
Crist. But whither would this lead?
Troll. List, list, my lord!
While thus his soul's unseated, shook by passion,
Could we engage him to betray Gustavus——
Crist. O empty hope! Impossible, my Trollio.
Do I not know him, and the cursed Gustavus?
Both fixed in resolution deep as hell,
And proud as high Olympus!
Troll. Ah, my liege,
No mortal footing treads so firm in virtue,
As always to abide the slippery path,
Nor deviate with the bias. Some have few,
But each man has his failing, some defect
Wherein to slide temptation—Leave him to me.
Crist. I know thou hast a serpentizing genius,
Canst wind the subtlest mazes of the soul,
And trace her wanderings to the source of action.
If thou canst bend this proud one to our purpose,
And make the lion crouch, 'tis well—if not,
Away at once, and sweep him from remembrance.
Troll. Then I must promise deep.
Crist. Ay, any thing; out-bid ambition.
Troll. Love?
Crist. Ha! Yes—our daughter too—if she can bribe him;
But then to win him to betray his friend?
Troll. O doubt it not, my lord—for if he loves,
As sure he greatly does, I have a stratagem
That holds the certainty of fate within it.
Love is a passion whose effects are various;
It ever brings some change upon the soul,
Some virtue, or some vice, till then unknown;
Degrades the hero, and makes cowards valiant.
Crist. True, when it pours upon a youthful temper,
Open and apt to take the torrent in;
It owns no limits, no restraint it knows,
But sweeps all down, though Heaven and hell oppose;
Even virtue rears in vain her sacred mound,
Razed in its rage, or in its swellings drowned.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Opens, and discovers ARVIDA *in chains; Guards preparing instruments of death and torture. He advances in confusion.*

Arv. Off, off, vain cumbrance, ye conflicting thoughts!
Leave me to Heaven. O peace!—It will not be—
Just when I rose above mortality,
To pour her wondrous weight of charms upon me!
At such a time, it was, it was too much!
To pluck the soaring pinion of my soul,
While, eagle-eyed, she held her flight to Heaven,
O'er pain and death triumphant! Help, ye saints,
Angelic ministers descend, descend,
And lift me to myself! hold, bind my heart
Firm and unshaken in the approaching ruin,
The wreck of earth-born frailty! and, O Heaven,
For every pang these tortured limbs shall feel,
Descend, in ten-fold blessings, on Gustavus!
Yes, bless him, bless him! Crown his hours with joy,
His head with glory, and his arms with conquest;
Set his firm foot upon the neck of tyrants,
And be his name the balm of every lip
That breathes through Sweden! Worthiest to be styled
Their friend, their chief, their father, and their king!

Enter TROLLIO.

Troll. Unbind your prisoner,
Arv. How?
Troll. You have your liberty,
And may depart unquestioned.
Arv. Do not mock me.
It is not to be thought, while power remains,
That Cristiern wants a reason to be cruel.
But let him know I would not be obliged.
He, who accepts the favours of a tyrant,
Shares in his guilt; they leave a stain behind them.
Troll. You wrong the native temper of his soul;
Cruel of force, but never of election:
Prudence compelled him to a shew of tyranny:
Howe'er, those politics are now no more,
And mercy, in her turn, shall shine on Sweden.
Arv. Indeed! It were a strange, a blessed reverse,
Devoutly to be wished! but then the cause,
The cause, my lord, must surely be uncommon.
May I presume?
Perhaps a secret.
Troll. No——or if it were,
The boldness of thy spirit claims respect,
And should be answered. Know, the only man
In whom our monarch ever knew repulse,
Is now our friend; that terror of the field,
The invincible Gustavus.
Arv. Ha! Friend to Cristiern? Guard thyself, my heart! [*Aside.*
Nor seem to take alarm——Why, good my lord,
What terror is there in a wretch proscribed,
Naked of means, and distant as Gustavus?
Troll. There you mistake——Nor knew we till this hour

The danger was so near——From yonder hill
He sends proposals, backed with all the powers
Of Dalecarlia, those licentious resolutes,
Who, having nought to hazard in the wreck,
Are ever foremost to foment a storm.
Arv. I were too bold to question on the terms.
Troll. No—trust me, valiant man, whoe'er thou art,
I would do much to win a worth like thine,
By any act of service, or of confidence.
The terms Gustavus claims, indeed, are haughty;
The freedom of his mother and his sister,
His forfeit province, Gothland, and the isles,
Submitted to his sceptre——But the league,
The bond of amity, and lasting friendship,
Is, that he claims Cristina for his bride.
You start, and seem surprised.
Arv. A sudden pain
Just struck athwart my breast——But say, my lord,
I thought you named Cristina.
Troll. Yes.
Arv. O torture! [*Aside.*
What of her, my good lord?
Troll. I said, Gustavus claimed her for his bride.
Arv. His bride! his wife!
You did not mean his wife! Do fiends feel thus? [*Aside.*
Down, heart, nor tell thy anguish! Pray excuse me;
Did you not say, the princess was his wife?
Whose wife, my lord?
Troll. I did not say what was, but what must be.
Arv. Touching Gustavus, was it not?
Troll. The same.
Arv. His bride!
Troll. I say his bride, his wife; his loved Cristina!
Cristina, fancied in the very prime
And youthful smile of nature; formed for joys
Unknown to mortals. You seem indisposed.
Arv. The crime of constitution—Oh Gustavus! [*Aside.*
This is too much!—And think you then, my lord—
What, will the royal Cristiern e'er consent
To match his daughter with his deadliest foe?
Troll. What should he do? War else must be eternal.
Besides, some rumours from his Danish realms
Make peace essential here.
Arv. Yes, peace has sweets,
That Hybla never knew; it sleeps on down,
Culled gently from beneath the cherub's wing;
No bed for mortals——man is warfare——all
A hurricane within; yet friendship stoops,
And gilds the gloom with falsehood, smiles, and varnish!
For still the storm grows high, and then no shore!
No rock to split on! 'Twere a kind perdition
To sink ten thousand fathom at a plunge,
And fasten on oblivion——there we hold,
And all is—— [*Faints.*
Troll. Help, bear him up. O potency of love,
That plucks this noble fabric from his base!
Bend, bend him forward——He revives——How fare you?
Arv. I know not—yet a dagger were most friendly.
Return me, Trollio, O return me back
To death, to racks! Undone, undone Arvida!
Troll. Is't possible, my lord! the prince Arvida!
My friend! [*Embraces him.*
Arv. Confusion to the name! [*Turns.*
Troll. Why this, good Heaven? And wherefore thus disguised?
Arv. Yes, that accomplished traitor, that Gustavus,
While he sat planning private scenes of happiness,
O well dissembled! He, he sent me hither;
My friendly, unsuspecting heart a sacrifice,
To make death sure, and rid him of a rival.
Troll. A rival! Do you then love Cristiern's daughter?
Arv. Name her not, Trollio; since she can't be mine:
Gustavus! how, ah! how hast thou deceived me!
Who could have looked for falsehood from thy brow,
Whose heavenly arch was as the throne of virtue!
Thy eye appeared a sun to cheer the world,
Thy bosom truth's fair palace, and thy arms,
Benevolent, the harbour for mankind.
Troll. What's to be done? Believe me, valiant prince,
I know not which most sways me to thy interests,
My love to thee, or hatred to Gustavus.
Arv. Would you then save me? Think, contrive it quickly!
Lend me your troops—by all the powers of vengeance,
Myself will face this terror of the north,
This son of fame—this—O Gustavus—What?
Where had I wandered?—Stab my bleeding country!
Save, shield me from that thought.
Troll. Retire, my lord;
For see, the princess comes.
Arv. Where, Trollio, where?
Ha! Yes, she comes indeed! her beauties drive
Time, place, and truth, and circumstance before them!
Perdition pleases there—pull—tear me from her!
Yet must I gaze—but one—but one look more,
And I were lost for ever. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter CRISTINA, MARIANA, *and attendants.*

Cristina. Forbid it, shame! Forbid it, virgin modesty!
No, no, my friend, Gustavus ne'er shall know it.
O I am over-paid with conscious pleasure;
The sense but to have saved that wond'rous man,

Is still a smiling cherub in my breast,
And whispers peace within.
Mar. 'Tis strange a man, of his high note and consequence,
Should so evade the busy search of thousands,
That six long months have shut him from enquiry,
And not an eye can trace him to his covert.
Cristina. Once 'twas not so; each infant lisped, Gustavus!
It was the favourite name of every language.
His slightest motions filled the world with tidings;
Waked he, or slept, fame watched the important hour,
And nations told it round.
Mar. I've heard, my princess,
What time Gustavus lay detained in Denmark,
Your royal father sought the hero's friendship,
And offered ample terms of peace and amity.
Cristina. He did; he offered that, my Mariana,
For which contending monarchs sued in vain:
He offered me, his darling, his Cristina;
But I was slighted, slighted by a captive,
Though kingdoms swelled my dower.
Mar. Amazement fix me!
Rejected by Gustavus!
Cristina. Yes, Mariana; but rejected nobly.
Not worlds could win him to betray his country!
Had he consented, I had then despised him.
What's all the gaudy glitter of a crown?
What, but the glaring meteor of ambition,
That leads a wretch benighted in his errors,
Points to the gulf, and shines upon destruction.
Mar. You wrong your charms, whose power might reconcile
Things opposite in nature—Had he seen you!—
Cristina. He has, my Mariana, he has seen me.
I'll tell thee—yet while inexpert of years,
I heard of bloody spoils, the waste of war,
And dire conflicting man; Gustavus' name
Superior rose, still dreadful in the tale:
Then first he seized my infancy of soul,
As somewhat fabled of gigantic fierceness,
Too huge for any form; he scared my sleep,
And filled my young idea. Not the boast
Of all his virtues, graces only known
To him, and heavenly natures! could erase
The strong impression; 'till that wondrous day
In which he met my eyes. But O, O Heaven!
O love, and all ye cordial powers of passion!
What then was my amazement! he was chained,
Was chained, my Mariana! Like the robes
Of coronation, worn by youthful kings,
He drew his shackles. The Herculean nerve
Braced his young arm; and, softened in his cheek,
Lived more than woman's sweetness! Then his eye!
His mein! his native dignity! He looked,
As though he led captivity in chains,
And all were slaves around.
Mar. Did he observe you?
Cristina. He did: for as I trembled, looked, and sighed,
His eyes met mine; he fixed their glories on me.
Confusion thrilled me then, and secret joy,
Fast throbbing, stole its treasures from my heart,
And, mantling upward, turned my face to crimson.
I wished—but did not dare to look—he gazed;
When sudden, as by force, he turned away,
And would no more behold me.

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Ah, bright imperial maid! my royal mistress!
Cristina. What wouldst thou say? Thy looks speak terror to me.
Laer. O you are ruined, sacrificed, undone!
I heard it all; your cruel, cruel father
Has sold you, given you up a spoil to treason,
The purchase of the noblest blood on earth—Gustavus!
Cristina. Ah! What of him? Where, where is he?
Laer. In Dalecarlia, on some great design,
Doomed in an hour to fall by faithless hands:
His friend, the brave, the false, deceived Arvida,
Even now prepares to lead a band of ruffians
Beneath the winding covert of the hill,
And seize Gustavus, obvious to the snares
Of friendship's fair dissemblance. And your father
Has vowed your beauties to Arvida's arms,
The purchase of his falsehood.
Cristina. Shield me, Heaven!
First duty, break thy filial bands in sunder,
And blot the name of parent from the world!
Is there no lett, no means of quick prevention?
Laer. Behold my life still chained to thy direction;
My will shall have a wing for every word,
That breathes thy mandate.
Cristina. Will you, good Laertes?
Alas, I fear to overtask thy friendship;
Say, will you save me then—O go, haste, fly!
Acquaint Gustavus—if, if he must fall,
Let hosts that hem this single lion in,
Let nations hunt him down—let him fall nobly.
Laer. I go, my princess—Heaven direct me to him! [*Exit.*
Cristina. I would pray too, to save me from pollution;
Detested stain, the touch of the betrayer!
But mighty love the partial prayer arrests,
And leaves me only anxious for Gustavus.
For him cold fears my fainting bosom chill,
His cares distract me, and his dangers kill;
Ye powers! if deaf to all the vows I make,
Yet shield Gustavus, for Gustavus' sake;
Protect his virtues from a faithless foe,
And save your only image, left below!

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Mountains of Dalecarlia.*

Enter Gustavus, *as a peasant, Dalecarlians following.*

Gust. Ye men of Sweden, wherefore are ye come?
See ye not yonder, how the locusts swarm,
To drink the fountains of your honour up,
And leave your hills a desert—Wretched men!
Why came ye forth! Is this a time for sport?
Or are ye met with song and jovial feast,
To welcome your new guests, your Danish visitants?
To stretch your supple necks beneath their feet,
And fawning lick the dust?—Go, go, my countrymen,
Each to your several mansions; trim them out;
Cull all the tedious earnings of your toil
To purchase bondage—Bid your blooming daughters,
And your chaste wives, to spread their beds with softness;
Then go ye forth, and with your proper hands
Conduct your masters in; conduct the sons
Of lust and violation—O Swedes, Swedes!
Heavens! are ye men, and will ye suffer this?

Enter Arnoldus, *who talks apart with* Gustavus.

1st Dale. How my blood boils!
2d Dale. Who is this honest spokesman?
3d Dale. What, know ye not Rodolphus of the mines?
A better labourer ne'er struck steel to stone.
Gust. There was a time, my friends! a glorious time!
When, had a single man of your forefathers
Upon the frontier met a host in arms,
His courage scarce had turned; himself had stood,
Alone had stood the bulwark of his country.
Your sires were known but by their manly fronts;
On their black brows, enthroned, sat Liberty,
The awe of honour, and contempt of death.
1st Dale. We are not bastards.
2d Dale. No.
3d Dale. We're Dalecarlians.
Gust. Come, come ye on then: Here I take my stand!
Here on the brink, the very verge of liberty;
Although contention rise upon the clouds,
Mix heaven with earth, and roll the ruin onward;
Here will I fix, and breast me to the shock,
Till I, or Denmark, fall.
Siv. And who art thou,
That thus wouldst swallow all the glory up
That should redeem the times? Behold this breast!
The sword has tilled it; and the stripes of slaves
Shall ne'er trace honour here; shall never blot
The fair inscription——Never shall the cords
Of Danish insolence bind down these arms,
That bore my royal master from the field.
Gust. Ha! Say you, brother? Were you there——O grief!
Where liberty and Stenon fell together?
Siv. Yes, I was there——A bloody field it was,
Where Conquest gasped, and wanted breath to tell,
Its o'er-toiled triumph. There, our bleeding king,
There Stenon on this bosom made his bed,
And rolling back his dying eyes upon me—
'Soldier,' he cried, 'if e'er it be thy lot
'To see my valiant cousin, great Gustavus,
'Tell him——for once, that I have fought like him,
'And would like him have——
Conquered—he should have said—but there, O there,
Death stopt him short!
Gust. Come to my arms, and let me hide thy tears,
For I have caught their softness——O Danes, Danes!
You shall weep blood for this. Shall they not, brother?
Yes, we will deal our might with thrifty vengeance,
A life for every blow! and, when we fall,
There shall be weight in it; like the tottering towers,
That draw contiguous ruin.
Siv. Brave, brave man!
My soul admires thee——By my father's spirit,
I would not barter such a death as this
For immortality! Nor we alone——
Here be the trusty gleanings of that field
Where last we fought for freedom; here's rich poverty,
Though wrapped in rags; my fifty brave companions—
Who, through the force of fifteen thousand foes,
Bore off their king, and saved his great remains.
Gust. Give me your hands, those valiant hands—Why, captain,
We could but die alone; with these we'll conquer.
My fellow-labourers, too——What say ye, friends?
Shall we not strike for it?
All. Death! Victory or death!
No bonds, no bonds!
Arn. Spoke like yourselves—Ye men of Dalecarlia,
Brave men and bold! whom every future age,
Tongues, nations, languages, and rolls of fame,
Shall mark for wondrous deeds, achievements won
From honour's dangerous summit, warriors all!

Say, might ye choose a chief, for high exploits,
From the first annal, to the latest praise
That breathes a hero's name—Speak, name the man
Who then should meet your wish?
Siv. Forbear the theme.
Why wouldst thou seek to sink us with the weight
Of grievous recollection? O Gustavus!
Could the dead wake, thou wert that man of men,
First of the foremost!
Gust. Didst thou know Gustavus?
Siv. Know him! O Heaven! what else, who else, was worth
The knowledge of a soldier? That great day,
When Cristiern, in his third attempt on Sweden,
Had summed his powers, and weighed the scale of fight;
On the bold brink, the very push of conquest,
Gustavus rushed, and bore the battle down,
In his full sway of prowess, like leviathan
That scoops his foaming progress on the main,
And drives the shoals along. Forward I sprung,
All emulous, and labouring to attend him;
Fear fled before, behind him Rout grew loud,
And distant Wonder gazed———At length he turned,
And having eyed me with a wondrous look
Of sweetness mixed with glory—grace inestimable!
He plucked this bracelet from his conquering arm,
And bound it here—My wrist seemed treble nerved;
My heart spoke to him; and I did such deeds
As best might thank him—But from that blessed day
I never saw him more——Yet, still, to this
I bow, as to the relicks of my saint:
Each morn I drop a tear on every bead,
Count all the glories of Gustavus o'er,
And think I still behold him.
Gust. Rightly thought;
For so thou dost, my soldier.
Give me my arms—Off, off ye dark disguises!
For I will be myself. Behold your general,
Gustavus! Come once more to lead ye on
To laurelled victory, to fame, to freedom!
1st Dale. Is it?
2d Dale. Yes.
3d Dale. No.
4th Dale. 'Tis he!
5th Dale. 'Tis he!
6th Dale. 'Tis he! [*A shout.*
Siv. Strike me, ye powers!——It is illusion all! It cannot.
Gust. What! no nearer?
Siv. It is! It is! [*Falls and embraces his knees.*
Gust. O speechless eloquence!
Rise to my arms, my friend.
Siv. Friend! said you, friend?
O my heart's lord! My conqueror! my——
Gust. Approach, my fellow soldiers! your Gustavus
Claims no precedence here: Friendship like mine
Throws all respect behind it—'tis enough
I read your joys, your transports in your eyes;
And would, O, would I had a life to spend,
For every soldier here! whose every life's
Far dearer than my own; dearer than aught,
Except your liberty, except your honour.
Perish Gustavus, ere this sacred sun,
That lights the rest of Sweden to their shame,
Should blush upon your chains! why said I chains!
To souls like yours, I should have talked of triumphs,
Empire, and fame, and hazards imminent,
Occasions wished for, glory—haste, brave men!
Collect your friends to join us on the instant;
Summon our brethren to their share of conquest,
And let loud Echo, from her circling hills,
Sound Freedom, 'till the undulation shake
The bound of utmost Sweden!
[*Exeunt Dalecarlians, crying Gusta* &c.!
Gustavus! Liberty!

Enter ANDERSON.

And. There was a glorious sound!
Gust. Yes, Anderson,
The long-wished hour is come—the storm is up,
And wrecks will follow—Where they are to light
Let Heaven determine—Well, my noble friend,
Has Peterson set out?
And. He has, this instant;
And bears your packet to the tyrant's camp.
Gust. What think you of his zeal?
And. In truth, my lord,
It wears a gallant show.
Gust. 'Tis specious all,
Flash without fire, the lightning of a cloud
That carries darkness in the rear—For Peterson,
To spread my letters through the camp of Cristiern,
And seek for succours in the jaws of death,
It showed too bold, too much the flaming patriot.
Beside, I know him for the friend of Trollio.
And. Why would you then employ him?
Gust. There's the mystery.
'Tis not his faith, but treachery I trust to.
My letters are directed to the chiefs
Of those inglorious mercenary Swedes,
Whom Cristiern had seduced to join his host,
And turn the sword of conquest on their country:
To each of those I have addressed in terms
Of special correspondence, meant to rouse
The jealousy of Cristiern; as I think
My packet can't escape him. What ensues?
The tyrant hence concludes himself betrayed,
Sifts all his legions, thins the ranks of fight,
And leaves them open to our bold invasion.
But grant that Peterson deceive my aim,
And hold the rank of virtue; then the Swedes
May waken to the glorious call of honour.

So—every way it saves us from the guilt
Of Swedes encountering Swedes, and spares the blood
Of brethren, though revolted.
And. On my soul,
This is a stratagem that saps the miner,
Makes treason turn a traitor to itself,
And mock its own designs.
Gust. O noble friend, fast winds the great machine,
That strikes the fate of Sweden—Go, my Anderson,
Assemble all thy brave adherents round thee;
With warlike inspiration warm their souls,
And haste to join me here.
And. I will, my lord. [*Exit.*

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Thy presence nobly speaks the man I wish. Gustavus!
Gust. Yes; thou hast a hostile garb—
Ha! say—Art thou Laertes? If I err not,
There is a friendly semblance in that face,
Which answers to a fond impression here,
And tells me I'm thy debtor——my deliverer!
Laer. No, valiant prince, you over-rate my service:
There is a worthier object of your gratitude
Whom yet you know not—Oh, I have to tell—
But then, to gain your credit, must unfold,
What haply should be secret——Be it so;
You are all honour.
Gust. Let me to thy mind!
For thou hast waked my soul into a thought
That holds me all attention.
Laer. Mightiest man!
To me alone you held yourself obliged
For life and liberty——Had it been so,
I were most blessed, with retribution just
To pay thee for my own—For on the day,
When by your arm the mighty Thraces fell,
Fate threw me to your sword—You spared my youth,
And, in the very whirl and rage of fight,
Your eye was taught compassion—from that hour
I vowed my life the slave of your remembrance;
And often, as Cristina, heavenly maid!
The mistress of my service, questioned me
Of wars and venturous deeds, my tidings came
Still freighted with thy name, until the day
In which yourself appeared, to make praise speechless.
Cristina saw you then, and on your fate
Dropped a kind tear; and when your noble scorn
Of proffered terms provoked her father's rage
To take the deadly forfeit; she, she only,
Whose virtues watched the precious hour of mercy,
All trembling, sent my secret hand to save you;
Where, through a pass unknown to all your keepers,
I led you forth, and gave you to your liberty.
Gust. O I am sunk, o'erwhelmed with wondrous goodness!
But were I rich and free as opening mines,
That team their golden wealth upon the world,
Still I were poor, unequal to her bounty.
Nor can I longer doubt whose generous arm,
In my Arvida, in my friend's deliverance,
Gave double life, and freedom to Gustavus.
Laer. A fatal present! Ah, you know him not;
Arvida is misled, undone by passion;
False to your friendship, to your trust unfaithful.
Gust. Ha! hold!
Laer. I must unfold it.
Gust. Yet forbear:
This way—I hear some footing—pray you soft—
If thou hast aught to urge against Arvida,
The man of virtue, tell it not the wind;
Lest slander catch the sound, and guilt should triumph. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

ARVIDA *entering speaks to a soldier.*

Arv. He's here——bear back your orders to your fellows,
That not a man, on peril of his life,
Advance in sight 'till called.
Sold. My lord, I will.
Arv. Have I not vowed it, faithless as he is,
Have I not vowed his fall! Yet, good Heaven!
Why start these sudden tears? On, on I must,
For I am half way down the dizzy steep,
Where my brain turns—A draught of Lethe now—
O that the world would sleep—to wake no more!
Or that the name of friendship bore no charm
To make my nerve unsteady, and this steel
Fly backward from its task! It shall be done.
Empire! Cristina! though the affrighted sun
Start back with horror of the direful stroke,
It shall be done. Calm, calm the bell within,
Thy looks may else turn traitors—Ha, he comes!
How steadily he looks, as Heaven's own book,
The leaf of truth, were opened on his aspect.
Up, up, dark minister——his fate calls out [*Puts up the dagger.*
To nobler execution; for he comes
In opposition, singly, man to man,
As though he braved my wish.

Enter GUSTAVUS.

[*They look for some time on each other—Arvida lays his hand on his sword, and withdraws it by turns—then advances irresolutely.*
Gust. Is it then so?
Arv. Defend thyself!
Gust. No! Strike!
I would unfold my bosom to thy sword,
But that I know the wound you give this breast
Would doubly pierce thy own.
Arv. I know thee not—
It is the time's eclipse, and what should be

In nature, now is nameless.
Gust. Ah, my brother!
Arv. What wouldst thou?
Gust. Is it thus we two should meet?
Arv. Art thou not false? Deep else, O deep indeed
Were my damnation!
Gust. Dear, unhappy man!
My heart bleeds for thee. False I had surely been,
Had I, like thee, been tempted.
Arv. Ha! speak, speak!
Didst thou not send to treat with Cristiern?
Gust. Never.
I know thy error, but I know the arts,
The frauds, the wiles that practised on thy virtue;
Firm how you stood, and towered above mortality;
Till, in the fond unguarded hour of love,
The wily undermining Trollio came,
And won thee from thyself—a moment won thee;
For still thou art Arvida, still the man
On whom thy country calls for thy deliverance.
Already are her bravest sons in arms;
Hark how they shout, impatient for our presence,
To lead them on to a new life of liberty,
To fame, to conquest—Ha! Heaven guard my brother!
Thy cheek turns pale, thy eye is wild upon me!
Wilt thou not answer me?
Arv. Gustavus!
Gust. Speak.
Arv. Have I not dreamed?
Gust. No other I esteem it.
Where lives the man, whose reason slumbers not?
Still pure, still blameless, if at wonted dawn
Again he wakes to virtue.
Arv. O, my dawn
Must soon be dark. Confusion dissipates,
To leave me worse confounded.
Gust. Think no more on't.
Come to my arms, thou dearest of mankind!
Arv. Stand off! Pollution dwells within my touch,
And horrors hang around me—Cruel man!
O, thou hast doubly damned me with this goodness!
For resolution held the deed as done,
That now must sink me—Hark! I am summoned hence,
My audit opens! Poise me! for I stand
Upon a spire, against whose sightless base
Hell breaks his wave beneath. Down, down, I dare not,
And up I cannot look, for justice fronts me.——
Thou shalt have vengeance! though my purpling blood
Were nectar for Heaven's bowl, as warm and rich,
As now 'tis base, it thus should pour for pardon!
[*Gustavus catches his arm, and in the struggle the dagger falls.*
Gust. Ha! hold, Arvida!—No, I will not lose thee——
Forbid it heaven! thou shalt not rob me so.
No, I will struggle with thee to the last,
And save thee from thyself. Oh, answer me!
Wilt thou forsake me? Answer me, my brother,
My best Arvida!
Arv. I would speak to thee——
But let it be by silence——Oh, Gustavus!
Gust. Say but you'll live.
Arv. Oh!
Gust. For my sake.
Arv. Yes, take me;
Expose me, cage me, brand me for the tool
Of crafty villains, for the veriest slave,
On whom the bend of each contemptuous brow
Shall look with loathing! Ah, my turpitude
Shall be the vile comparative for knaves
To boast and whiten by!
Gust. Not so, not so.
Who knows no fault, my friend, knows no perfection.
The rectitude, that Heaven appoints to man,
Leads on through error; and the kindly sense
Of having strayed, endears the road to bliss;
It makes Heaven's way more pleasing. O, my brother!
'Tis hence a thousand cordial charities
Derive their growth, their vigour, and their sweetness.
This short lapse
Shall to thy future foot give cautious treading,
Erect, and firm, in virtue.
Arv. Give me leave. [*Offers to pass.*
Gust. You shall not pass.
Arv. I must.
Gust. Whither?
Arv. I know not——O Gustavus!
Gust. Speak.
Arv. You can't forgive me!
Gust. Not forgive thee!
Arv. No.
Look there! [*Points to the dagger.*
And yet, when I resolved to kill thee,
I could have died—indeed I could—for thee,
I could have died, Gustavus!
Gust. O! I know it.
A generous mind, though swayed awhile by passion,
Is like the steely vigour of the bow,
Still holds its native rectitude, and bends
But to recoil more forceful! Come, forget it.

Enter a Dalecarlian.

Dale. My lord, as now I passed the mountain's brow,
I spied some men, whose arms, and strange attire,
Give cause for circumspection.
Gust. Danes, perhaps;
Haste, intercept their passage to the camp.
[*Exit Dale.*

Arn. Those are the Danes that witness to my shame!
Gust. Perish the opprobrious term! Not so, Arvida;
Myself will be the guardian of thy fame;
Trust me, I will.—Our friends approach.—O clear,
While I attend them, clear that cloud, my brother,
That sits upon the morning of thy youth!
It hangs too near the heart of thy Gustavus.
[*Exit.*
Arv. Of thy Gustavus! O wretch, wretch, cursed wretch!
What is this time and place, and toys of circumstance,
That wind our actions so, as Heaven's own hand
What's done may not unravel?—Pardon may!—
There's the Lethean sweet, the snow of Heaven,
New blanching o'er the negro front of guilt,
That, to the eye of mercy, all appears
Fair as the unwritten page—yet, self-convict,
Though Heaven's free power should pardon, where's my peace?
Thus, thus to be driven out from my own breast!
To have no shed, no sheltering nook at home,
To take reflection in! How looks the wretch
Whose heart cries 'Villain' to itself? I'll not
Endure its battery—Something must be done,
Of high import, e'er night, that I may sleep,
Or wake for ever!

Enter GUSTAVUS, *followed by the Dalecarlians,* ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, *Officers, &c.*

1st Dale. Let us all see him!
2d Dale. Yes, and hear him too.
3d Dale. Let us be sure 'tis he himself.
4th Dale. Our general.
5th Dale. And we will fight while weapons can be found.
6th Dale. Or hands to wield them.
7th Dale. Get on the bank, Gustavus.
And. Do, my lord.
Gust. My countrymen!——
1st Dale. Ho! hear him!
2d Dale. Peace!
3d Dale. Peace!
4th Dale. Peace!
Gust. Amazement, I perceive, hath filled your hearts,
And joy, for that your lost Gustavus, 'scaped,
Through wounds, imprisonments, and chains, and deaths,
Thus sudden, thus unlooked for, stands before ye!
As one escaped from cruel hands I come,
From hearts that ne'er knew pity; dark and vengeful!
Who quaff the tears of orphans, bathe in blood,
And know no music but the groans of Sweden!
Yet, not for that my sister's early innocence,
And mother's age, now grind beneath captivity;
Nor that one bloody, one remorseless hour,
Swept my great sire, and kindred, from my side;
For them Gustavus weeps not; though my eyes
Were far less dear, for them I will not weep.—
But, O great parent, when I think on thee!
Thy numberless, thy nameless, shameful infamies,
My widowed country! Sweden! when I think
Upon thy desolation, spite of rage——
And vengeance, that would choak them——tears will flow!
And. O, they are villains, every Dane of them,
Practised to stab and smile—to stab the babe
That smiles upon them!
Arn. What accursed hours
Roll o'er those wretches, who, to fiends like these,
In their dear liberty, have bartered more
Than worlds will rate for?
Gust. O Liberty! Heaven's choice prerogative!
True bond of law, thou social soul of property,
Thou breath of reason, life of life itself!
For thee the valiant bleed! O sacred Liberty!
Winged from the summer's snare, from flattering ruin,
Like the bold stork you seek the wintery shore,
Leave courts, and pomps, and palaces, to slaves,
Cleave to the cold, and rest upon the storm!
Upborn by thee, my soul disdained the terms
Of empire—offered at the hands of tyrants!
With thee, I sought this favourite soil; with thee,
These favourite sons I sought—thy sons, O Liberty!
For, even amid the wilds of life, you lead them,
Lift their low rafted cottage to the clouds,
Smile o'er their heaths, and from their mountain tops
Beam glory to the nations!
All. Liberty! Liberty!
Gust. Are ye not marked, ye men of Dalecarlia,
Are ye not marked, by all the circling world,
As the great stake, the last effort for liberty?
Say, is it not your wealth, the thirst, the food,
The scope, and bright ambition, of your souls?
Why else have you, and your renowned forefathers,
From the proud summit of their glittering thrones
Cast down the mightiest of your lawful kings,
That dared the bold infringement? What, but liberty,
Through the famed course of thirteen hundred years,
Aloof hath held invasion from your hills,
And sanctified their shade?—And will ye, will ye
Shrink from the hopes of the expecting world,
Bid your high honours stoop to foreign insult,
And, in one hour, give up to infamy
The harvest of a thousand years of glory?
1st Dale. No!
2d Dale. Never, never!
3d Dale. Perish all first!
4th Dale. Die all!
Gust. Yes, die by piecemeal!
Leave not a limb o'er which a Dane may triumph!
Now, from my soul, I joy, I joy, my friends,

To see ye feared; to see that even your foes
Do justice to your valour!—There they be,
The power of kingdoms, summed in yonder host,
Yet kept aloof, yet trembling to assail ye!
And, O! when I look round, and see you here,
Of number short, but prevalent in virtue,
My heart swells high, and burns for the encounter:
True courage but from opposition grows;
And what are fifty, what a thousand slaves,
Matched to the sinew of a single arm,
That strikes for liberty?—That strikes to save
His fields from fire, his infants from the sword,
His couch from lust, his daughters from pollution,
And his large honours from eternal infamy?
What, doubt we then? Shall we, shall we stand here,
Till motives, that might warm an ague's frost,
And nerve the coward's arm, shall poorly serve
To wake us to resistance? Let us on!
O, yes, I read your lovely fierce impatience;
You shall not be withheld; we will rush on them.
This is, indeed, to triumph, where we hold
Three kingdoms in our toil! Is it not glorious,
Thus to appal the bold, meet force with fury,
And push yon torrent back, till every wave
Flee to its fountain?

3d Dale. On! lead us on, Gustavus! one word more
Is but delay of conquest.

Gust. Take your wish.
He, who wants arms, may grapple with the foe,
And so be furnished. You, most noble Anderson,
Divide our powers, and, with the famed Olaus,
Take the left rout.—You, Eric, great in arms!
With the renowned Nederbi, hold the right,
And skirt the forest down; then wheel at once,
Confessed to view, and close upon the vale:
Myself, and my most valiant cousin here,
The invincible Arvida, gallant Sivard,
Arnoldus, and these hundred hardy veterans,
Will pour directly on, and lead the onset.
Joy, joy, I see confessed from every eye!
Your limbs tread vigorous, and your breasts beat high!
Thin though our ranks, though scanty be our bands,
Bold are our hearts, and nervous are our hands!
With us, truth, justice, fame, and freedom close,
Each, singly, equal to an host of foes.
I feel, I feel them fill me out for fight,
They lift my limbs as feathered Hermes light!
Or, like the bird of glory, towering high,
Thunder within his grasp, and lightning in his eye! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Before the camp.*

Enter CRISTIERN, TROLLIO, *and Attendants.*

Crist. YOUR observation's just; I see it, Trollio:
Men are machines, with all their boasted freedom;
Their movements turn upon some favourite passion;
Let art but find the latent foible out,
We touch the spring, and wind them at our pleasure.

Troll. Let Heaven spy out for virtue, and then starve it!
But vice and frailty are the statesman's quarry,
The objects of our search, and of our science;
Marked by our smiles, and cherished by our bounty.
'Tis hence, you lord it o'er your servile senates;
How low the slaves will stoop to gorge their lusts,
When aptly baited! even the tongues of patriots
(Those sons of clamour) oft relax the nerve
Within the warmth of favour.

Crist. How else should kings subsist? For what is power,
But the nice conduct of another's weakness?
That thing called virtue is the bane of government,
A libel on the state, that asks suppression;
It has a hateful and unbending quality;
It serves no end, still restive to the rein,
And to the spur unspeedy: They who boast it
Are traitors, rivals of their king, my Trollio,
And, wanting other subjects, greatly dare
To lord it o'er themselves. Such is Gustavus,
If yet he be——
And such Arvida was; though now, I trust,
He is too far advanced in our designs
To think of a retreat.

Troll. Impossible!
Already has he leaped the guilty mound,
That might appal his virtue; for the world
He dare not now look back; where shame pursues,
And cuts off all retreat.

Enter Gentleman Usher and PETERSON, *who kneels.*

Gent. My liege, lord Peterson.

Crist. Rise to our trust, most worthy Peterson,
Rise to our friendship: By my head I swear,
Bar but our Trollio here, there's not a Swede,
Who holds thy valued level in our heart!
For thou'rt unshaken, though thy nation swerve;
Faithful among the faithless.

Peter. What I am
Let this inform your majesty. [*Gives a packet.*

Troll. A packet?
Whence had you that, my friend!

Peter. Even from the hands
Of the once great Gustavus.

Crist. Then you have seen him? Tell me, tell me, Peterson;
What said he? Eh! How looked the mighty rebel?
His means, his scope, the pride of his presumption—
Give me the whole!
Peter. Last night, my gracious lord,
While yet I held your messenger in conference,
Arrived, who brought a letter from Gustavus,
Wherein, digesting many flagrant terms
Of mutinous import against the state
Of your high dignity, by morning light
He prayed me to attend him; boasting much
Of plenteous hopes, and means of boldest enterprize.
Of this I gave you notice; and ere dawn
Set out for fresh intelligence—I came;
I saw him shrunk, that glory of the north,
Soiled with the vileness of a slave's attire;
Where in the depth and darkness of the mines,
For six long months he hath not seen the sun.
Colleagued with circling horrors, hourly toil
Hath been his watch, and penury his earning;
But, like the lion, newly broke from bonds,
The mingling passions from his eyes dart glory;
Pride lifts his stature, and his opening front
Still looks dominion.
Crist. Who were his adherents?
Peter. The traitor Anderson, and a few friends,
To whom, ere I set out, he stood revealed.
And when I seemed to question on his powers
Of rivalship, the props whereon he meant
To lift contention to the princely front
Of such high opposition; he replied,
His powers were near your person.
Crist. How! what's here?
[*Looks on the pacquet.*
To Laurens, Aland, Haquin, and Roderic!
Confusion! Treason's in our camp! Who's there?
Gent. My liege!
Crist. Bear this to Norbi——Bid him seize
[*Gives a signet.*
The Swedish captains.
Troll. Might I but presume——
Crist. I will not be controuled—bid him seize all,
Soldiers and chiefs! by hell, there's not a Swede,
But lurks an instrument to prompt rebellion,
And plots upon my life! Look there, 'tis evident: [*Gives Trollio a letter.*
They are all leagued, confederate with Gustavus,
The abettors of his treason.
Troll. It should seem so:
And yet it should not——Tell me, Peterson,
Art thou assured thy credit with Gustavus
Will answer to a trust like this? Ha! Say.
Peter. Yes, well assured: my seal appeared too warm
To give the least cold colour for suspicion.
Troll. I fear, my friend, I fear he has o'erreached you.
Divide and conquer, is the sum of politics.
Beyond the dreaded circle of his sword,
Gustavus triumphs in an ample genius;
He walks at large, sees clear and wide around him;
Calm in the storm and turbulence of action;
He ponders on the last event of things,
And makes each cause subservient to the consequence.
Crist. You over-rate his craft; they're false, my Trollio,
False every Swede of them; I read their souls.

Enter CRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Cristina. I heard it was your royal pleasure, sir,
I should attend your highness.
Crist. Yes, Cristina,
But business interferes. [*Exeunt.*

Enter an Officer.

Offi. My sovereign liege!
Wide o'er the western shelving of yon hill,
We think, though indistinctly, we can spy
Like men in motion mustering on the heath;
And there is one who saith he can discern
A few of martial gesture, and bright arms,
Who this way bend their action.
Crist. Friends, perhaps;
For foes it were too daring—Haste thee, Trollio,
Detach a thousand of our Danish horse
To rule their motions—We will out ourself,
And hold our powers in readiness—Lead on.
Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Enter CRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Mar. Ha! did you mark, my princess, did you mark?
Should some reverse, some wondrous whirl of fate
Once more return Gustavus to the battle,
New nerve his arm, and wreath his brow with conquest;
Say, would you not repent that e'er you saved
This dreadful man, the foe of your great race;
Who pours impetuous in his country's cause
To spoil you of a kingdom?
Cristina. No, my friend.
Had I to death, or bondage, sold my sire,
Or had Gustavus on our native realms
Made hostile inroad, then, my Mariana!
Had I then saved him from the stroke of justice,
I should not cease my suit to Heaven for pardon.
But if, though in a foe, to reverence virtue,
Withstand oppression, rescue injured innocence,
Step boldly in betwixt my sire and guilt,
And save my king, my father, from dishonour;
If this be sin, I have shook hands with penitence.
First, perish crowns, dominion, all the shine
And transience of this world, ere guilt shall serve
To buy the vain incumbrance.

Mar. Do not think
I meant, my princess, to arraign your virtues,
Howe'er I seemed to question on the consequence.
Cristina. The consequence of virtue must be good:
It must. Though it should prove my father's lot,
In being rescued from one act of guilt,
To lose the whole of all his wide dominions,
He were a gainer.—Blasted be that royalty,
Which murder must make sure, and crimes inglorious!
The bulk of kingdoms, nay, the world is light,
When guilt weighs opposite—O would to Heaven,
The loss of empire would restore his innocence,
Restore the fortunes, and the precious lives
Of thousands, fallen the victims of ambition!

Enter LAERTES.

Ha! Laertes! most welcome! well—and have you! say, Laertes——
Laer. O royal maid!
Cristina. Thy looks are doubtful——Speak,
Why art thou silent——Does he live?
Laer. He does.
But death ere night must fill a long account;
The camp, the country's in confusion: War
And changes ride upon the hour, that hastes
To intercept my tongue—I else could tell
Of virtues hitherto beyond my ken;
Courage, to which the lion stoops his crest,
Yet grafted upon qualities as soft
As a rocked infant's meekness; such as tempts,
Against my faith, my country, and allegiance,
To wish thee speed, Gustavus.
Cristina. Then you found him.
Laer. I did: and warned him, but in vain; for death
To him appeared more grateful than to find
His friend's dishonour.
Cristina. Give me the manner—quick—soft, good Laertes!

Enter CRISTIERN, TROLLIO, PETERSON, *Danes, &c.*

Crist. Damned, double traitor! O cursed, false Arvida!
Guard well the Swedish prisoners, bind them hard—
Stand to your arms—Bring forth the captives there!

Enter AUGUSTA *and* GUSTAVA *guarded.*

Troll. My liege——
Crist. Away! I'll hear no more of politics;
Fortune! we will not trust the changeling more;
But wear her girt upon our armed loins,
Or pointed in our grasp.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. The foe's at hand.
With gallant shew your thousand Danes rode forth,
But shall return no more! I marked for action,
A band of desperate resolutes rush on them,
Scarce numbering to a tenth, and in mid way
They closed; the shock was dreadful, nor your Danes
Could bear the madding charge; a while they stood;
Then shrunk, and broke, and turned——When, lo, behind,
Fast wheeling from the right and left, there poured,
Who intercepted their return, and, caught
Within the toil, they perished.
Crist. 'Tis Gustavus!
No mortal else, not Ammon's boasted son,
Not Cæsar would have dared it. Tell me, say,
What numbers in the whole may they amount to?
Offi. About five thousand.
Crist. And no more?
Offi. No more,
That yet appear.
Crist. We count six times their sum.
Haste, soldier, take a trumpet, tell Gustavus
We have of terms to offer, and would treat
Touching his mother's ransom; say, her death,
Suspended by our grace, but waits his answer.
[*Exit Officer.*
Madam, it should well suit with your authority,
[*To Augusta.*
To check this frenzy in your son—look to it,
Or by the saints this hour's your last of life!
Aug. Come, my Gustava, come, my little captive!
We shall be free; our tyrant is grown kind;
And for these chains that bind thy pretty arms,
The golden cherubim shall lend thee wings,
And thou shalt mount amid the smiling choir
Of little heavenly songsters, like thyself,
All robed in innocence.
Gustava. Will you go, mother?
Aug. So help me, mercy! Yes, I'll go, my child;
And I will give thee to thy father's fondness,
And to the arms of all thy royal race
In Heaven; who sit on thrones, with loves, and joys,
And pleasures smiling round.
Crist. Is this my answer?
Come forth, ye ministers of death, come forth!

Enter Ruffians, who seize Augusta and Gustava.

Pluck them asunder! We shall prove you, lady!
'Tis my damned lot, thus ever to be crossed
With rank blown pride, and insolence eternal.
Gustava. O mother, take me, take me from these men!
They fright me with their looks.
Aug. Alas, my child, I cannot take thee from them.
Gustava. O, they will hurt me: can't you take me, mother?

Aug. They can't, they cannot hurt you, my Gustava.
Fear not, my little one! your name should be
A charm o'er cowardice, for you are called
After your valiant brother; he'll disown you,
He will not love you, if you fear, Gustava.
Cristina. Ah! I can hold no longer. Royal sir,
Thus on my knees, and lower, lower still——
Crist. My child! What mean you?
Cristina. O my gracious father!
Kill, kill me rather—let me perish first,
But do not stain the sanctity of kings
With the sweet blood of helpless innocence;
Do not, my father! Spare the little orphans,
And let the lambs go free!
Aug. Ha! who art thou?
That look'st so like the inhabitants of Heaven,
Like mercy sent upon the morning's blush,
To glad the heart, and cheer a gloomy world
With light 'till now unknown?
Crist. Away, they come.
I'll hear no more of your ill-timed petitions.
Cristina. O yet for pity!
Crist. I will none on't; leave me!
Pity! it is the infant fool of nature:
Tear off her hold, and bear her to her tent.
[*Exeunt Cristina, Mar. Laer. and attendants.*

Enter an Officer.

Offi. My liege, Gustavus, though with much reluctance,
Consents to one hour's truce. His soldiers rest
Upon their arms, and, followed by a few,
He comes to know your terms.
Crist. I see, fall back——
Stand firm—Be ready, slaves, and, on the word,
Plunge deep your daggers in their bosoms.
[*Points to Augusta.*

Enter GUSTAVUS, ARVIDA, ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, *&c.*

Hold!
Gust. Ha! it is, it is my mother!
Crist. Tell me, Gustavus, tell me why is this?
That, as a stream diverted from the banks
Of smooth obedience, thou hast drawn those men
Upon a dry unchannelled enterprize
To turn their inundation?—Are the lives
Of my misguided people held so light,
That thus thou'dst push them on the keen rebuke
Of guarded majesty; where justice waits,
All awful, and resistless to assert
The imperious rights, the sanctitude of kings,
And blast rebellion?
Gust. Justice! Sanctitude!
And rights! O patience! Rights! What rights, thou tyrant?
Yes, if perdition be the rule of power;
If wrongs give right; O then, supreme in mischief!
Thou wert the lord, the monarch of the world!
Too narrow for thy claim. But if thou think'st
That crowns are vilely propertied, like coin,
To be the means, the specialty of lust,
And sensual attribution—If thou think'st,
That empire is of titled birth, or blood;
That nature, in the proud behalf of one,
Shall disenfranchise all her lordly race,
And bow her general issue to the yoke
Of private domination—then, thou proud one,
Here know me for thy king—Howe'er be told,
Not claim hereditary, not the trust
Of frank election;
Not even the high anointing hand of Heaven
Can authorize oppression; give a law
For lawless power; wed faith to violation;
On reason build misrule, or justly bind
Allegiance to injustice—Tyranny
Absolves all faith; and who invades our rights,
Howe'er his own commence, can never be
But an usurper—But for thee, for thee
There is no name!—thou hast abjured mankind;
Dashed safety from thy bleak unsocial side,
And waged wild war with universal nature!
Crist. Licentious traitor! thou canst talk it largely;
Who made thee umpire of the rights of kings,
And power, prime attribute? As on thy tongue
The poise of battle lay, and arms, of force,
To throw defiance in the front of duty.
Look round, unruly boy! thy battle comes
Like raw, disjointed must'ring; feeble wrath!
A war of waters borne against the rock
Of our firm continent, to fume, and chafe,
And shiver in the toil.
Gust. Mistaken man!
I come, empowered and strengthened in thy weakness.
For though the structure of a tyrant's throne
Rise on the necks of half the suffering world,
Fear trembles in the cement: Prayers and tears,
And secret curses, sap its mouldering base,
And steal the pillars of allegiance from it;
Then, let a single arm but dare the sway,
Headlong it turns, and drives upon destruction.
Troll. Profane, and alien to the love of heaven!
Art thou still hardened to the wrath divine,
That hangs o'er thy rebellion?—Know'st thou not
Thou art at enmity with grace? Cast out,
Made an anathema, a curse enrolled
Among the faithful, thou and thy adherents
Shorn from our holy church, and offered up
As sacred to damnation?
Gust. Yes, I know,
When such as thou, with sacrilegious hand,
Seize on the apostolic key of heaven,
It then becomes a tool for crafty knaves
To shut out virtue, and unfold those gates,
That heaven itself had barred against the lusts
Of avarice and ambition. Soft, and sweet,
As looks of charity, or voice of lambs
That bleat upon the morning, are the words
Of christian meekness! Mission all divine!

The law of love sole mandate——but your gall,
Ye Swedish prelacy! Your gall hath turned
The words of sweet, but indigested peace,
To wrath and bitterness——Ye unhallowed men!
In whom vice sanctifies, whose precepts teach
Zeal without truth, religion without virtue,
Who ne'er preach Heaven but with a downward eye,
That turns your souls to dross; who, shouting, loose
The dogs of hell upon us—thefts, and rapes,
Sacked towns, and midnight howlings through the realm
Receive your sanction——O 'tis glorious mischief,
When vice turns holy, puts religion on,
Assumes the robe pontifical, the eye
Of saintly elevation, blesseth sin,
And makes the seal of sweet offended heaven
A sign of blood, a label for decrees,
That hell would shrink to own!———
Crist. No more of this.
Gustavus, wouldst thou yet return to grace,
And hold thy motions in the sphere of duty,
Acceptance might be found.
Gust. Imperial spoiler!
Give me my father, give me back my kindred,
Give me the fathers of ten thousand orphans,
Give me the sons in whom thy ruthless sword
Has left our widows childless! Mine they were,
Both mine, and every Swede's, whose patriot breast
Bleeds in his country's wounds! O thou can'st not!
Thou hast out-sinned all reckoning! Give me then
My all that's left, my gentle mother there,
And spare yon little trembler!
Crist. Yes, on terms
Of compact, and submission.
Gust. Ha! with thee?
Compact with thee! and mean'st thou for my country?
For Sweden! No—so hold my heart but firm,
Altho' it wring for't; though blood drop for tears,
And at the sight my straining eyes start forth—
They both shall perish first.
Crist. Slaves, do your office.
Gust. Hold yet!—Thou can'st not be so damned! my mother!
I dare not ask thy blessing—Where's Arvida?
Where art thou? Come, my friend, thou'st known temptation———
And therefore best can'st pity, or support me,
Arv. Alas! I shall but serve to weigh thee downward,
To pull thee from the dazzling, sightless height,
At which thy virtue soars. For, O Gustavus,
My soul is dark, disconsolate and dark;
Sick to the world, and hateful to myself,
I have no country now; I've nought but thee,
And should yield up the interest of mankind,
Where thine's in question.
Aug. See, my son relents;
Behold, O king! yet spare us but a moment;
His little sister shall embrace his knees,
And these fond arms, around his duteous neck,
Shall join to bend him to us.
Crist. Could I trust ye———
Arv. I'll be your hostage.
Crist. Granted.
Gust. Hold, my friend.
[*Here Arvida breaks from Gustavus, and passes to Cristiern's Party, while Augusta and Gustava go over to Gustavus.*
Aug. Is it then given, yet given me 'ere I die
To see thy face, Gustavus? thus to gaze,
To touch, to fold thee thus!—My son, my son!
And have I lived to this? It is enough.
All armed, and in thy country's precious cause
Terribly beauteous, to behold thee thus!
Why, 'twas my only, hourly suit to heaven,
And now 'tis granted. O my glorious child!
Blessed were the throes I felt for thee, Gustavus!
For from the breast, from out your swathing bands,
You stepped the child of honour.
Gust. O my mother!
Aug. Why stands that water trembling in thy eye?
Why heaves thy bosom? Turn not thus away!
'Tis the last time that we must meet, my child,
And I will have thee whole. Why, why, Gustavus,
Why is this form of heaviness? For me
I trust it is not meant; you cannot think
So poorly of me: I grow old, my son,
And to the utmost period of mortality,
I ne'er should find a death's hour like to this,
Whereby to do thee honour.
Gust. Roman patriots!
Ye Decii, self-devoted to your country!
You gave no mothers up! Will annals yield
No precedent for this, no elder boast,
Whereby to match my trial?
Aug. No, Gustavus;
For Heaven still squares our trial to our strength.
And thine is of the foremost——Noble youth!
Ev'n I, thy parent, with a conscious pride,
Have often bowed to thy superior virtues.
O, there is but one bitterness in death,
One only sting——
Gust. Speak, speak!
Aug. 'Tis felt for thee.
Too well I know thy gentleness of soul,
Melting as babes; even now the pressure's on thee,
And bends thy loveliness to earth—O, child!
The dear but sad foretaste of thy affliction
Already kills thy mother—But, behold,
Behold thy valiant followers, who to thee,
And to the faith of thy protecting arm,
Have given ten thousand mothers, daughters too:

Who in thy virtue yet may learn to bear
Millions of free-born sons to bless thy name,
And pray for their deliverer—O farewell!
This, and but this, the very last adieu!
Heaven sit victorious on thy arm, my son!
And give thee to thy merits!
Crist. Ah, thou traitress!
Gustava. O brother, a'n't you stronger than that man?
Don't let him take my mother.
Aug. See, Gustavus,
My little captive waits for one embrace.
Gust. Come to my arms, thou lamb-like sacrifice!
O that they were of force to hold thee ever,
To let thee to my heart! there lock thee close,
And circle thee with life! But 'twill not be!
Gustava. I'll stay with you, my brother.
Gust. Killing innocence!
That I was born to see this hour!
The pains of hell are on me!—Take her, mother!
Gustava. I will not part with you, indeed, I will not!
Gust. Take her—Distraction! Haste, my dearest mother:
Oh—else I shall run mad—quite mad and save ye.
Arv. Hold, madam; hear me, thou most dear Gustavus!
Thus low I bend my prayer, reject me not:
If once, if ever, thou didst love Arvida,
O leave me here to answer to the wrath
Of this fell tyrant. Save thy honoured mother,
And that sweet lamb, from slaughter!
Gust. Cruel friendship!
Crist. And, by my life I'd take thee at thy word,
Thou doubly damned! but that I know 'twould please thee.
Aug. No, generous prince, thy blood shall never be
The price of our dishonour. Come, my child;
Weep not, sweet babe! there shall no harm come nigh thee.
Crist. 'Tis well, proud dame; you are returned I see——
Each to his charge—Here break we off, Gustavus;
For to the very teeth of thy rebellion
We dash defiance back.
Gust. Alas, my mother!
Grief chokes up utterance, else I have to say
What never tongue unfolded—Yet return!
Come back, and I will give up all to save thee!
For, on the covering of thy sacred head,
My heart drops blood. Thou fountain of my life!
Dearer than mercy is to kneeling penitence,
My earliest blessing, first and latest joy;
Return, return, and save thy lost Gustavus!
Crist. No more, thou trifler!
Aug. O farewell for ever!
[*Exeunt Cristiern and his party. Gustavus and his party remain.*
Gust. Then she is gone—Arvida! Anderson!
For ever gone—Arnoldus, friends, where are ye?
Help here, heave, heave this mountain from me—O——
Heaven keep my senses!——So—We will to battle;
But let no banners wave—Be still, thou trump!
And every martial sound that gives the war
To pomp or levity; for vengeance now
Is clad with heavy arms, sedately stern,
Resolved, but silent as the slaughtered heaps
O'er which my soul is brooding.
Arn. O Gustavus!
Is there a Swede of us, whose sword and soul
Grapples not to thee, as to all they hold
Of earthly estimation? Said I more,
It were but half my thought.
And. On thee we gaze,
As one unknown till this important hour,
Pre-eminent of men!
Siv. Accursed be he,
Who, in thy leading, will not fight, and strive,
And bleed, and gasp, with pleasure!
And. We are thine;
All, all, both we and ours; whom thou this day
Hast dearly purchased.
Arn. Though, to yield us up,
Had scarce been less than virtue.
Gust. O my friends!
I see, 'tis not for man to boast his strength
Before the trial comes—This very hour,
Had I a thousand parents, all seemed light
When weighed against my country; and but now,
One mother seemed of weight to poise the world,
Though conscious truth and reason were against her
For, O, howe'er the partial passions sway,
High Heaven assigns but one unbiassed way;
Direct through every opposition leads,
Where shelves decline, and many a steep impedes.
Here hold we on—though thwarting fiends alarm,
Here hold we on—though devious Syrens charm;
In Heaven's disposing power events unite,
Nor aught can happen wrong to him who acts aright.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. V.

SCENE I.—*The royal tent.*

Enter CRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Cristina. HARK! Mariana, list!—No—All is silent———
It was not fancy sure—didst thou hear aught?
Mar. Too plain, the voice of terror seized my ear,
And my heart sinks within me.
Cristina. O, I fear
The war is now at work—As winds, methought,
Long borne through hollow vaults, the sound approached;
One sound, yet laden with a thousand notes
Of fearful variation; then it swelled
To distant shouts, now coming on the gale;
Again, borne backward with a parting groan,
All sunk to horrid stillness.
Mar. Look, my princess!
Ah, no! withhold thy eyes! the place grows dark,
A sudden cloud of sorrow stains the day,
And throws its gloom around.

Enter four Slaves, as bearing the bodies of AUGUSTA *and* GUSTAVA *on a bier covered.—Four women, in chains, follow weeping.*

Cristina. Whence are ye, say, you daughters of affliction?
Their speech is in their tears—Avert, ye saints!
Avert that thought! soft! hold ye! I've a tear
For every mourner—Ah!
[*Looks under the covering.*
Mar. What mean you, madam?
Cristina. Reflection, come not there! See it not, eyes!
How art thou spilt, thou blood of royalty!
Close at the paleness of its parent breast
The babe lies slaughtered. Tell me, who did this?
No, hold ye! Say not that my father did it;
For duty then turns rebel—Cruel father!
O, that some villager, whose early toil
Lifts the penurious morsel to his mouth,
Had claimed my birth! Ambition had not then
Thus stepped 'twixt me and Heaven.
Mar. Go, bear it hence——
Turn, turn, my royal mistress!
Cristina. Ah, Augusta!
Among thy foes thou'rt fallen, thou'rt fallen in virtue!
Exalt thyself, O Guilt! for here the good
Have none who may lament them. Sit we down;
For I grow weary of the world; let death
Within his vaulted durance, dark and still,
Receive me too; and where the afflicted rest,
There fold me in for ever.

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Arise, Cristina; fly! thou royal virgin!
This morn beheld thee mistress of the north,
Bright heir of Scandinavia; and this hour
Has left thee not, throughout thy wide dominions,
Whereon to rest thy foot.
Cristina. Now, praise to Heaven!
Say but my father lives!
Laer. At your command
I went; and, from a neighbouring summit, viewed
Where either host stood adverse, sternly wedged;
Reflecting on each other's gloomy front,
Fell hate and fixed defiance—When, at once,
The foe moved on, attendant on the steps
Of their Gustavus—He, with mournful pace
Came slow and silent; till two hapless Danes
Pricked forth, and on his helm discharged their fury:
Then rouzed the lion! To my wondering sight
His stature grew twofold; before his eye
All force seemed withered, and his horrid plume
Shook wild dismay around; as Heaven's dread bolt,
He shot, he pierced our legions; in his strength
His shouting squadron gloried, rushing on
Where'er he led the battle—full five times,
Hemmed by our mightier host, the foe seemed lost,
And swallowed from my sight; five times again,
Like flame, they issued to the light—and thrice,
These eyes beheld him, they beheld Gustavus
Unhorsed, and by a host girt singly in;
And thrice he broke through all.
Cristina. My blood runs chill.
Laer. With such a strenuous, such a laboured conflict,
Sure never field was fought! until Gustavus
Aloud cried, Victory! and on his spear
High reared the imperial diadem of Denmark.
Then slacked the battle; then recoiled our host;
His echoed, Victory! and now would know
No bounds; rout followed, and the face of fight—
—She heeds me not.
Cristina. O, ill-starred royalty!
My father! Cruel, dear, unhappy father!
Summoned so sudden! fearful thought!
Step in, sweet mercy! For thy time was—Ha!

Enter CRISTIERN, *flying, without his helmet, in disorder, his sword broke, and his garments bloody; he throws away his sword, and speaks.*

Crist. Give us new arms of proof—fresh horses ——quick!
A watch without there—set a standard up
To guide our scattered powers! Haste, my friends, haste!
We must be gone—O for some cooling stream
To slake a monarch's thirst!
Laer. A post, my liege,
A second post from Denmark says——

Crist. All's lost.
Is it not so? Begone! Perdition choak thee—
Give me a moment's solitude—Thought, thought,
Where wouldst thou lead?
Cristina. He sees me not——Alas, alas, my father!
O, what a war there lives within his eye!
Where greatness struggles to survive itself.
I tremble to approach him; yet I fain
Would bring peace to him—Don't you know me, sir?
My father, look upon me! look, my father!
Why strains your lip, and why that doubtful eye
Through fury melting o'er me? Turn, ah, turn!
I cannot bear its softness—How? nay, then,
There is a falling dagger in that tear,
To kill thy child, to murder thy Cristina.
Crist. Then thou'rt Cristina?
Cristina. Yes.
Crist. My child!
Cristina. I am.
Crist. Curse me! then curse me! Join with heaven and earth
And hell, to curse!
Cristina. Alas! on me, my father,
Thy curses be on me; but on thy head
Fall blessings from that heaven, which has this day
Preserved thy life in battle.
Crist. What have I
To do with heaven? Damnation! What am I?
All frail and transient as my lapsed dominions!
E'en now the solid earth prepares to slide
From underneath me. Nature's power cries out,
Leave him, thou universe! No—hold me, heaven!
Hold me, thou heaven! whom I've forsaken—hold
Thy creature, though accursed!
Cristina. Patience and peace
Possess thy mind! Not all thy pride of empire
E'er gave such blessed sensation, as one hour
Of penitence, though painful——Let us hence—
Far from the blood and bustle of ambition.
Be it my task to watch thy rising wish,
To smooth thy brow, find comfort for thy cares,
And for thy will, obedience; still to cheer
The day with smiles, and lay the nightly down
Beneath thy slumbers.
Crist. O thou all that's left me!
Even in the riot, in the rage of fight,
Thy guardian virtues watched around my head,
When else no arm could aid—for through my ranks,
My circling troops, the fell Gustavus rushed;
'Vengeance!' he cried, and with one eager hand
Gripped fast my diadem—his other arm
High reared the deathful steel—suspended yet;
For in his eye, and through his varying face,
Conflicting passions fought——he looked——he stood
In wrath reluctant—Then, with gentler voice;
'Cristina, thou hast conquered! Go,' he cried,
'I yield thee to her virtues.'

Enter TROLLIO *and Guards, swords drawn.*

Troll. Haste, O king!
The foe has hemmed us round; O haste to save
Thyself and us!
Crist. Thy sword.
[*Takes a sword from one of the Guards.*
Troll. What means my——
Crist. Villain!
Well thought, by Hell! Ha! Yes, thou art our minister,
The reverend monitor of vice——the soil,
Baneful and rank with every principle,
Whence grow the crimes of kings. First perish thou! [*Stabs him.*
Who taught the throne of power to fix on fear,
And raise its safety from the public ruin;
Fall thou into the gulph thyself hast fixed
Between the prince and people; cutting off
Communion from the ear of royalty,
And mercy from complaint—away, away!
Thy death, old man, be on thy monarch's head;
On thine, the blood of all thy countrymen,
Who fell beneath thy counsels. [*Exeunt.*

TROLLIO *attempts to rise, and then speaks.*

Troll. Thou bloody tyrant! late, too late I find,
Nor faith, nor gratitude, nor friendly trust,
No force of obligations can subsist
Between the guilty—O, let none aspire
To be a king's convenience! Has he virtues,
Those are his own; his vices are his minister's.
Who dares to step 'twixt envy and the throne,
Alike to feel the caprice of his prince,
As public detestation. Ha! I am going—
But whither? No one near! to feel! to catch!
The world but for an instant! for one ray
To guide my soul! Her way grows wonderous dark,
And down! down! down! [*Dies.*

SCENE II.

Enter GUSTAVUS, ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, *&c. in triumph.* GUSTAVUS *advances, and the rest range themselves on each side of the stage.*

Gust. That we have conquered, first we bend to heaven!
And. And next to thee!
All. To thee, to thee, Gustavus!
Gust. No, matchless men! my brothers of the war!
Be it my greatest glory to have mixed
My arms with yours, and to have fought for once
Like to a Dalecarlian; like to you,
The sires of honour, of a new-born fame,
To be transmitted, from your great memorial,
To climes unknown, to age succeeding age,
Till time shall verge upon eternity,
And patriots be no more——

Arn. Behold, my lord,
The Danish prisoners, and the traitor Peterson,
Attend their fate.

Gust. Send home the Danes with honour,
And let them better learn, from our example,
To treat whom next they conquer with humanity.

And. But then for Peterson!

Gust. His crimes are great:
A single death were a reward for treason:
Let him still languish—Let him be exiled!
No more to see the land of liberty,
The hills of Sweden, nor the native fields
Of known, endeared idea.

And. Royal sir,
This is to pardon, to encourage villains;
And hourly to expose that sacred life,
Where all our safety centres.

Gust. Fear them not.
The fence of virtue is a chief's best caution;
And the firm surety of my people's hearts
Is all the guard that e'er shall wait Gustavus.
I am a soldier from my youth; yet Anderson,
These wars, where man must wound himself in man,
Have somewhat shocking in them: trust me, friend,
Except in such a cause as this day's quarrel,
I would not shed a single wretch's blood
For the world's empire!

Arn. O exalted Sweden!
Blessed people! Heaven! wherein have we deserved
A man like this to rule us!

Enter ARVIDA *leading in* CRISTINA. *He runs to* GUSTAVUS.

Gust. My Arvida!

Arv. My king! O hail! Thus let me pay my homage. [*Kneels.*

Gust. Rise, rise, nor shame our friendship.

Arv. See, Gustavus! Behold, nor longer wonder at my frailty.

Gust. Be faithful, eyes! Ha! Yes! it must be so.
'Tis she; for Heaven would choose no other form
Wherein to treasure every mental virtue!

Cristina. Renowned Gustavus! mightiest among men!
If such a wretch, the captive of thy arms,
Trembling and awed in thy superior presence,
May find the grace that every other finds,
For thou art said to be of wondrous goodness!
Then hear, and O excuse a foe's presumption,
While low, thus low, you see a suppliant child,
Now pleading for a father, for a dear,
Much loved—if cruel, yet unhappy—father!
O, let, let him escape, who ne'er can wrong thee more!
If he, with circling nations, could not stand
Against thee single; singly, what can he,
When thou art fenced with nations?

Gust. Ha! that posture!
O rise—surprised, my eye perceived it not.
Cristina! thou all formed for excellence!
I've much to say, but that my tongue, my thoughts,
Are troubled; warred on by unusual passions.
'Twas hence thou hadst it in thy power to ask,
Ere I could offer.——Come, my friend, assist,
Instruct me to be grateful. O Cristina!
I fought for freedom, not for crowns, thou fair one!
They shall sit brighter on that beauteous head,
Whose eye might awe the monarchs of the earth,
And light the world to virtue!——My Arvida!

Arv. O great and good, and glorious to the last!
I read thy soul, I see the generous conflict,
And come to fix, not trouble, thy repose.
Could you but know with what an eager haste
I sprung to execute thy late commands;
To shield this lovely object of thy cares,
And give her thus, all beauteous, to thy eyes!
For I've no bliss but thine, have lost the form
Of every wish that's foreign to thy happiness.
But, O, my king! my conqueror! my Gustavus!
It grieves me much, that thou must shortly mourn,
Even on the day in which thy country's freed,
That crowns thy arms with conquest and Cristina.

Gust. Alas! your cheek is pale——you bleed, my brother!

Arv. I do, indeed—to death!

Gust. You have undone me:
Rash, headstrong man! O, was this well, Arvida? [*Turns from him.*

Arv. Pardon, Gustavus! mine's the common lot,
The fate of thousands fallen this day in battle.
I had resolved on life, to see you blessed,
To see my king and his Cristina happy.
Turn, thou beloved, thou honoured next to Heaven!
And to thy arms receive a penitent,
Who never more shall wrong thee.

Gust. O, Arvida!
Friend! friend! [*Turns and embraces him.*

Arv. Thy heart beats comfort to me! in this breast,
Let thy Arvida, let thy friend survive.
O! strip his once loved image of its frailties,
And strip it, too, of every fonder thought,
That may give thee affliction——Do, Gustavus;
It is my last request; for Heaven and thou
Are all the care, and business—of Arvida. [*Dies.*

Gust. Friend! brother! speak——He's gone, and here is all
That's left of him, who was my life's best treasure!
How art thou fallen, thou greatly valiant man!
In ruin graceful, like the warrior spear,
Though shivered in the dust!—So fall Gustavus!
But thou art sped, hast reached the goal before me;

And one light lapse, throughout thy course of virtue,
Shews only thou wert man, ordained to strive,
But not attain, perfection.——
Dost thou, too, weep? transcendent, loveliest maid!
Pardon a heart, o'ercharged with grief,
That in thy presence will not be exiled,
Though every joy dwells round thee.
Cristina. O Gustavus!
A bosom, pure like thine, must soon regain
The heart-felt happiness that dwells with virtue;
And Heaven, on all exterior circumstance,
Shall pour the balm of peace, shall pay thee back
The bliss of nations, breathing on thy head
The sweets that live within the prayers of foes,
Subdued unto thy merits.——Fare, farewell!
Gust. Thou shalt not part, Cristina.
Cristina. O!—I must——
Gust. No, thou art all that's left to sweeten life,
And reconcile the wearied to the world.
Cristina. It will not be—I dare not hear——
Gust. You must.
I am thy suppliant in my turn—but, O!
My suit is more, much more, than life or empire,
Than man can merit, or worlds give without thee!
Cristina. Now, aid me, aid me, all ye chaster powers,
That guard a woman's weakness! 'Tis resolved;
Thy own example charms thy suit to silence.
Nor think alone to bear the palm of virtue,
Thou, who hast taught the world, when duty calls,
To throw the bar of every wish behind them.
Exalted in that thought, like thee I rise,
While every lessening passion sinks beneath me.
Adieu, adieu, most honoured, first of men!
I go, I part, I fly, but to deserve thee.
Gust. Yet stay—a moment—till my fluttering heart
Pour forth in love, in wonder pour before thee,
Thou cruel excellence—Wouldst thou, too, leave me?
Not if the heart, the arms, of thy Gustavus
Have force to hold thee!
Cristina. O delightful notes!
That I do love thee, yes, 'tis true, my lord;
The bond of virtue, friendship's sacred tie,
The lover's pains, and all the sister's fondness—
Mine has the flame of every love within it.
But I have a father, guilty if he be,
Yet is he old; if cruel, yet a father.
Abandoned now by every supple wretch,
That fed his years with flattery—I am all
That's left to calm, to soothe his troubled soul
To penitence, to virtue; and, perhaps,
Restore the better empire o'er his mind,
True seat of all dominion. Yet, Gustavus,
Yet there are mightier reasons—O, farewell!
Had I ne'er loved, I might have stayed with honour. [*Exit.*

GUSTAVUS *looks after* CRISTINA, *then turns and looks on* ARVIDA.—ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, *&c. advance.*

And. Behold, my lord, behold the sons of war,
Of triumph, turn to tears; while, from that eye,
All Sweden takes her fate—and smiles around,
Or weeps, with her Gustavus!
Arn. Wilt thou not cheer them? say, thou great deliverer!
Sin. O general!
1st Dale. King!
2d Dale. Brother!
3d Dale. Father!
All. Friend!
Gust. Come, come, my brothers all! Yes, I will strive
To be the sum of every title to ye,
And you shall be my sire, my friend revived,
My sister, mother, all that's kind and dear,
For so Gustavus holds ye——O, I will
Of private passions all my soul divest,
And take my dearer country to my breast;
To public good transfer each fond desire,
And clasp my Sweden with a lover's fire.
Well pleased, the weight of all her burdens bear;
Dispense all pleasure, but engross all care.
Still quick to find, to feel my people's woes,
And wake, that millions may enjoy repose.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

MAHOMET,

THE

IMPOSTOR.

BY

MILLER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	MEN.
MAHOMET.	ALCANOR, *chief of the senate of Mecca.*
MIRVAN, *his general.*	PHARON, *his friend.*
ALI, HERCIDES, AMMON, *officers to Mahomet.*	WOMEN.
ZAPHNA, *a captive, brought up under Mahomet.*	PALMIRA, *a captive, brought up under Mahomet.*

Scene,—Mecca.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*an apartment in the temple of Mecca.*

Enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

Alc. PHARON, no more—shall I
Fall prostrate to an arrogant impostor,
Homage in Mecca one I banished thence,
And incense the delusions of a rebel!
No—blast Alcanor, righteous Heaven! if e'er
This hand, yet free and uncontaminate,
Shall league with fraud, or adulate a tyrant.
Pha. August and sacred chief of Ishmael's senate,
This zeal of thine, paternal as it is,
Is fatal now—our impotent resistance
Controls not Mahomet's unbounded progress,
But, without weakening, irritates the tyrant.
When once a citizen you well condemned him
As an obscure, seditious innovator;
But now he is a conqueror, prince, and pontiff,
Whilst nations numberless embrace his laws,
And pay him adoration—even in Mecca
He boasts his proselytes.
Alc. Such proselytes
Are worthy of him—low untutored reptiles,
In whom sense only lives—most credulous still
Of what is most incredible.
Pha. Be such
Disdained, my lord; but may not the pest spread upwards,
And seize the head—Say, is the senate sound?
I fear some members of that reverend class
Are marked with the contagion, who, from views
Of higher power and rank,
Worship this rising sun, and give a sanction
To his invasions.

Alc. If, ye Powers divine!
Ye mark the movements of this nether world,
And bring them to account, crush, crush those vipers,
Who, singled out by a community
To guard their rights, shall, for a grasp of ore,
Or paltry office, sell them to the foe!
Pha. Each honest citizen, I grant, is thine,
And, grateful for thy boundless blessings on them,
Would serve thee with their lives; but the approach
Of this usurper to their very walls
Strikes them with such a dread, that even these
Implore thee to accept his proffered peace.
Alc. Oh, people lost to wisdom as to glory!
Go, bring in pomp, and serve upon your knees
This idol, that will crush you with its weight.
Mark, I abjure him: by his savage hand
My wife and children perished, whilst in vengeance
I carried carnage to his very tent,
Transfixed to earth his only son, and wore
His trappings as a trophy of my conquest.
This torch of enmity, thus lighted 'twixt us,
The hand of time itself can ne'er extinguish.
Pha. Extinguish not, but smother for a while
Its fatal flame, and greatly sacrifice
Thy private sufferings to the public welfare.
Oh say, Alcanor, wert thou to behold
(As soon thou may'st) this famed metropolis
With foes begirt, behold its pining tenants
Prey on each other for the means of life,
Whilst lakes of blood and mountains of the slain
Putrify the air,
And sweep off thousands with their poisonous steams,
Would thy slain children be avenged by this?
Alc. No, Pharon, no; I live not for myself:
My wife and children lost, my country's now
My family.
Pha. Then let not that be lost.
Alc. 'Tis lost by cowardice.
Pha. By rashness often.
Alc. Pharon, desist.
Pha. My noble lord, I cannot,
Must not, desist, will not, since you're possessed
Of means to bring this insolent invader
To any terms you'll claim.
Alc. What means?
Pha. Palmira.
That blooming fair, the flower of all his camp,
By thee borne off in our last skirmish with him,
Seems the divine ambassadress of peace,
Sent to procure our safety. Mahomet
Has by his heralds thrice proposed her ransom,
And bade us fix the price.
Alc. I know it, Pharon:
And wouldst thou then restore this noble treasure
To that barbarian? Wouldst thou, for the frauds,
The deaths, the devastations, he brings on us,
Enrich his ruffian hands with such a gem,
And render beauty the reward of rapine?—
Nay, smile not, friend, nor think that at these years,
Well travelled in the winter of my days,
I entertain a thought towards this young beauty,
But what's as pure as is the western gale,
That breathes upon the uncropt violet——
Pha. My lord——
Alc. This heart, by age and grief congealed,
Is no more sensible to love's endearments
Than are our barren rocks to morn's sweet dew,
That balmy trickles down their rugged cheeks.
Pha. My noble chief, each master-piece of nature
Commands involuntary homage from us.
Alc. I own, a tenderness unfelt before,
A sympathetic grief, with ardent wishes
To make her happy, fill my widowed bosom:
I dread her being in that monster's power,
And burn to have her hate him like myself.
'Twas on this hour I, at her modest suit,
Promised her audience in my own pavilion.
Pharon, go thou, meanwhile, and see the senate
Assembled straight—I'll sound them as I ought.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*changes to a room of state.*

Enter PALMIRA.

Pal. What means this boding terror, that usurps,
In spite of me, dominion o'er my heart,
Converting the sweet flower of new-blown hope
To deadly nightshade, poisoning to my soul
The fountain of its bliss?—Oh holy prophet!
Shall I ne'er more attend thy sacred lessons?
Oh Zaphna! much-loved youth! I feel for thee
As for myself—But hold! my final audit
Is now at hand—I tremble for the event!
Here comes my judge—now liberty or bondage!

Enter ALCANOR.

Alc. Palmira, whence those tears? trust me, fair maid!
Thou art not fallen into barbarians' hands;
What Mecca can afford of pomp or pleasure,
To call attention from misfortune's lap,
Demand and share it.
Pal. No, my generous victor!
My suit's for nothing Mecca can afford;
Prisoner these two long months beneath your roof,
I have tasted such benignity and candour,
Whilst your own hands so laboured to beguile
The anxious moments of captivity,
That oft I have called my tears ingratitude.
Alc. If ought remains, that's in my power, to smooth
The rigour of your fate, and crown your wishes,
Why, 'twould fill
The furrows in my cheeks, and make old age
Put on its summer's garb.
Pal. Thus low I bless thee. [*Kneeling.*
It is on you, on you alone, Alcanor,
My whole of future happiness depends:

Have pity then;
Pity, Alcanor, one, who is torn from all
That's dear or venerable to her soul;
Restore me, then, restore me to my country,
Restore me to my father, prince, and prophet!
Alc. Is slavery dear then? is fraud venerable?
What country? a tumultuous wandering camp!
Pal. My country, sir, is not a single spot
Of such a mould, or fixed to such a clime;
No, 'tis the social circle of my friends,
The loved community, in which I'm linked,
And in whose welfare all my wishes centre.
Alc. Excellent maid! Then Mecca be thy country.
Robbed of my children, would Palmira deign
To let me call her child, the toil I took
To make her destiny propitious to her,
Would lighten the rough burthen of my own:
But no; you scorn my country and my laws.
Pal. Can I be your's, when not my own? Your bounties
Claim and share my gratitude—but Mahomet
Claims right o'er me of parent, prince, and prophet.
Alc. Of parent, prince, and prophet! Heav'ns! that robber,
Who, a scaped felon, emulates a throne,
And, scoffer at all faiths, proclaims a new one!
Pal. Oh, cease, my lord! this blasphemous abuse
Of one, whom millions with myself adore,
Does violence to my ear; such black profaneness
'Gainst Heaven's interpreter blots out remembrance
Of favours past, and nought succeeds but horror.
Alc. Oh superstition! thy pernicious rigours,
Inflexible to reason, truth, and nature,
Banish humanity the gentlest breasts.
Palmira, I lament to see thee plunged
So deep in error—
Pal. Do you then reject
My just petition? can Alcanor's goodness
Be deaf to suffering virtue?
Name but the ransom,
And Mahomet will treble what you ask.
Alc. There is no ransom Mahomet can offer,
Proportioned to the prize. Trust me, Palmira,
I cannot yield thee up. What! to a tyrant,
Who wrongs thy youth, and mocks thy tender heart
With vile illusions and fanatic terrors!—

Enter PHARON.

What wouldst thou, Pharon?
Pha. From yon western gate,
Which opens on Moradia's fertile plains,
Mahomet's general, Mirvan, hastes to greet thee.
Alc. Mirvan, that vile apostate!
Pha. In one hand
He holds a scimitar, the other bears
An olive branch, which to our chiefs he waves,
An emblem of his suit—a martial youth,
Zaphna by name, attends him for our hostage.
Pal. apart.] Zaphna! mysterious heaven!
Pha. Mirvan advances
This way, my lord, to render you his charge.
Alc. Mirvan advance! how dare the traitor see me?
Palmira, thou retire—Pharon, be present.
[*Exit. Pal.*

Enter MIRVAN.

After six years of infamous rebellion
Against thy native country, dost thou, Mirvan,
Again profane with thy detested presence
These sacred walls, which once thy hands defended,
But thy bad heart has vilely since betrayed?
Thou poor deserter of thy country's gods,
Thou base invader of thy country's rights,
What wouldst thou have with me?
Mir. I pardon thee——
Out of compassion to thy age and sufferings,
And high regard for thy experienced valour,
Heaven's great apostle offers thee in friendship
A hand could crush thee, and I come commissioned
To name the terms of peace he deigns to tender.
Alc. He deigns to tender! insolent impostor!
Dost thou not, Mirvan, blush
To serve this wretch—this base of soul as birth?
Mir. Mahomet's grandeur's in himself; he shines not
With borrowed lustre.
Plunged in the night of prejudice, and bound
In fetters of hereditary faith,
My judgment slept; but when I found him born
To mould anew the prostrate universe,
I started from my dream, joined his career,
And shar'd his arduous and immortal labours.
Once, I must own, I was as blind as thou:
Then wake to glory, and be changed like me.
Alc. What death to honour, wakening to such glory!
Pha. Oh, what a fall from virtue was that change!
Mir. Come, embrace our faith, reign with Mahomet,
And, clothed in terrors, make the vulgar tremble.
Alc. 'Tis Mahomet, and tyrants like to Mahomet,
'Tis Mirvan, and apostates like to Mirvan,
I only would make tremble—Is it, say'st thou,
Religion, that's the parent of this rapine,
This virulence and rage?—No; true religion
Is always mild, propitious and humane,
Plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood,
Nor bears destruction on her chariot-wheels;
But stoops to polish, succour, and redress,
And builds her grandeur on the public good.
Mir. Thou art turned Christian, sure! some straggling monk
Has taught thee these tame lessons—

Alc. If the Christians
Hold principles like these, which reason dictates,
Which all our notions of the powers divine
Declare the social laws they meant for man,
And all the beauties and delights of nature
Bear witness to, the Christians may be right;
Thy sect cannot, who, nursed in blood and slaughter,
Worship a cruel and revengeful being,
And draw him always with his thunder round him,
As ripe for the destruction of mankind.
Mir. If clemency delights thee, learn it here.
Though banished, by thy voice, his native city,
Though, by thy hand, robbed of his only son,
Mahomet pardons thee; nay, farther, begs
The hatred burning 'twixt you be extinguished,
With reconciliation's generous tear.
Alc. I know thy master's arts; his generous tears,
Like the refreshing drops, that previous fall
To the wild outrage of o'erwhelming earthquakes,
Only forerun destruction;
Courage he has, not bravery;
For blood and havock are the sure attendants
On his victorious car.
Pha. Leagues he will make too——
Alc. Like other grasping tyrants, till he eyes
A lucky juncture to enlarge his bounds;
Then he'll deride them, leap o'er every tie
Of sacred guarantee, or sworn protection;
And when the oppressed ally implores assistance,
Beneath that mask invade the wished-for realms,
And from pure friendship take them to himself.
Mir. Mahomet fights Heaven's battles, bends the bow,
To spread Heaven's laws, and to subject to faith
The iron neck of error.
Alc. Lust and ambition, Mirvan, are the springs
Of all his actions; whilst, without one virtue,
Dissimulation, like a flattering painter,
Bedecks him with the colouring of them all:
This is thy master's portrait—But no more——
My soul's inexorable, and my hate
Immortal as the cause from whence it sprang.
Mir. What cause——
Alc. The difference between good and evil.
Mir. Thou talkest to me, Alcanor, with an air
Of a stern judge, that, from his dread tribunal,
Intimidates the criminal beneath him:
Resume thy temper, act the minister,
And treat with me as with the ambassador
Of Heaven's apostle and Arabia's king.
Alc. Arabia's king! what king? who crowned him?
Mir. Conquest——
Whilst, to the style of conqueror, and of monarch,
Patron of peace he'd add—Name then the price
Of peace and of Palmira—Boundless treasures,
The spoils of vanquished monarchs, and the stores
Of rifled provinces, are thrown before thee.
Our troops, with matchless ardour, hasten hither
To lay in ruin this rebellious city;
Stem then the rushing torrent: Mahomet
In person comes to claim a conference with thee,
For this good purpose.
Alc. Who? Mahomet?
Mir. Yes, he conjures thou'lt grant it.
Alc. Traitor! were I sole ruler here in Mecca,
I'd answer thee with chastisement——
Mir. Hot man!
I pity thy false virtue—But farewell——
And, since the senate share thy power in Mecca,
To their serener wisdoms I'll appeal.
[*Exit Mirvan.*
Alc. I'll meet thee there, and see whose voice is victor.
Come, Pharon, aid me to repulse this traitor;
To bear him with impunity amongst us
Is treason 'gainst ourselves——Ye sacred powers,
My country's gods, that, for three thousand years,
Have reigned protectors of the tribe of Ishmael,
Oh! support my spirit
In that firm purpose it has always held!
To combat violence, fraud, and usurpation,
To pluck the spoil from the oppressors' jaws,
And keep my country, as I found it, free!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—PALMIRA'S *apartment.*

Enter PALMIRA.

Pal. CEASE, cease, ye streaming instruments of woe,
From your ignoble toil—Take warmth, my heart!
Collect thy scattered powers, and brave misfortune.
In vain the storm-tossed mariner repines;
Were he within to raise as great a tempest
As beats him from without, it would not smooth
The boisterous surge: impatience only throws
Discredit on mischance, and adds a shame
To our affliction.

Enter ZAPHNA.

Ha! all-gracious Heaven!
Thou, Zaphna! is it thou? what pitying angel
Guided thy steps to these abodes of bondage?
Zaph. Thou sovereign of my soul, and all its powers,
Object of every fear, and every wish,
Friend, sister, love, companion, all that's dear!
Do I once more behold thee, my Palmira?
Oh, I will set it down the whitest hour,
That Zaphna e'er was blessed with!
Pal. Say, my hero——
Are my ills ended then? They are, they are:

Now Zaphna's here I am no more a captive,
Except to him: oh, blest captivity!
Zaph. Those smiles are dearer to my raptured breast,
Sweeter those accents to my listening heart,
Than all Arabia's spices to the sense.
Pal. No wonder, that my soul was so elate,
No wonder, that the cloud of grief gave way,
When thou, my sun of comfort, wert so nigh,
Zaph. Since that dire hour, when on Sabaria's strand
The barbarous foe deprived me of Palmira,
In what a gulph of horror and despair
Have thy imagined perils plunged my soul!
Stretched on expiring corses for a while
To the deaf stream I poured out my complaint,
And begged I might be numbered with the dead,
That strewed its banks——then starting from despair,
With rage I flew to Mahomet for vengeance;
He, for some high mysterious purpose, known
To heaven and him alone, at length dispatched
The valiant Mirvan to demand a truce:
Instant on wings of lightning I pursued him,
And entered as his hostage—fixed, Palmira,
Or to redeem, or die a captive with thee.
Pal. Heroic youth!
Zaph. But how have these barbarians
Treated my fair?
Pal. With high humanity.
I, in my victor, found a friend—Alcanor
Has made me feel captivity in nothing
But absence from my Zaphna and my friends.—
Zaph. I grieve a soul so generous is our foe:
But now, presented as an hostage to him,
His noble bearing and humanity
Made captive of my heart; I felt, methought,
A new affection lighted in my breast,
And wondered, whence the infant ardour sprang.
Pal. Yet generous as he is, not all my prayers,
Not all the tears I lavish at his feet,
Can move him to restore me——
Zaph. But he shall———
Let the barbarian know he shall, Palmira;
The god of Mahomet, our divine protector,
Whose still triumphant standard I have borne
O'er piles of vanquished infidels—that power,
Which brought unnumbered battlements to earth,
Will humble Mecca too.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, noble Mirvan,
Do my Palmira's chains sit loose upon her?
Say, is it freedom? This presumptuous senate—
Mir. Has granted all we asked, all we could wish—
The truce obtained, the gates to Mahomet
Flew open——
Zaph. Mahomet in Mecca say'st thou?
Once more in Mecca!
Pal. Transport! bid him welcome.
Zaph. Thy sufferings then are o'er, the ebb is past,
And a full tide of hope flows in upon us!
Mir. The spirit of our prophet, that inspired me,
Breathed such divine persuasion from my lips,
As shook the reverend fathers—'Sirs,' cried I,
'This favourite of high Heaven, who rules in battle,
'Before whose footstool tributary kings
'Bow the anointed head, born here in Mecca,
'Asks but to be enrolled a senator,
'And you refuse his prayer. Deluded sages!
'Although your conqueror, he requests no more
'Than one day's truce, pure pity to yourselves!
'To save you if he can; and you—Oh shame!—
At this a general murmur spread around,
Which seemed propitious to us——
Zaph. Greatly carried!
Go on———
Mir. Then straight the inflexible Alcanor
Flew through the streets, assembling all the people
To bar our prophet. Thither too I fled,
Urged the same arguments, exhorted, threatened,
Till they unhinged the gates, and gave free passage
To Mahomet and his chiefs—In vain Alcanor,
And his disheartened party, strove to oppose him;
Serene and dauntless, through the gazing crowd,
With more than human majesty he moved,
Bearing the peaceful olive, whilst the truce
Was instantly proclaimed———
Pal. But where's the prophet?
Mir. Reclined in yonder grot, that joins the temple,
Attended by his chiefs.
Zaph. There let us haste
With duteous step, and bow ourselves before him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a spacious grotto.*

MAHOMET *discovered, with the alcoran before him.*

Mah. Glorious hypocrisy! What fools are they,
Who, fraught with lustful or ambitious views,
Wear not thy spacious mask—Thou, Alcoran!
Hast won more battles, ta'en more cities for me,
Than thrice my feeble numbers had atchieved,
Without the succour of thy sacred impulse.

Enter HERCIDES, AMMON, *and* ALI.

Invincible supporters of our grandeur!
My faithful chiefs, Hercides, Ammon, Ali!
Go, and instruct this people in my name,
That faith may dawn, and, like a morning star,
Be herald to my rising:
Lead them to know and to adore my god;
But above all, to fear him—Lo, Palmira!
[*Exeunt Hercides, &c.*
Her angel-face, with unfeigned blushes spread,
Proclaims the purity, that dwells within.

Enter MIRVAN, ZAPHNA, *and* PALMIRA.

[*To Palmira.*] The hand of war was ne'er before so barbarous,
Never bore from me half so rich a spoil
As thee, my fair.
Pal. Joy to my heavenly guardian!
Joy to the world, that Mahomet's in Mecca!
Mah. My child, let me embrace thee—How's this, Zaphna!
Thou here!
Zaph. [*kneeling.*] My father, chief, and holy pontiff!
The god, that thou'rt inspired by, marched before me.
Ready for thee to wade through seas of danger,
Or cope with death itself, I hither hastened
To yield myself an hostage, and with zeal
Prevent thy order.
Mah. 'Twas not well, rash boy:
He, that does more than I command him, errs
As much as he, who falters in his duty,
And is not for my purpose—I obey
My god—implicitly obey thou me.
Pal. Pardon, my gracious lord, his well-meant ardour.
Brought up from tender infancy beneath
The shelter of thy sacred patronage,
Zaphna and I've been animated still
By the same sentiments: Alas, great prophet!
I have had enough of wretchedness—to languish
A prisoner here, far both from him and you;
Grudge me not then the ray of consolation
His presence beamed, nor cloud my dawning hope
Of rising freedom and felicity.
Mah. Palmira, 'tis enough; I read thy heart;
Be not alarmed; though burdened with the cares
Of thrones and altars, still my guardian eye
Will watch o'er thee as o'er the universe.
Follow my generals, Zaphna. Fair Palmira,
Retire, and pay your powerful vows to Heaven,
And dread no wrongs but from Alcanor.
[*Zaphna and Palmira go out separately.*
Mirvan——
Attend thou here—'Tis time, my trusty soldier,
My long-tried friend, to lay unfolded to thee
The close resolves and councils of my heart.
The tedious length of a precarious siege
May damp the present ardour of my troops,
And check me in the height of my career.
Let us not give deluded mortals leisure
By reason to disperse the mystic gloom
We have cast about us—Prepossession, friend,
Reigns monarch of the million—Mecca's crowd
Gaze at my rapid victories, and think
Some awful power directs my arm to conquest;
But whilst our friends once more renew their efforts
To win the wavering people to our interest,
What think'st thou, say, of Zaphna, and Palmira?
Mir. As of thy most resigned and faithful vassals.
Mah. Oh Mirvan! they are the deadliest of my foes.
Mir. How!
Mah. Yea, they love each other——
Mir. Well—what crime?——
Mah. What crime! dost say?—Learn all my frailty, then——
My life's a combat: keen austerity
Subjects my nature to abstemious bearings:
I have banished from my lips that traitorous liquor,
That either works to practises of outrage,
Or melts the manly breast to woman's weakness;
Or on the burning sands or desert rocks
With thee I bear the inclemency of climates,
Freeze at the pole, or scorch beneath the line.
For all these toils love only can retaliate,
The only consolation or reward,
Fruit of my labours, idol of my incense,
And sole divinity, that I adore;
Know then, that I prefer this young Palmira
To all the ripened beauties, that attend me;
Dwell on her accents, dote upon her smiles,
And am not mine but her's. Now judge, my friend,
How vast the jealous transports of thy master,
When at his feet he daily hears this charmer
Avow a foreign love, and, insolent,
Give Mahomet a rival!
Mir. How! and Mahomet
Not instantly revenge——
Mah. Ah! should he not?
But better to detest him know him better:
Learn, then, that both my rival and my love
Sprang from the loins of this audacious traitor.
Mir. Alcanor!
Mah. Is their father; old Hercides,
To whose sage institution I commit
My captive infants, late revealed it to me—
Perdition! I myself light up their flame,
And fed it, till I set myself on fire.
Well, means must be employed; but see, the father;
He comes this way, and launches from his eye
Malignant sparks of enmity and rage.
Mirvan, see all ta'en care of; let Hercides,
With his escort, beset yon gate; bid Ali
Make proper disposition round the temple;
This done, return, and render me account
Of what success we meet with 'mongst the people:
Then, Mirvan, we'll determine or to loose,
Or bridle in our vengeance, as its suits.
[*Exit Mirvan.*

Enter ALCANOR.

Mah. Why dost thou start, Alcanor? Whence that horror?
Is then my sight so baneful to thee?
Alc. Heavens!
Must I then bear this? must I meet in Mecca,
On terms of peace, this spoiler of the earth?

Mah. Approach, old man, without a blush; since Heaven,
For some high end, decrees our future union.
Alc. I blush not for myself, but thee, thou tyrant!
For thee, bad man! who comest, with serpent-guile,
To sow dissention in the realms of peace;
Thy very name sets families at variance,
'Twixt son and father bursts the bonds of nature,
And scares endearment from the nuptial pillow!
Even truce with thee is a new stratagem.
And is it, insolent dissembler! thus
Thou comest, to give the sons of Mecca peace,
And me an unknown god?
Mah. Were I to answer any but Alcanor,
That unknown god should speak in thunder for me;
But here, with thee, I'd parley as a man.
Alc. What canst thou say? what urge in thy defence?
What right hast thou received to plant new faiths,
Or lay a claim to royalty and priesthood?
Mah. The right, that a resolved and towering spirit
Has o'er the grovelling instinct of the vulgar.—
Alc. Patience, good Heavens! have I not known thee, Mahomet,
When void of wealth, inheritance, or fame,
Ranked with the lowest of the low at Mecca?
Mah. Dost thou not know, thou haughty feeble man,
That the low insect, lurking in the grass,
And the imperial eagle, which aloft
Ploughs the etherial plain, are both alike
In the Eternal eye!—Mortals are equal:
It is not birth, magnificence, or power,
But virtue only, makes the difference 'twixt them.
Alc. What sacred truth from what polluted lips! [*Aside.*
Mah. By virtue's ardent pinions borne on high,
Heaven met my zeal, gave me, in solemn charge,
Its sacred laws, then bade me on and publish.
Alc. And did Heaven bid thee on, and plunder too?
Mah. My law is active, and inflames the soul
With thirst of glory. What can thy dumb gods?
What laurels spring beneath their sooty altars?
Thy slothful sect disgrace the human kind,
Enervate lifeless images of men!
Mine bear the intrepid soul; my faith makes heroes.
Alc. Go, preach these doctrines at Medina, where,
By prostate wretches, thou art raised to homage.
Mah. Hear me: thy Mecca trembles at my name;
If, therefore, thou wouldst save thyself or city,
Embrace my proffered friendship.—What to-day
I thus solicit, I'll command to-morrow.
Alc. Contract with thee a friendship! frontless man!
Knowest thou a god can work that miracle?
Mah. I do—Necessity—thy interest.
Alc. Interest is thy god, Equity is mine.
Propose the tie of this unnatural union;
Say, is it the loss of thy ill-fated son,
Who, in the field, fell victim to my rage,
Or the dear blood of my poor captive children,
Shed by thy butchering hands?
Mah. Ay, 'tis thy children.
Mark me, then, well, and learn the important secret,
Which I'm sole master of——Thy children live.
Alc. Live!
Mah. Yes——both live——
Alc. What sayest thou? Both!
Mah. Ay, both.
Alc. And dost thou not beguile me?
Mah. No, old man.
Alc. Propitious Heavens! Say, Mahomet, for now,
Methinks, I could hold endless converse with thee;
Say what's their portion! liberty or bondage?
Mah. Bred in my camp, and tutored in my law,
I hold the balance of their destinies:
And now 'tis on the turn—their lives or deaths—
'Tis thine to say which shall preponderate.
Alc. Mine! can I save them? name the mighty ransom——
If I must bear their chains, double the weight,
And I will kiss the hand, that puts them on;
Or, if my streaming blood must be the purchase,
Drain every sluice and channel of my body,
My swelling veins will burst to give it passage.
Mah. I'll tell thee, then—renounce thy pagan faith,
Abolish thy vain gods, and——
Alc. Ha!
Mah. Nay, more,
Surrender Mecca to me, quit this temple,
Assist me to impose upon the world,
Thunder my Koran to the gazing crowd,
Proclaim me for their prophet and their king,
And be a glorious patron of credulity
To Korah's stubborn tribe. These terms performed,
Thy son shall be restored, and Mahomet's self
Will deign to wed thy daughter.
Alc. Hear me, Mahomet——
I am a father, and this bosom boasts
A heart as tender as e'er parent bore.
After a fifteen years of anguish for them,
Once more to view my children, clasp them to me,
And die in their embraces—melting thought!
But were I doomed or to enslave my country,
And help to spread black error o'er the earth,
Or to behold these blood-embrued hands
Deprive me of them both—Know me, then, Mahomet,

I'd not admit a doubt to cloud my choice——
[*Looking earnestly at Mahomet, for some time, before he speaks.*
Farewell. [*Exit Alcanor.*
Mah. Why, fare thee well then—churlish dotard!
Inexorable fool! Now, by my arms,
I will have great revenge; I'll meet thy scorn
With treble retribution.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, my Mirvan,
What sayest thou to it now?
Mir. Why, that Alcanor
Or we must fall.
Mah. Fall, then, the obdurate rebel!
Mir. The truce expires to morrow, when Alcanor
Again is Mecca's master, and has vowed
Destruction on thy head: the senate, too,
Have passed thy doom.
Mah. Those heart-chilled paltry babblers,
Placed on the bench of sloth, with ease can nod,
And vote a man to death! Why don't the cowards
Stand me in yonder plain? With half their numbers
I drove them headlong to their walls for shelter,
And he was deemed the wisest senator,
That entered first the gate; but now they think
They've got me in the toil, their spirits mount,
And they could prove most valorous assassins.—
Well, this I like—I always owed my greatness
To opposition; had I not met with struggles,
I'd been obscure.—Enough.—Perish Alcanor!
He marbled up, the pliant populace,
Those dupes of novelty, will bend before us,
Like osiers to a hurricane——
Mir. No time
Is to be lost.
Mah. But for a proper arm;
For, however irksome, we must save
Appearances, and mask it with the vulgar.
Mir. True, my sage chief.—What think'st thou, then, of Zaphna?
Mah. Of Zaphna, sayest thou!
Mir. Yes, Alcanor's hostage——
He can, in private, do thee vengeance on him:
Thy other favourites, of maturer age,
And more discreetly zealous, would not risk it.
Youth is the stock, whence grafted superstition
Shoots with unbounded vigour. He's a slave
To thy despotic faith; and, urged by thee,
However mild his nature may appear,
Howe'er humane and noble is his spirit,
Or strong his reason, where allowed to reason,
He would, for Heaven's sake, martyr half mankind.
Mah. The brother of Palmira!
Mir. Yes, that brother,
The only son of thy outrageous foe,
And the incestuous rival of thy love.
Mah. I hate the stripling, loathe his very name;
The manes of my son, too, cry for vengeance
On the cursed sire; but then thou know'st my love,
Know'st from whose blood she sprang: this staggers, Mirvan;
And yet I'm here surrounded with a gulf
Ready to swallow me; come, too, in quest
Of altars and a throne—What must be done?—
My warring passions, like contending clouds,
When fraught with thunder's fatal fuel, burst
Upon themselves, and rend me with the shock.
And shall enervating contagious love
Hag my aspiring spirit, sink me down
To woman's shackles, make a lapthing of me?
Glory! that must not be! ambition still,
And great revenge, impetuous urge their claims,
And must be noticed. Mirvan, sound this youth;
Touch not at once upon the startling purpose,
But make due preparation.
Mir. I'll attack him
With all the forces of enthusiasm;
There lies our strength.
Mah. First, then, a solemn vow
To act whatever Heaven by me enjoins him;
Next, omens, dreams, and visions, may be pleaded;
Hints, too, of black designs, by this Alcanor,
Upon Palmira's virtue and his life.——
But to the proof.—Be now propitious, Fortune!
Then love, ambition, vengeance, jointly triumph.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A grand apartment.*

Enter ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

Zaph. ALCANOR claims a private conference with us!
What has he to unfold?
Pal. I tremble, Zaphna.
Zaph. Time press'd too, did he say?
Pal. He did; then cast
A look so piercing on me, it o'erwhelmed
My face with deep confusion; this he marked;
Then, starting, left me.
Zaph. aside.] Ha! this gives me fear,
That Mirvan's jealousies are too well grounded;
But I must not distract her tender bosom
With visionary terrors. [*To Pal.*] Both in private?
Pal. In private both.
Zaph. Her virtue and my life! [*Apart.*
It cannot be; so reverend a form
Could ne'er be pander to such black devices.

Pal. But let us shun it, Zaphna; much I fear
Alcanor has deceived us: dread the treachery
Of this blood-thirsty senate. Trust me, Zaphna,
They have sworn the extirpation of our faith,
Nor care by what vile means—
Zaph. My soul's best treasure,
For whose security my every thought
Is up in arms, regardless of my own;
Shun thou Alcanor's presence. This hour, Palmira,
Mirvan, by order of our royal pontiff,
Prepares to solemnize some act of worship
Of a more hallowed and mysterious kind
Than will admit of vulgar eye; myself
Alone am honoured to assist.
Pal. Alone!
Zaph. Yes, to devote myself by solemn vow
For some great act, of which my fair's the prize.
Pal. What act?
Zaph. No matter, since my loved Palmira
Shall be the glorious recompence—
Pal. Oh, Zaphna!
Methinks I do not like this secret vow.
Why must not I be present! were I with thee,
I should not be so anxious;
For trust me, Zaphna, my affection for thee
Is of that pure disinterested nature,
So free from passion's taint, I have no one wish
To have thee more than thus, have thee my friend,
Share thy loved converse, wait upon thy welfare,
And view thee with a sister's spotless eye.
Zaph. Angelic excellence!
Pal. And let me tell thee,
This Mirvan, this fierce Mirvan, gives me terrors:
So far from tendering consolation to me,
His theme is blood and slaughter. As I met him,
His eyes flamed fury, whilst in dubious phrase
He thus bespoke me—'The destroying angel
'Must be let loose—Palmira, Heaven ordains
'Some glorious deed for thee, yet hid in darkness;
'Learn an implicit reverence for its will;
'And, above all, I warn thee, fear for Zaphna.
Zaph. What could he mean? can I believe, Alcanor,
Thy fair deportment but a treacherous mask?
Yet spite of all the rage that ought to fire me
Against this rebel to our faith and prophet,
I have held me happy in his friendship,
And bondage wore the livery of choice.
Pal. How has Heaven fraught our love-linked hearts, my Zaphna,
With the same thoughts, aversions and desires!
But for thy safety and our dread religion,
That thunders hatred to all infidels,
With great remorse I should accuse Alcanor.
Zaph. Let us shake off this vain remorse, Palmira,
Resign ourselves to Heaven, and act its pleasure.
The hour is come, that I must pledge my vow:
Doubt not but the Supreme, who claims this service,
Will prove propitious to our chaste endearments.
Farewell, my love; I fly to gain the summit
Of earth's felicity—to gain Palmira. [*Exit.*
Pal. Where'er I turn me here, 'tis all suspicion.
What means this vow? Mirvan, I like thee not:
Alcanor too distracts my timorous breast:
Even Mahomet's self I dread, whilst I invoke him.
Like one benighted 'midst a place of tombs,
I gaze around me, start at every motion,
And seem hemmed in by visionary spectres.
All righteous Power, whom, trembling, I adore,
And blindly follow, oh deliver me
From these heart-rending terrors!—Ha! who's here?

Enter MAHOMET.

'Tis he! 'tis Mahomet himself! kind Heaven
Has sent him to my aid—My gracious lord!
Protect the dear, dear idol of my soul!
Save Zaphna; guard him from ——
Mah. From what!—why Zaphna?
Whence this vain terror? is he not with us?
Pal. Oh, sir, you double now my apprehensions!
Those broken accents and that eager look
Shew you have anguish smothering at the heart,
And prove for once, that Mahomet's a mortal.
Mah. apart.] Ha! I shall turn a traitor to myself—
Oh woman! woman!—Hear me; ought I not
To be enraged at thy profane attachment!
How could thy breast, without the keenest sting,
Harbour one thought not dictated by me?
Is that young mind, I took such toil to form,
Turned an ingrate and infidel at once?
Away, rebellious maid——
Pal. What dost thou say,
My royal lord? Thus prostrate at your feet
Let me implore forgiveness, if in aught
I have offended: talk not to me thus;
A frown from thee, my father and my king,
Is death to poor Palmira. Say then, Mahomet,
Didst thou not in this very place permit him
To tender me his vows?
Mah. apart.] His vows! perdition!
How the soft traitress racks me!—Rise, Palmira—
Apart.] Down, rebel love! I must be calm—
Come hither;
Beware, rash maid, of such imprudent steps;
They lead to guilt. What wild pernicious errors
Mayn't the heart yield to, if not greatly watched!
Pal. In loving Zaphna sure it cannot err;
There's nothing wild, nothing pernicious—
Mah. How!
This theme delights you———
Pal. I must own it does.
Yes, my great master, for I still have thought
That Heaven itself approved of my affection,

And gave a sanction to our mutual ardours.
Can what was virtue once be now a crime?
Can I be guilty———
Mah. Yes—towards me you are——
You, nursed from infancy beneath my eye,
Child of my care and pupil of my faith,
You, whom my partial fondness still distinguished
From all the captive youths that graced my triumphs,
And you who now, without my leave, permit
A slave to bear thee from my sight for ever.
Pal. No, we both live, nay more, would die for thee:
And oh, my lord! if all that earth can offer
Of grandeur, opulence, or pleasure, e'er
Shall make me deaf to gratitude's demands,
May Zaphna's self be evidence against me,
And plead for double vengeance on my treachery!
Mah. apart.] Zaphna again! Furies! I shall relapse,
And make her witness of my weakness.
Pal. Sir!
What sudden start of passion arms that eye?
Mah. Oh, nothing: pray retire a while: take courage:
I'm not at all displeased: 'twas but to sound
The depth of thy young heart. I praise thy choice:
Trust then thy dearest interests to my bosom;
But know your fate depends on your obedience.
If I have been a guardian to your youth,
If all my lavish bounties past weigh aught,
Deserve the future blessings which await you.
Howe'er the voice of heaven dispose of Zaphna,
Confirm him in the path where duty leads,
That he may keep his vow and merit thee.
Pal. Distrust him not, my sovereign; noble Zaphna
Disdains to lag in love or glory's course.
Mah. Enough of words—
Pal. As boldly I've avowed
The love I bear that hero at your feet,
I'll now to him, and fire his generous breast
To prove the duty he has sworn to thee.
[*Exit Palmira.*
Mah. Confusion! must I, spite of me, be made
The confidant of her incestuous passion?
What could I say? such sweet simplicity
Lured down my rage, and innocently winged
The arrow through my heart. And shall I bear this?
Be made the sport of curst Alcanor's house?
Checked in my rapid progress by the sire,
Supplanted in my love by this rash boy,
And made a gentle pander to the daughter?
Perdition on the whole detested race!

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Now, Mahomet, is the time to seize on Mecca,
Crush this Alcanor, and enjoy Palmira.
This night the old enthusiast offers incense
To his vain gods in sacred Caabo:
Zaphna, who flames with zeal for Heaven and thee,
May be won o'er to seize that lucky moment.
Mah. He shall; it must be so; he's born to act
The glorious crime; and let him be at once
The instrument and victim of the murder.
My law, my love, my vengeance, my own safety,
Have doomed it so—But, Mirvan, dost thou think
His youthful courage, nursed in superstition,
Can e'er be worked—
Mir. I tell thee, Mahomet,
He's tutored to accomplish thy design.
Palmira too, who thinks thy will is Heaven's,
Will nerve his arm to execute thy pleasure.
Love and enthusiasm blind her youth:
They're still most zealous who're most ignorant.
Mah. Didst thou engage him by a solemn vow?
Mir. I did, with all the enthusiastic pomp
Thy law enjoins; then gave him, as from thee,
A consecrated sword to act thy will.
Oh, he is burning with religious fury!
Mah. But hold, he comes—

Enter ZAPHNA.

Child of that awful and tremendous power,
Whose laws I publish, whose behests proclaim,
Listen, whilst I unfold his sacred will:
'Tis thine to vindicate his ways to man,
'Tis thine his injured worship to avenge.
Zaph. Thou lord of nations, delegate of Heaven,
Sent to shed day o'er the benighted world,
Oh say in what can Zaphna prove his duty!
Instruct me how a frail earth-prisoned mortal
Can, or avenge, or vindicate a god.
Mah. By thy weak arm he deigns to prove his cause,
And launch his vengeance on blaspheming rebels.
Zaph. What glorious action, what illustrious danger,
Does that Supreme, whose image thou, demand?
Place me, oh place me, in the front of battle,
'Gainst odds innumerable! try me there;
Or, if a single combat claim my might,
The stoutest Arab may step forth and see,
If Zaphna fail to greet him as he ought.
Mah. Oh, greatly said, my son; 'tis inspiration!
But heed me: 'tis not by a glaring act
Of human valour Heaven has willed to prove thee;
This infidels themselves may boast, when led
By ostentation, rage, or brute-like rashness.
To do whate'er Heaven gives in sacred charge,
Nor dare to sound its fathomless decrees,
This, and this only's meritorious zeal.
Attend, adore, obey; thou shalt be armed
By death's remorseless angel, which awaits me.

Zaph. Speak out, pronounce; what victim must I offer?
What tyrant sacrifice? whose blood requirest thou?
Mah. The blood of a detested infidel,
A murderer, a foe to Heaven and me,
A wretch, who slew my child, blasphemes my god,
And, like a huge Colossus, bears a world
Of impious opposition to my faith:
The blood of—curst Alcanor!
Zaph. I!—Alcanor!
Mah. What! dost thou hesitate? Rash youth, beware;
He that deliberates, is sacrilegious.
Far, far from me be those audacious mortals,
Who for themselves would impiously judge,
Or see with their own eyes; who dares to think,
Was never born a proselyte for me.
Know who I am; know on this very spot
I have charged thee with the just decree of Heaven,
And when that Heaven requires of thee no more
Than the bare offering of its deadliest foe,
Nay, thy foe too, and mine, why dost thou balance,
As thy own father were the victim claimed!
Go, vile idolater! false Musselman!
Go seek another master, a new faith!
Zaph. Oh Mahomet!
Mah. Just when the prize is ready,
When fair Palmira's destined to thy arms——
But what's Palmira? or what's heaven to thee,
Thou poor weak rebel to thy faith and love!
Go serve and cringe to our detested foe.
Zaph. Oh pardon, Mahomet! methinks I hear
The oracle of Heaven—It shall be done.
Mah. Obey then, strike, and for his impious blood,
Palmira's charms and Paradise be thine.
Apart to Mirvan.] Mirvan, attend him close, and let thy eyes
Be fixed on every movement of his soul.
[*Exeunt.*
Zaph. Soft, let me think—This duty wears the face
Of something more than monstrous—Pardon, Heaven!
To sacrifice an innocent old man,
Weighed down with age, unsuccoured and unarmed!
When I am hostage for his safety too!——
No matter, Heaven has chose me for the duty;
My vow is past and must be straight fulfilled.
Ye stern relentless ministers of wrath,
Spirits of vengeance! by whose ruthless hands
The haughty tyrants of the earth have bled,
Come to my succour, to my flaming zeal
Join your determined courage;
And thou, angel
Of Mahomet, exterminating angel!
That mow'st down nations to prepare his passage,
Support my faltering will, harden my heart,
Lest nature, pity, plead Alcanor's cause,
And wrest the dagger from me.
Ha! who comes here?

Enter ALCANOR.

Alc. Whence, Zaphna, that deep gloom,
That, like a blasting mildew on the ear
Of promised harvest, blackens o'er thy visage?
Grieve not, that here, through form, thou art confined;
I hold thee not as hostage, but as friend,
And make thy safety partner with my own.
Zaph. And make my safety partner with thy own! [*Aside.*
Alc. The bloody carnage, by this truce suspended
For a few moments, like a torrent checked
In its full flow, will, with redoubled strength,
Bear all before it——
In this impending scene of public horror,
Be then, dear youth! these mansions thy asylum:
I'll be thy hostage now, and with my life
Will answer, that no mischief shall befall thee.
I know not why, but thou art precious to me.
Zaph. Heaven, duty, gratitude, humanity! [*Aside.*
What didst thou say, Alcanor? Didst thou say,
That thy own roof should shield me from the tempest?
That thy own life stood hostage for my safety?
Alc. Why thus amazed at my compassion for thee?
I am a man myself, and that's enough
To make me feel the woes of other men,
And labour to redress them.
Zaph. [*Aside.*] What melody these accents make!
And whilst my own religion spurs to murder,
His precepts of humanity prevail.
[*To Alcanor.*] Can, then, a foe to Mahomet's sacred law
Be virtue's friend?
Alc. Thou know'st but little, Zaphna,
If thou dost think true virtue is confined
To climes or systems; no, it flows spontaneous,
Like life's warm stream, throughout the whole creation,
And beats the pulse of every healthful heart.
How canst thou, Zaphna, worship for thy god
A being, claiming cruelty and murders
From his adorers? Such is thy master's god.
Zaph. [*Aside.*] Oh, my relenting soul! thou'rt almost thawed
From thy resolve—I pray you, sir, no more.
Peace, reason, peace!
Alc. [*Aside.*] The more I view him, talk with him, observe
His understanding towering above his age,
His candour, which even bigotry can't smother.
The more my breast takes interest in his welfare.

[*To Zaphna*] Zaphna, come near—I oft have thought to ask thee,
To whom thou owest thy birth; whose generous blood
Swells thy young veins, and mantles at thy heart.
Zaph. That dwells in darkness; no one friendly beam
E'er gave me glimpse, from whom I am descended.
The camp of godlike Mahomet has been
My cradle and my country; whilst, of all
His captive infants, no one more has shared
The sunshine of his clemency and care.
Alc. I do not blame thy gratitude, young man:
But why was Mahomet thy benefactor?
Why was not I? I envy him that glory.
Why, then, this impious man has been a father
Alike to thee and to the fair Palmira?
Zaph. Oh!
Alc. What is the cause, my Zaphna, of that sigh,
And all that language of a smothered anguish?
Why didst thou snatch away thy cordial eye,
That shone on me before?
Zaph. [*Aside.*] Oh my torn heart!
Palmira's name revives the racking thought
Of my near blunted purpose.
Alc. Come, my friend;
The floodgates of destruction, soon thrown open,
Will pour in ruin on that curse of nations.
If I can save but thee and fair Palmira
From this o'erflowing tide, let all the rest
Of his abandoned minions be the victims
For your deliverance—I must save your blood.
Zaph. [*Aside.*] Just Heaven! and is it not I must shed his blood?
Alc. Nay, tremble, if thou dar'st to hesitate.
Follow me straight.

Enter PHARON.

Pha. Alcanor, read that letter,
Put in my hands this moment by an Arab,
With utmost stealth, and air bespeaking somewhat
Of high importance.
Alc. [*Reads.*] Whence is this?—Hercides!
Cautious, my eyes! be sure you're not mistaken
In what you here insinuate. Gracious Heaven!
Will then thy Providence at length o'errule
My wayward fate, and by one matchless blessing
Sweeten the sufferings of a threescore years!
[*After looking for some time earnestly at Zaphna.*
Follow me.
Zaph. Thee!—But Mahomet—
Alc. Thy life
And all its future bliss dwells on this moment.
Follow, I say. [*Exeunt Alcanor and Pharon.*

Enter MIRVAN *and his attendants, hastily, on the other side of the Stage.*

Mir. [*To Zaphna.*] Traitor, turn back! what means
This conference with the foe? To Mahomet
Away this instant; he commands thy presence.
Zaph. [*Aside.*] Where am I? Heavens! how shall I now resolve?
How act? A precipice on every side
Awaits me, and the first least step's perdition.
Mir. Young man, our prophet brooks not such delay;
Go, stop the bolt, that's ready to be launched
On thy rebellious head.
Zaph. Yes, and renounce
This horrid vow, that's poison to my soul.
[*Exit with Mirvan, &c.*

Re-enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

Alc. Where is this Zaphna?—But he flies me still:
In vain I call in all the softening arts
Of pity, love, and friendship, to engage him:
His breast is seared by that impostor's precepts
'Gainst all who bid defiance to his laws.
But, Pharon, didst thou mark the baneful gloom,
The somewhat like reluctance, rage, and pity,
That, blended, sat upon his pensive brow?
Pha. I did; there is something at his heart—
Alc. There is——
Would I could fathom it! This letter, Pharon,
His aspect, age, the transport that I taste,
When he is near me; the anxiety
His absence gives, do too much violence
To my distracted sense. Hercides here
Desires to see me; 'twas his barbarous hands,
That robbed me of my children; they are living,
He tells me, under Mahomet's protection,
And he has something to unfold, on which
Their destiny and mine depend. This Zaphna
And young Palmira, vassals of that tyrant,
Are ignorant from whom they are descended.
Imagination's pregnant with that thought.
My wishes mock me. Sinking with my grief,
I blindly catch at every flattering error,
And supplicate deception's self for succour.
Pha. Hope, but yet fear, Alcanor: think, my chief,
How many infants from their parents torn,
Ere conscious whose they are, attend that tyrant,
Drink in his dictates, place their being in him,
And deem him an infallible dispenser
Of Heaven's decisions——
Alc. Well, no matter, Pharon;
At noon of night conduct Hercides hither;
Thy master in the adjoining fane once more
Will importune the gods with prayers and incense,
That he may save his friends, and see his children.
Pha. Thou shalt not find thy Pharon slack in aught,
That tends to thy deliverance from this anguish.
[*Exit Phar.*
Alc. Just Heaven! if, by erroneous thought or act,
I have drawn down your fierce displeasure on me,

Point me to right! I'll onward to its goal
With double energy, will expiate all,
That, in the days of ignorance, might offend;
Only restore my children to my care,
Give to my craving arms my hapless children,
That I may form them, turn them back from wrong,
Weed their young minds from those pernicious errors
The arch-impostor has implanted in them,
Train them in virtue's school, and lead them on
To deeds of glorious and immortal honour.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—MAHOMET'S *apartment.*

MAHOMET *alone.*

Mah. Ambition knows not conscience——
Well, this Zaphna
Is fixed at length—I lessoned him so home,
Dealt to his young enthusiastic soul
Such promises and threats———

Enter MIRVAN.

Mirvan, what news?
Mir. Oh, Mahomet, I fear the nice woven web
Of our design's unravelled. Ere thy spirit
Had re-inflamed young Zaphna with the thirst
Of old Alcanor's blood, he had revealed
The dreadful purpose to Hercides—
Mah. Ha!
Mir. Hercides loves the youth, and Zaphna still
Has held him as a father.
Mah. That I like not.
What does Hercides say? thinks he with us?
Mir. Oh no; he trembles at the very thought
Of this dread scene, compassionates Alcanor,
And——
Mah. He's but a half friend then, and a half friend
Is not a span from traitor. Mirvan, Mirvan,
A dangerous witness must be some way dealt with:
Am I obeyed?
Mir. 'Tis done.
Mah. Then for the rest——
Or e'er the harbinger of morrow's dawn
Gleam in the east, Alcanor, thou must set,
Or Mahomet and all his hopes must perish:
That's the first step; then, Zaphna, next for thee!
Soon as thy hands have dealt the midnight mischief,
In thy own blood the secret must be drowned.
Thus quit of son and father (those curst rivals,
Who elbow me at once in love and grandeur)
Both Mecca and Palmira shall be mine.
Oh towering prospect! how it fills the eye
Of my aspiring and enamoured soul!
Night! put on double sable, that no star
May be a spy on those dark deeds——Well, Mirvan,
Shall we accomplish this?
Mir. We shall, my chief.
Mah. What though I seize his life, from whom she sprung?
He's not her father, as she knows it not.
Trust me, those partial ties of blood and kindred
Are but the illusive taints of education:
What we call nature is mere habit, Mirvan;
That habit's on our side; for the whole study
Of this young creature's life has been obedience,
To think, believe, and act as pleasured me.
But hold; the hour, on which our fortune hangs,
Is now at hand. While Zaphna seeks the temple,
Let us look round us, see that not a wheel
Lag in the vast machine we have at work:
It is success, that consecrates our actions;
The vanquished rebel as a rebel dies,
The victor rebel plumes him on a throne.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The temple.*

Enter ZAPHNA, *with a drawn sword in his hand.*

Zaph. Well then, it must be so; I must discharge
This cruel duty—Mahomet enjoins it,
And Heaven, through him, demands it of my hands.
Horrid, though sacred, act!—my soul shrinks back,
And wont admit conviction—Ay, but Heaven!
Heaven's call I must obey—Oh dire obedience!
What dost thou cost me! my humanity!
Why, duty, art thou thus at war with nature?

Enter PALMIRA.

Thou here, Palmira! oh! what fatal transport
Leads thee to this sad place, these dark abodes,
Sacred to death? Thou hast no business here.
Pal. Oh, Zaphna, fear and love have been my guides.
What horrid sacrifice is this enjoined thee?
What victim does the god of Mahomet
Claim from thy tender hand?
Zaph. Oh, my guardian angel,
Speak, resolve me;
How can assassination be a virtue?
How can the gracious parent of mankind
Delight in mankind's sufferings? May not this prophet,
This great announcer of his heavenly will,
Mistake it once?
Pal. Oh, tremble to examine.
He sees our hearts—To doubt is to blaspheme.
Zaph. Be steady, then, my soul, firm to thy purpose,

And let religion steel thee against pity.
Come forth, thou foe to Mahomet, and Heaven,
And meet the doom thy rebel faith deserves!
Come forth, Alcanor!
Pal. Who, Alcanor!
Zaph. Yes.
Pal. The good Alcanor?
Zaph. Why do you call him good?
Curse on his pagan virtues! he must die;
So Mahomet commands: and yet methinks
Some other deity arrests my arm,
And whispers to my heart—Zaphna, forbear!
Pal. Distracting state!
Zaph. Alas! my dear Palmira,
I'm weak, and shudder at this bloody business.
Help me, oh help, Palmira! I am torn,
Distracted with this conflict.
Zeal, horror, love, and pity, seize my breast,
And drag it different ways. Alas! Palmira,
You see me tossing on a sea of passions;
'Tis thine, my angel, to appease this tempest,
Fix my distracted will, and teach me—
Pal. What!
What can I teach thee in this strife of passions?
Oh Zaphna! I revere our holy prophet,
Think all his laws are registered in heaven,
And every mandate minted in the skies.
Zaph. But then, to break through hospitality,
And murder him, by whom we are protected!
Pal. Oh, poor Alcanor! generous, good Alcanor!
My heart bleeds for thee.
Zaph. Know then, unless I act this horrid scene,
Unless I plunge this dagger in the breast
Of that old man, I must—I must—
Pal. What—
Zaph. Must, Palmira——
(Oh agonizing thought!) lose thee for ever.
Pal. Am I the price of good Alcanor's blood?
Zaph. So Mahomet ordains.
Pal. Horrible dowry!
Zaph. Thou knowest the curse our prophet has denounced,
Of endless tortures on the disobedient;
Thou knowest with what an oath I have bound myself
To vindicate his laws, extirpate all,
That dare oppose his progress; say then, fair one,
Thou tutoress divine, instruct me how,
How to obey my chief, perform my oath,
Yet list to mercy's call!
Pal. This rends my heart.
Zaph. How to avoid being banished thee for ever!
Pal. Oh, save me from that thought! must that e'er be?
Zaph. It must not: thou hast now pronounced his doom.
Pal. What doom?—Have I!
Zaph. Yes, thou hast sealed his death.
Pal. I seal his death!—Did I?

Zaph. 'Twas Heaven spoke by thee; thou'rt its oracle,
And I'll fulfil its laws. This is the hour,
In which he pays, at the adjoining altar,
Black rites to his imaginary gods.
Follow me not, Palmira.
Pal. I must follow;
I will not, dare not, leave thee.
Zaph. Gentle maid,
I beg thee fly these walls; thou canst not bear
This horrid scene—Oh, these are dreadful moments!
Begone—quick—this way—
Pal. No, I follow thee,
Retread thy every footstep, though they lead
To the dark gulph of death.
Zaph. Thou matchless maid!—to the dire trial then. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *draws, and discovers the inner part of the temple, with a pagan altar and images;* ALCANOR *addressing himself to the idols.*

Alc. Eternal Powers! that deign to bless these mansions,
Protectors of the sons of Ishmael,
Crush, crush this blasphemous invader's force,
And turn him back with shame! If power be your's,
Oh! shield your injured votaries, and lay
Oppression, bleeding at your altar's foot.

Enter ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

Pal. entering.] Act not this bloody deed! oh save him, save him!
Zaph. Save him, and lose both paradise and thee!
Pal. Hah, yon' he stands—Oh! Zaphna, all my blood is frozen at the sight!
Alc. 'Tis in your own behalf that I implore
The terrors of your might; swift, swiftly
Pour vengeance on this vile apostate's head,
Who dares profanely wrest your thunder from you,
And lodge it with an unknown fancied god.
Zaph. Hear how the wretch blasphemes! So, now—
Pal. Hold, Zaphna!
Zaph. Let me go—
Pal. I cannot—cannot.
Alc. But if, for reasons which dim-sighted mortals
Can't look into, you'll crown this daring rebel
With royalty and priesthood, take my life!
And if, ye gracious Powers! you have aught of bliss
In store for me, at my last hour permit me
To see my children, pour my blessing on them,
Expire in their dear arms, and let them close
These eyes, which then would wish no after-sight!
Pal. His children, did he say?
Zaph. I think he did——

Alc. For this I'll at your altar pay my vows,
And make it smoke with incense. [*Retires behind the altar.*
Zaph. Now's the time; [*Drawing his sword.*
Insulting Heaven, he flies to stones for refuge:
Now let me strike!
Pal. Stay but one moment, Zaphna.
Zaph. It must not be—unhand me.
Pal. What to do?
Zaph. To serve my God and king, and merit thee.
[*Breaking from Palmira. and going towards the altar, he starts, and stops short.*
Ha! what are ye, ye terrifying shades?
What means this lake of blood, that lies before me?
Pal. Oh Zaphna! let us fly these horrid roofs.
Zaph. No, no—Go on, ye ministers of death;
Lead me the way: I'll follow ye.
Pal. Stay, Zaphna!
Heap no more horrors on me; I'm expiring
Beneath the load.
Zaph. Be hushed—the altar trembles!
What means that omen! does it spur to murder,
Or would it rein me back? No, 'tis the voice
Of Heaven itself, that chides my lingering hand.
Now send up thither all thy vows, Palmira,
Whilst I obey its will and give the stroke.
[*Goes out behind the altar after Alcanor.*
Pal. What vows? Will Heaven receive a murderer's vows!
For sure I'm such, whilst I prevent not murder.
Why beats my heart thus? what soft voice is this,
That's waken'd in my soul, and preaches mercy?
If Heaven demands his life, dare I oppose?
Is it my place to judge?—Ha! that dire groan
Proclaims the bloody business is about.
Zaphna! oh Zaphna!

Re-enter ZAPHNA.

Zaph. Ha! where am I?
Who calls me? where's Palmira? she's not here:
What fiend has snatched her from me?
Pal. Heavens! he raves!
Dost thou not know me, Zaphna! her, who lives
For thee alone!—Why dost thou gaze thus on me?
Zaph. Where are we?
Pal. Hast thou then discharged
The horrid duty?
Zaph. What dost thou say?
Pal. Alcanor——
Zaph. Alcanor! what Alcanor?
Pal. Gracious Heaven,
Look down upon him!
Let's be gone, my Zaphna!
Let's fly this place!
Zaph. Oh, whither fly! to whom?
D'ye see these hands? who will receive these hands?
Pal. Oh, come, and let me wash them with my tears!
Zaph. Who art thou! let me lean on thee—I find
My powers returning. Is it thou, Palmira?
Where have I been? what have I done?
Pal. I know not:
Think on't no more.
Zaph. But I must think and talk on't too, Palmira;
I seiz'd the victim by his hoary locks—
(Thou, Heaven, didst will it)
Then, shuddering with horror, buried strait
The poignard in his breast. I had redoubled
The bloody plunge—(what cannot zeal persuade!)
But that the venerable sire poured forth
So piteous a groan! looked so, Palmira——
And with a feeble voice, cried, Is it Zaphna?
I could no more. Oh? hadst thou seen, my love,
The fell, fell dagger in his bosom, viewed
His dying face, where sat such dignity,
Clothed with compassion towards his base assassin!
[*Throwing himself on the ground.*
The dire remembrance weighs me to the earth—
Here let me die——
Pal. Rise, my loved Zaphna! rise,
And let us fly to Mahomet for protection:
If we are found in these abodes of slaughter,
Tortures and death attend us: let us fly!
Zaph. starting up.] I did fly at that blasting sight, Palmira,
When drawing out the fatal steel he cast
Such tender looks! I fled—the fatal steel,
The voice, the tender looks, the bleeding victim
Blessing his murderer, I could not fly:
No, they clung to me, rived my throbbing heart,
And set my brain on fire. What have we done!
Pal. Hark! what's that noise! I tremble for thy life.
Oh! in the name of love, by all the ties,
Those sacred ties, that bind thee mine for ever,
I do conjure thee, follow me!
[ALCANOR *comes from behind the altar, leaning against it, with the bloody sword in his hand.*
Zaph. Ha! look, Palmira, see what object's that,
Which bears upon my tortured sight! Is't he?
Or is't his bloody manes come to haunt us?
Pal. 'Tis he himself, poor wretch! struggling with death,
And feebly crawling towards us. Let me fly,
And yield what help I can: let me support thee,
Thou much-lamented, injured, good old man!
Zaph. Why don't I move? my feet are rooted here,
And all my frame is struck and withered up
As with a lightning's blast.
Alc. My gentle maid,
Wilt thou support me?
Weep not, my Palmira.
Pal. I could weep tears of blood, if that would serve thee.

Alc. [*Sitting down.*] Zaphna, come hither; thou hast ta'en my life,
For what offence, or what one thought towards thee,
That anger or malevolence gave birth,
Heaven knows I am unconscious. Do not look so:
I see thou dost relent.

Enter PHARON *hastily.*

Pha. [*Starting back.*] Ha! 'tis too late, then.
Alc. Would I could see Hercides!—Pharon, lo!
Thy martyred friend, by his distempered hand,
Is now expiring!
Pha. Dire unnatural crime!
Oh, wretched parricide!—behold thy father!
[*Pointing to Alcanor.*
Zaph. My father!
Pal. Father! ha!
Alc. Mysterious Heaven!
Pha. Hercides, dying by the hand of Mirvan,
Who slew him, lest he should betray the secret,
Saw me approach, and, in the pangs of death,
Cried, 'Fly and save Alcanor; wrest the sword
'From Zaphna's hands, if 'tis not yet too late,
'That's destined for his death; then let him know,
'That Zaphna and Palmira are his children.'
Pal. That Zaphna and Palmira are his children!
Dost hear that, Zaphna?
Zaph. 'Tis enough, my fate!
Canst thou aught more?
Alc. Oh, nature! oh, my children!
By what vile instigations wert thou driven,
Unhappy Zaphna! to this bloody action?
Zaph. [*Falling at his father's feet.*] Oh, I cannot speak!
Restore me, sir, restore that damned weapon,
That I, for once, may make it, as I ought,
An instrument of justice.
Pal. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, my father!
Strike here! the crime was mine; 'twas I alone,
That worked his will to this unnatural deed!
Upon these terms alone he could be mine;
And incest was the price of parricide!
Zaph. Strike your assassins——
Alc. I embrace my children,
And joy to see them, though my life's the forfeit!
Rise, children, rise, and live: live to revenge
Your father's death.—But, in the name of nature,
By the remains of this paternal blood,
That's oozing from my wound, raise not your hands
'Gainst your own being. Zaphna, wouldst thou do me
A second deadlier mischief?
Self-slaughter cannot atone for parricide.
Zaph. Then I will live,
Live to some purpose: This is glorious suffering.
Alc. Thy undetermined arm has not quite fulfilled
Its bigot purpose; I hope to live to animate
Our friends 'gainst this impostor: Lead them, Zaphna,
To root out a rapacious baneful crew,
Whose zeal is frenzy, whose religion murder!
Zaph. Swift, swift, ye hours! and light me to revenge!
Come, thou infernal weapon,
[*Snatches the bloody sword.*
I'll wash off thy foul stain with the heart's blood
Of that malignant sanctified assassin!
[*As Zaphna is going off, Mirvan and his followers enter, and stop him.*
Mir. Seize Zaphna,
And load the traiterous murderer with chains!
Help you the good Alcanor—Hapless man!
Our prophet, in a vision, learnt to-night
The mournful tale of thy untimely end,
And sent me straight to seize the vile assassin,
That he might wreak severest justice on him:
Mahomet comes to vindicate the laws,
Not suffer, with impunity, their breach.
Alc. Heavens! what accumulated crimes are here!
Zaph. Where is the monster? bear me instant to him,
That I may blast him with my eye, may curse him
With my last hesitating voice!
Pal. Thou traitor!
Did not thy own death-doing tongue enjoin
This horrid deed?
Mir. Not mine, by Heaven!
Zaph. Not thine!
Mir. No; by our prophet, and his holy faith,
Of all the thoughts ere harboured in this breast,
It ne'er had such a monster for its tenant!
Zaph. Most accomplished villain!
Mirvan, look at me—darest thou——
Mir. Off with him, [*To the Soldiers.*
And see him well secured, till Mahomet
Demands him of you.
Pal. Villain, hold! [*Laying hold of Zaphna.*
Mir. Away!
Zaph. Just, just reward of my credulity!
Pal. Let me go with him; I will share thy fate,
Unhappy Zaphna, for I share thy guilt——
But then—— [*Looking back at Alcanor.*
Mir. No more—you must to Mahomet:
Obey without reluctance: Our great prophet,
In pity to your tender frame and years,
Will take you under his divine protection.
Pal. [*Aside.*] Oh death! deliver me from such protection!
Mir. If you would aught to save the destined Zaphna,
Follow me to the prophet; you may move him
To mitigate his doom.—Away!
[*To the soldiers who hold Zaphna.*
You this way. [*To Palmira*
Zaph. Pardon!

Pal. Oh, pardon!
[*They are led off by degrees, looking alternately at their father and each other.*
Alc. Oh, insupportable!
Both from me torn, then, when I wanted most
Their consolation. [*A shout.*
Pha. Hark!
The citizens are roused, and all, in arms,
Rush on to your defence.
Alc. Pharon, support me
Some moments longer.—Help, conduct me towards them;
Bare this wound to them; let that speak the cause,
The treacherous cause—for words begin to fail me;
Then, if in death I can but serve my country,
Save my poor children from this tiger's gripe,
And give a second life to that loved pair,
By whose misguided zeal I lose my own——
What patriot, or parent, but would wish,
In so divine a cause, to fall a martyr!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter MAHOMET *and* MIRVAN.

Mah. WRONG will be ever nursed and fed with blood!——
So this boy bigot held his pious purpose?
Mir. Devoutly.
Mah. What a senseless machine
Can superstition make the reasoner man!
Alcanor lies there on his bed of earth?
Mir. This moment he expired, and Mecca's youth
In vain lament their chief. To the mad crowd
That gathered round, good Ali and myself
(Full of thy dauntless heavenly-seeming spirit)
Disclaimed the deed, and pointed out the arm
Of righteous Heaven, that strikes for Mahomet.
Think ye, we cried (with eyes and hands upreared),
Think ye our holy prophet would consent
To such a crime, whose foulness casts a blot
On right of nations, nature, and our faith?
Oh, rather think he will revenge his death,
And root his murder from the burdened earth!
Then struck our breasts, and wept the good old man,
And only wished he'd died among the faithful,
And slept with Ibrahim.
Mah. Excellent Mirvan!
Mir. We, then, both at large
Descanted on thy clemency and bounty.
On that the silent and desponding crowd
Broke out in murmurs, plaints, and last in shouts,
And each mechanic grew a mussulman.
Mah. Oh, worthy to deceive and awe the world,
Second to Mahomet! let me embrace thee——
But say, is not our army at their gates
To back our clemency?
Mir. Omar commands
Their nightly march through unsuspected paths,
And with the morn appears.
Mah. At sight of them,
The weak remaining billows of this storm
Will lash themselves to peace—But where is Zaphna?
Mir. Safe in a dungeon, where he dies apace.
Ere at the altar's foot he slew his sire,
In his own veins he bore his guilt's reward,
A deadly draught of poison.
Mah. I would be kind, and let him die deceived,
Nor know that parent-blood defiles his soul.
Mir. He cannot know it: if the grave be silent,
I'm sure Hercides is——
Mah. Unhappy Zaphna!
Something like pity checks me for thy death.
But why—I must not think that way—shall Mahomet
Give a new paradise to all mankind,
And let remorse of conscience be the hell
Of his own breast! My safety claimed his life,
And all the heaven of fair Palmira's charms
Shall be my great reward.
Mir. My noble lord,
Palmira is at hand, and waits your pleasure.
Mah. At hand! How, Mirvan, couldst thou let me talk
On themes of guilt, when that pure angel's near?
Mir. The weeping fair, led on by flattering hope
Of Zaphna's life, attends your sacred will:
A silent pale dejection shrouds her cheeks,
And, like the lily in a morning shower,
She droops her head and locks up all her sweets.
Mah. Say Mahomet awaits, and then
Assemble all our chiefs, and on this platform
Let them attend me straight. [*Exit Mirvan.*

Enter PALMIRA *with attendants.*

Pal. apart.] Where have they led me?
Methinks each step I take, the mangled corse
Of my dear father (by poor Zaphna mangled)
Lies in my way, and all I see is blood—[*Starting.*
'Tis the impostor's self!—Burst, heart, in silence.
Mah. Maid, lay aside this dread. Palmira's fate
And that of Mecca by my will is fixed.
This great event, that fills thy soul with horror,
Is mystery to all but Heaven and Mahomet.
Pal. Oh, ever righteous Heaven! canst thou suffer

This sacrilegious hypocrite, this spoiler,
To steal thy terrors, and blaspheme thy name,
Nor doom him instant dead? [*Aside.*
Mah. Child of my care,
At length from galling chains I've set thee free,
And made thee triumph in a just revenge;
Think then thou'rt dear to me, and Mahomet
Regards thee with a more than father's eye;
Then know (if thou'lt deserve the mighty boon)
An higher name, a nobler fate, awaits thee.
Pal. What would the tyrant?— [*Aside.*
Mah. Raise thy thoughts to glory,
And sweep this Zaphna from thy memory,
With all that's past—Let that mean flame expire
Before the blaze of empire's radiant sun.
Thy grateful heart must answer to my bounties,
Follow my laws, and share in all my conquests.
Pal. What laws, what bounties, and what conquests, tyrant?
Fraud is thy law, the tomb thy only bounty,
Thy conquests fatal as infected air,
Dispeopling half the globe—See here, good Heaven!
The venerable prophet I revered,
The king I served, the god that I adored!
Mah. approaching her.] Whence this unwonted language, this wild frenzy?
Pal. Where is the spirit of my martyred father?
Where Zaphna's, where Palmira's innocence?
Blasted by thee, by thee, infernal monster—
Thou found'st us angels and hast made us fiends;
Give, give us back our lives, our fame, our virtue:
Thou canst not, tyrant—yet thou seekest my love,
Seekest with Alcanor's blood his daughter's love!
Mah. apart.] Horror and death! the fatal secret's known.

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Oh, Mahomet, all's lost, thy glory tarnished,
And the insatiate tomb ripe to devour us!
Hercides' parting breath divulged the secret.
The prison's forced, the city all in arms:
See where they bear aloft their murdered chief,
Fell Zaphna in their front, death in his looks,
Rage all his strength. Spite of the deadly draught,
He holds in life but to make sure of vengeance.
Mah. What dost thou here, then? instant with our guards,
Attempt to stem their progress, till the arrival
Of Omar with the troops.
Mir. I haste, my lord. [*Exit Mirvan.*
Pal. Now, now, my hour's at hand!
Hearest thou those shouts, that rend the ambient air?
Seest thou those glancing fires, that add new horrors
To the night's gloom? fresh from thy murdering poignard,
My father's spirit leads the vengeful shades
Of all the wretches whom thy sword has butchered:
I see them raise their unsubstantial arms
To snatch me from thy rage, or worse, thy love.
Shadows shall conquer in Palmira's cause.
Mah. [*Aside.*] What terror's this, that hangs upon her accents?
I feel her virtue, though I know her weakness.
Pal. Thou askest my love; go seek it in the grave
Of good Alcanor. Talk'st of grateful minds?
Bid Zaphna plead for thee, and I may hear thee;
Till then, thou art my scorn—May'st thou, like me,
Behold thy dearest blood spilt at thy feet!
Mecca, Medina, all our Asian world,
Join, join to drive the impostor from the earth!
Blush at his chains, and shake them off in vengeance!
Mah. [*Aside.*] Be still, my soul, nor let a woman's rage
Ruffle thy wonted calm. Spite of thy hate,
Thou art lovely still, and charming even in madness.
[*A shout and noise of fighting.*
My fair, retire; nor let thy gentle soul
Shake with alarms; thou art my peculiar care:
I go to quell this traitorous insurrection,
And will attend thee straight.
Pal. No, tyrant, no;
I'll join my brother, help to head our friends,
And urge them on. [*A shout.*
Roll, roll your thunders, heavens, and aid the storm!
Now hurl your lightning on the guilty head,
And plead the cause of injured innocence!
[*Exit Pal.*

Enter ALI.

Mah. Whence, Ali, that surprise?
Ali. My royal chief,
The foe prevails. Thy troops, led on by Mirvan,
Are all cut off, and valiant Mirvan's self,
By Zaphna slain, lies weltering in his blood:
The guard, that to our arms should ope the gates,
Struck with the common phrenzy, vow thy ruin,
And death and vengeance is the general cry!
Mah. Can Ali fear? then, Mahomet, be thyself!
Ali. See, thy few friends, whom wild despair hath armed,
(But armed in vain) are come to die beside thee.
Mah. Ye heartless traitors! Mahomet alone
Shall be his own defender, and your guard
Against the crowds of Mecca—Follow me.
Ha!

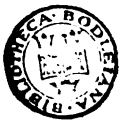
Enter ZAPHNA, PALMIRA, *and* PHARON, *with citizens, and the body of* ALCANOR *on a bier.*

Zaph. See, my friends, where the Impostor stands,

With head erect, as if he knew not guilt,
As if no tongue spake from Alcanor's wounds,
Nor called for vengeance on him.
Mah. Impious man!
Is it not enough to have spilt thy parent-blood,
But, with atrocious and blaspheming lips,
Darest thou arraign the substitute of Heaven!
Zaph. The substitute of Heaven! so is the sword,
The pestilence, the famine; such art thou;
Such are the blessings Heaven has sent to man
By thee its delegate; nay, more, to me.
Oh, he took pains, Palmira, upon us;
Deluded us into such monstrous crimes
As Nature sickened at conception of!——
How couldst thou damn us thus?
Mah. Babbler, avaunt!
Zaph. Well thou upbraid'st me; for to parley with thee
Half brands me coward. Oh, revenge me, friends!
Revenge Alcanor's massacre; revenge
Palmira's wrongs, and crush the rancorous monster!
Mah. Hear me, ye slaves, born to obey my will!
Pal. Ah, hear him not! fraud dwells upon his tongue.
Zaph. Have at thee, fiend—Ha! Heaven!
[*Zaphna advancing, reels, and reclines on his sword.*
What cloud is this
That thwarts upon my sight? My head grows dizzy,
My joints unloose; sure 'tis the stroke of Fate.
Mah. [*Aside.*] The poison works! then triumph, Mahomet!
Zaph. Off, off, base lethargy!
Pal. Brother, dismayed!
Hast thou not power but in a guilty cause,
And only strength to be a parricide?
Zaph. Spare that reproach—Come on—It will not be.
[*Hangs down his sword, and reclines on Pharon.*
Some cruel power unnerves my willing arm,
Blasts my resolves, and weighs me down to earth.
Mah. Such be the fate of all, who brave our law.
Nature and Death have heard my voice, and now
Let Heaven be judge 'twixt Zaphna and myself,
And instant blast the guilty of the two.
Pal. Brother! oh, Zaphna!
Zaph. Zaphna, now no more.
[*Sinking down by Alcanor's body, and leaning on the bier, Pharon kneeling down with him, and supporting him.*
Down, down, good Pharon—Thou poor injured corse,
May I embrace thee? Wont thy pallid wound
Purple anew at the unnatural touch,
And ooze fresh calls for vengeance?
Pal. Oh, my brother!
Zaph. In vain's the guiltless meaning of my heart;
High heaven detests the involuntary crime,
And dooms for parricide—Then tremble, tyrant!
If the Supreme can punish errors thus,
What new-invented tortures must await
Thy soul, grown leprous with such foul offences?
But soft—now Fate and Nature are at strife—
Sister, farewell! with transport should I quit
This toilsome, perilous, delusive stage,
But that I leave thee on it: leave thee, Palmira,
Exposed to what is worse than fear can image,
That tyrant's mercy; but I know thee brave;
Know that thou'lt act a part—Look on her Heaven,
Guide her, and—oh! [*Dies.*
Pal. Think not, ye men of Mecca,
This death inflicted by the hand of heaven;
'Tis he—that viper——
Mah. Know, ye faithless wretches!
'Tis mine to deal the bolts of angry heaven;
Behold them there, and let the wretch, who doubts,
Tremble at Zaphna's fate; and know, that Mahomet
Can read his thoughts, and doom him with a look.
Go then, and thank your pontiff and your prince
For each day's sun he grants you to behold.
Hence to your temples, and appease my rage!
[*The people go off.*
Pal. Ah, stay! my brother's murdered by this tyrant:
By poison, not by piety, he kills.
Mah. 'Tis done——Thus ever be our law received! [*Apart.*
Now, fair Palmira——
Pal. Monster! is it thus,
Thou makest thyself a god, by added crimes,
And murders justified by sacrilege?
Mah. Think, exquisite Palmira! for thy sake—
Pal. Thou'st been the murderer of all my race.
See where Alcanor, see where Zaphna, lies;
Do they not call for me too at thy hands?
Oh that they did!—But I can read thy thoughts;
Palmira's saved for something worse than death;
This to prevent——Zaphna, I follow thee.
[*Stabs herself with Zaphna's sword.*
Mah. What hast thou done!
Pal. A deed of glory, tyrant!
Thou hast left no object worth Palmira's eyes,
And, when I shut out light, I shut out thee——
[*Dies.*
Mah. Farewell, dear victim of my boundless passion!
The price of treachery, the reward of murder,
Sink with thee to the earth——Oh, justice, justice!
In vain are glory, worship, and dominion!
All conqueror as I am, I am a slave,
And, by the world adored, dwell with the damned!

My crimes have planted scorpions in my breast;
Here, here, I feel them. 'Tis in vain to brave
The host of terrors, that invade my soul:
I might deceive the world, myself I cannot.
Ali. Be calm a while, my lord; think what you are.
Mah. Ha! what am I? [*Turning to the bodies.*
Ye breathless family,
Let your loud crying wounds say what I am.
Oh! snatch me from that sight; quick, quick transport me
To nature's loneliest mansion, where the sun
Ne'er entered, where the sound of human tread
Was never heard—But wherefore? still I there,
There still, shall find myself—Ay, that's the hell!
I'll none on't. [*Drawing his sword.*
Ali. Heavens! help, hold him!
[*Ali, &c. disarm him.*

Mah. Paltry dastards!
You fled the foe, but can disarm your master!
Angel of death, whose power I've long proclaimed,
Now aid me, if thou canst; now, if thou canst,
Draw the kind curtain of eternal night,
And shroud me from the horrors, that beset me!
[*Exeunt Mahomet, &c.*
Pha. Oh! what a curse is life, when self-conviction
Flings our offences hourly in our face,
And turns existence torturer to itself!
Here let the mad enthusiast turn his eyes,
And see from bigotry what horrors rise;
Here in the blackest colours let him read,
That zeal, by craft misled, may act a deed,
By which both innocence and virtue bleed.
]*Exeunt omnes.*



TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

BY

THOMSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
TANCRED, *count of Leece.*	SIGISMUNDA, *daughter of Siffredi.*
MATTEO SIFFREDI, *lord high chancellor of Sicily.*	LAURA, *sister of Rodolpho, and friend to Sigismunda.*
EARL OSMOND, *lord high constable of Sicily.*	
RODOLPHO, *friend to Tancred, and captain of the guards.*	*Barons, Officers, Guards, &c.*

Scene—The city of Palermo, in Italy.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The palace.*

Enter SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Sig. AH, fatal day to Sicily! the king
Touches his last moments!
Laura. So 'tis feared.
Sig. The death of those distinguished by their station,
But by their virtue more, awakes the mind
To solemn dread, and strikes a saddening awe;
Not that we grieve for them, but for ourselves,
Left to the toil of life—And yet the best
Are, by the playful children of this world,
At once forgot, as they had never been.
Laura, 'tis said, the heart is sometimes charged
With a prophetic sadness: such, methinks,
Now hangs on mine. The king's approaching death
Suggests a thousand fears. What troubles thence
May throw the state once more into confusion,
What sudden changes in my father's house
May rise, and part me from my dearest Tancred,
Alarms my thoughts.
Laura. The fears of love-sick fancy!
Perversely busy to torment itself.
But be assured, your father's steady friendship,
Joined to a certain genius, that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,
Here, in the public eye of Sicily,
This, I may call him, his adopted son,
The noble Tancred, formed to all his virtues.
Sig. Ah, formed to charm his daughter!—This fair morn
Has tempted far the chase. Is he not yet
Returned?
Laura. No. When your father to the king,
Who now expiring lies, was called in haste,
He sent each way his messengers to find him;
With such a look of ardour and impatience,
As if this near event was to count Tancred
Of more importance than I comprehend.
Sig. There lies, my Laura, o'er my Tancred's birth
A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely accost,
Nay, with respect, which oft I have observed,
Stealing, at times, submissive o'er his features,
In Belmont's woods my father reared this youth—
Ah, woods! where first my artless bosom learned
The sighs of love.—He gives him out the son
Of an old friend, a baron of Apulia,

Who, in the late crusado, bravely fell.
But then 'tis strange; is all his family
As well as father dead? and all their friends,
Except my sire, the generous good Siffredi?
Had he a mother, sister, brother, left,
The last remain of kindred, with what pride,
What rapture, might they fly o'er earth and sea,
To claim this rising honour of their blood!
This bright unknown, this all-accomplished youth,
Who charms too much the heart of Sigismunda!
Laura, perhaps your brother knows him better,
The friend and partner of his freest hours.
What says Rodolpho? Does he truly credit
This story of his birth?

Laura. He has sometimes,
Like you, his doubts; yet, when maturely weighed,
Believes it true. As for lord Tancred's self,
He never entertained the slightest thought
That verged to doubt; but oft laments his state,
By cruel fortune so ill paired to yours.

Sig. Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth—Then, to your brother, Laura,
He talks of me?

Laura. Of nothing else. Howe'er
The talk begin, it ends with Sigismunda.
Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks,
Are full of you, and all the woods of Belmont
Enamoured with your name———

Sig. Away, my friend;
You flatter———yet the dear delusion charms.

Laura. No, Sigismunda, 'tis the strictest truth,
Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondness
My brother talks for ever of the passion
That fires young Tancred's breast. So much it strikes him,
He praises love as if he were a lover.
He blames the false pursuits of vagrant youth,
Calls them gay folly, a mistaken struggle
Against best judging nature. Heaven, he says,
In lavish bounty formed the heart for love;
In love included all the finer seeds
Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss——

Sig. Virtuous Rodolpho!

Laura. Then his pleasing theme
He varies to the praises of your lover——

Sig. And, what, my Laura, says he on the subject?

Laura. He says, that, though he was not nobly born,
Nature has formed him noble, generous, brave,
Truly magnanimous, and warmly scorning
Whatever bears the smallest taint of baseness;
That every easy virtue is his own;
Not learned by painful labour, but inspired,
Implanted in his soul. Chiefly one charm
He in his graceful character observes;
That though his passions burn with high impatience,
And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,
Are ready to fly off; yet the least check
Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,
And gentle softness.

Sig. True! Oh, true, Rodolpho!
Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his!
He is all warmth, all amiable fire,
All quick heroic ardour! tempered soft
With gentleness of heart, and manly reason!
If virtue were to wear a human form,
To light it with her dignity and flame,
Then softening, mix her smiles and tender graces—
Oh, she would choose the person of my Tancred!
Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praise him;
The subject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,
While my breast trembles to that sweetest music!
The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,
Is never flattered with such dear enchantment—
'Tis more than selfish vanity—as when
She hears the praises of the man she loves!

Laura. Madam, your father comes.

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. [*To an attendant as he enters.*] Lord Tancred
Is found?

Atten. My lord, he quickly will be here.
I scarce could keep before him, though he bid me
Speed on, to say he would attend your orders.

Sif. 'Tis well—retire—You, too, my daughter, leave me.

Sig. I go, my father—But how fares the king?

Sif. He is no more. Gone to that awful state,
Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

Sig. How bright must then be his!—This stroke is sudden;
He was this morning well, when to the chase
Lord Tancred went.

Sif. 'Tis true. But at his years
Death gives short notice—Drooping nature then,
Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls.
His death, my daughter, was that happy period
Which few attain. The duties of his day
Were all discharged, and gratefully enjoyed
Its noblest blessings; calm as evening skies
Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open heaven; when, for his last long sleep
Timely prepared, a lassitude of life,
A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,
Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.
Oh, may my death be such!—He but one wish
Left unfulfilled, which was to see count Tancred—

Sig. To see count Tancred!—Pardon me, my lord—

Sif. For what, my daughter?—But, with such emotion,
Why did you start at mention of count Tancred?

Sig. Nothing—I only hoped the dying king
Might mean to make some generous just provision
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

Sif. And he has done it largely—Leave me now—

I want some private conference with lord Tancred. [*Exeunt Sigismunda and Laura.*
My doubts are but too true—If these old eyes
Can trace the marks of love, a mutual passion
Has seized, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
My sovereign now—Should it be so? Ah, there,
There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake
My long concerted scheme, to settle firm
The public peace and welfare, which the king
Has made the prudent basis of his will——
Away, unworthy views! you shall not tempt me!
Nor interest, nor ambition shall seduce
My fixed resolve—Perish the selfish thought,
Which our own good prefers to that of millions!
He comes, my king, unconscious of his fortune.

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. My lord Siffredi, in your looks I read,
Confirmed, the mournful news that fly abroad
From tongue to tongue—We then, at last, have lost
The good old king?
Sif. Yes, we have lost a father!
The greatest blessing heaven bestows on mortals,
And seldom found amidst these wilds of time,
A good, a worthy king!—Hear me, my Tancred,
And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,
How he deserved that best, that glorious title.
'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.
He loved his people, deemed them all his children;
The good exalted, and depressed the bad.
He spurned the flattering crew, with scorn rejected
Their smooth advice that only means themselves,
Their schemes to aggrandize him into baseness;
Nor did he less disdain the secret breath,
The whispered tale, that blights a virtuous name.
He sought alone the good of those for whom
He was entrusted with the sovereign power:
Well knowing, that a people, in their rights
And industry protected; living safe
Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws;
Encouraged in their genius, arts and labours,
And happy each, as he himself deserves,
Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand,
They will for him provide: their filial love
And confidence are his unfailing treasure,
And every honest man his faithful guard.
Tan. A general face of grief o'erspreads the city.
I marked the people, as I hither came,
In crowds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,
And pouring forth the noblest praise—of tears.
Those, whom remembrance of their former woes,
And long experience of the vain illusions
Of youthful hope, had into wise consent
And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,
And, often casting up their eyes to heaven,
Gave sign of sad conjecture. Others shewed,
Athwart their grief, or real or affected,
A gleam of expectation, from what chance
And change might bring. A mingled murmur ran
Along the streets; and from the lonely court
Of him, who can no more assist their fortunes,
I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,
All hurrying to Constantia.
Sif. Noble youth!
I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,
Worthy of riper years—But if they seek
Constantia, trust me, they mistake their course.
Tan. How! Is she not, my lord, the late king's sister,
Heir to the crown of Sicily? the last
Of our famed Norman line, and now our queen?
Sif. Tancred, 'tis true; she is the late king's sister,
The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant
William the Bad—so for his vices stiled;
Who spilt much noble blood, and sore oppressed
The exhausted land: whence grievous wars arose,
And many a dire convulsion shook the state;
When he, whose death Sicilia mourns to-day,
William, who has, and well deserved the name
Of Good, succeeding to his father's throne,
Relieved his country's woes—But to return;
She is the late king's sister, born some months
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.
Tan. You much surprise me—May I then presume
To ask who is?
Sif. Come nearer, noble Tancred,
Son of my care. I must, on this occasion,
Consult thy generous heart; which, when conducted
By rectitude of mind and honest virtues,
Gives better counsel than the hoary head—
Then know, there lives a prince, here in Palermo,
The lineal offspring of our famous hero,
Roger the First.
Tan. Great Heaven! How far removed
From that our mighty founder?
Sif. His great grandson:
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,
Before his father.
Tan. Ha! the prince you mean,
Is he not Manfred's son? The generous, brave,
Unhappy Manfred? whom the tyrant William,
You just now mentioned, not content to spoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamously murdered?
Sif. Yes, the same.
Tan. By heavens, I joy to find our Norman reign,
The world's sole light amidst these barbarous ages,
Yet rears its head; and shall not, from the lance,
Pass to the feeble distaff.—But this prince,
Where has he lain concealed?
Sif. The late good king,
By noble pity moved, contrived to save him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage,
And had him reared in private, as became

His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,
By civil broils most miserably torn,
He, in his safe retreat, has lain concealed,
His birth and fortune to himself unknown;
But when the dying king to me intrusted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His successor he named him.
Tan. Happy youth!
He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty Osmond, and the tyrant's daughter.
Sif. Ay, that is what I dread—the heat of youth;
There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state;
I dread the horrors of rekindled war:
Though dead, the tyrant still is to be feared;
His daughter's party still is strong and numerous:
Her friend, earl Osmond, constable of Sicily,
Experienced, brave, high-born, of mighty interest.
Better the prince and princess should by marriage
Unite their friends, their interest, and their claims;
Then will the peace and welfare of the land
On a firm basis rise.
Tan. My lord Siffredi,
If by myself I of this prince may judge,
That scheme will scarce succeed—Your prudent age
In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it—
But wherefore fear? The right is clearly his;
And, under your direction, with each man
Of worth, and stedfast loyalty, to back
At once the king's appointment and his birthright,
There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,
Against the astonished sons of violence,
Who fight with awful justice on their side.
All Sicily will rouse, all faithful hearts
Will range themselves around prince Manfred's son.
For me, I here devote me to the service
Of this young prince; I every drop of blood
Will lose with joy, with transport, in his cause—
Pardon my warmth—but that, my lord, will never
To this decision come—Then find the prince;
Lose not a moment to awaken in him
The royal soul. Perhaps he now, desponding,
Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune,
That in the narrower bounds of private life
He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues
Which from his noble father he inherits.
Sif. Perhaps, regardless, in the common bane
Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.
But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,
I will awake a higher sense, a love,
That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.
Tan. Why that surmise? Or should he love, Siffredi,
I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise
And animate his virtues—Oh, permit me
To plead the cause of youth—Their virtue oft,
In pleasure's soft enchantment lulled awhile,
Forgets itself; it sleeps and gayly dreams,
Till great occasion rouse it; then, all flame,
It walks abroad, with heightened soul and vigour,
And by the change astonishes the world!
Even with a kind of sympathy, I feel
The joy that waits this prince; when all the powers,
The expanding heart can wish, of doing good;
Whatever swells ambition, or exalts
The human soul into divine emotions,
All crowd at once upon him.
Sif. Ah, my Tancred,
Nothing so easy as in speculation,
And at a distance seen, the course of honour;
A fair delightful champaign strewed with flowers.
But when the practice comes; when our fond passions,
Pleasure and pride, and self-indulgence, throw
Their magic dust around, the prospect roughens;
Then dreadful passes, craggy mountains rise,
Cliffs to be scaled, and torrents to be stemmed;
Then toil ensues, and perseverance stern;
And endless combats with our grosser sense,
Oft lost, and oft renewed; and generous pain
For others felt; and, harder lesson still!
Our honest bliss for others sacrificed;
And all the rugged task of virtue quells
The stoutest heart of common resolution.
Few get above this turbid scene of strife,
Few gain the summit, breathe that purest air,
That heavenly ether, which untroubled sees
The storm of vice and passion rage below.
Tan. Most true, my lord. But why thus augur ill?
You seem to doubt this prince. I know him not;
Yet, oh, methinks, my heart could answer for him!
The juncture is so high, so strong the gale
That blows from Heaven, as through the deadest soul
Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.
Sif. Hear him, immortal shades of his great fathers!—
Forgive me, sir, this trial of your heart.
Thou! thou, art he!
Tan. Siffredi!
Sif. Tancred, thou!
Thou art the man of all the many thousands
That toil upon the bosom of this isle,
By Heaven elected to command the rest,
To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!
Tan. Manfred my father! I the last support
Of the famed Norman line, that awes the world!
I, who this morning wandered forth an orphan,
Outcast of all but thee, my second father!
Thus called to glory! to the first great lot
Of human kind!—Oh, wonder-working hand,
That in majestic silence, sways at will
The mighty movements of unbounded nature!
Oh, grant me, Heaven, the virtues to sustain

This awful burden of so many heroes!
Let me not be exalted into shame,
Set up the worthless pageant of vain grandeur!
Meantime I thank the justice of the king,
Who has my right bequeathed me. Thee, Siffredi,
I thank thee—Oh, I ne'er enough can thank thee!
Yes, thou hast been—thou art—shalt be my father!
Thou shalt direct my inexperienced years,
Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.
Sif. It is enough—for me—to see my sovereign
Assert his virtues, and maintain his honour.
Tan. I think, my lord, you said the king committed
To you his will. I hope it is not clogged
With any base conditions, any clause,
To tyrannize my heart, and to Constantia
Enslave my hand, devoted to another.
The hint you just now gave of that alliance,
You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
In this alone I will not bear dispute,
Not even from thee, Siffredi!—Let the council
Be strait assembled, and the will there opened:
Thence issue speedy orders to convene,
This day ere noon, the senate: where those barons,
Who now are in Palermo, will attend,
To pay their ready homage to their king,
Their rightful king, who claims his native crown,
And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.
Sif. I go, my liege. But once again permit me
To tell you——Now, is the trying crisis,
That must determine of your future reign.
Oh, with heroic rigour watch your heart!
And to the sovereign duties of the king,
The unequalled pleasures of a god on earth,
Submit the common joys, the common passions,
Nay, even the virtues, of the private man,
Tan. Of that no more. They not oppose, but aid,
Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.
The kind all-ruling wisdom is no tyrant.
[*Exit Siffredi.*
Tan. Now, generous Sigismunda, comes my turn
To shew my love was not of thine unworthy,
When fortune bade me blush to look on thee.
But what is fortune to the wish of love?
A miserable bankrupt! Oh, 'tis poor,
'Tis scanty all, whate'er we can bestow!
The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want!
Quick, let me find her! taste that highest joy,
The exalted heart can know, the mixed effusion
Of gratitude and love! Behold, she comes!

Enter SIGISMUNDA.

Tan. My fluttering soul was all on wing to find thee,
My love, my Sigismunda!
Sif. Oh, my Tancred!
Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom
That lowers around? Just now, involved in thought,
My father shot athwart me—You, my lord,
Seem strangely moved—I fear some dark event,
From the king's death, to trouble our repose,
That tender calm we in the woods of Belmont
So happily enjoyed——Explain this hurry;
What means it? Say.
Tan. It means that we are happy!
Beyond our most romantic wishes happy!
Sig. You but perplex me more.
Tan. It means, my fairest,
That thou art queen of Sicily; and I
The happiest of mankind! than monarch more!
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant William's rage,
Famed Roger's lineal issue, was my father.
[*Pausing.*
You droop, my love; dejected on a sudden,
You seem to mourn my fortune—The soft tear
Springs in thy eye—Oh, let me kiss it off—
Why this, my Sigismunda?
Sig. Royal Tancred,
None at your glorious fortune can like me
Rejoice; yet me alone, of all Sicilians,
It makes unhappy.
Tan. I should hate it, then!
Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from me!
No, Sigismunda, 'tis my hope with thee
To share it, whence it draws its richest value.
Sig. You are my sovereign—I at humble distance—
Tan. Thou art my queen! the sovereign of my soul!
You never reigned with such triumphant lustre.
Such winning charms, as now; yet, thou art still
The dear, the tender, generous Sigismunda!
Who, with a heart exalted far above
Those selfish views that charm the common breast.
Stooped from the height of life and courted beauty,
Then, then, to love me, when I seemed of fortune
The hopeless outcast, when I had no friend,
None to protect and own me, but thy father.
And wouldst thou claim all goodness to thyself?
Canst thou thy Tancred deem so dully formed,
Of such gross clay, just as I reached the point—
A point my wildest hopes could ne'er imagine—
In that great moment, full of every virtue,
That I should then so mean a traitor prove
To the best bliss and honour of mankind,
So much disgrace the human heart, as then,
For the dead form of flattery and pomp,
The faithless joys of courts, to quit kind truth,
The cordial sweets of friendship and of love,
The life of life! my all, my Sigismunda!
I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,
Cruel, unjust, an outrage to my heart,
Did they not spring from love.
Sig. Think not, my lord,

That to such vulgar doubts I can descend.
Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought
Of changing with the vain, external change
Of circumstance and fortune. Rather thence
It would, with rising ardour, greatly feel
A noble pride, to shew itself the same.
But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.
There is a haughty duty, that subjects them
To chains of state, to wed the public welfare,
And not indulge the tender, private virtues.
Some high-descended princess, who will bring
New power and interest to your throne, demands
Your royal hand—perhaps Constantia——
Tan. She!
Oh, name her not! were I this moment free
And disengaged as he, who never felt
The powerful eye of beauty, never sighed
For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor
All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father
Most basely murdered mine; and she, his daughter,
Supported by his barbarous party still,
His pride inherits, his imperious spirit,
And insolent pretensions to my throne.
And canst thou deem me, then, so poorly tame,
So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
As from the prudent cowardice of state
E'er to submit to such a base proposal?
Detested thought! Oh, doubly, doubly hateful!
From the two strongest passions; from aversion
To this Constantia—and from love to thee.
Custom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,
O'er servile man extends a blind dominion:
The pride of kings enslaves them; their ambition,
Or interest, lords it o'er the better passions.
But vain their talk, masked under specious words
Of station, duty, and of public good.
They, whom just Heaven has to a throne exalted,
To guard the rights and liberties of others,
What duty binds them to betray their own?
For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates,
But those of truth and honour; wear no chains,
But the dear chains of love, and Sigismunda!
Or if indeed, my choice must be directed
By views of public good, whom shall I choose
So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,
And beam sweet mercy on a happy people,
As thee, my love? Whom place upon my throne
But thee, descended from the good Siffredi?
'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him
Whate'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.
Sig. Cease, cease to raise my hopes above my duty!
Charm me no more, my Tancred! Oh, that we
In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,
Had passed our gentle days, far from the toil
And pomp of courts! Such is the wish of love;
Of love that, with delightful weakness, knows
No bliss, and no ambition but itself.
But in the world's full light, those charming dreams,
Those fond illusions vanish. Awful duties,
The tyranny of men, even your own heart,
Where lurks a sense your passion stifles now,
And proud imperious honour, call you from me.
'Tis all in vain—you cannot hush a voice
That murmurs here—I must not be persuaded!
Tan. [*kneeling.*] Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes!
And witness Heaven, prime source of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world combined against me,
Its pride, its splendour, its imposing forms,
Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the face
Of solemn state, nor even thy father's wisdom,
Shall ever shake my faith to Sigismunda!
[*Trumpets and acclamations heard.*
But, hark! the public voice to duties calls me,
Which, with unwearied zeal, I will discharge;
And thou, yes, thou, shalt be my bright reward;
Yet—ere I go—to hush thy lovely fears,
Thy delicate objections—[*Writes his name.*]——
Take this blank,
Signed with my name, and give it to thy father:
Tell him, 'tis my command, it be filled up
With a most strict and solemn marriage-contract.
How dear each tie, how charming to my soul,
That more unites me to my Sigismunda!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*A grand Saloon.*

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. So far 'tis well——The late king's will proceeds
Upon the plan I counselled; that prince Tancred
Shall make Constantia partner of his throne.
Oh, great, oh, wished event! whence the dire seeds
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.
May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage
Of cruel faction, and my country's woes,
Tired with the toils and vanities of life,
Behold this period, then be closed in peace!
But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which love has thrown betwixt? Love, that disturbs
The schemes of wisdom still; that, winged with passion,
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits,
Leaves the grey-headed reason far behind.
Alas, how frail the state of human bliss!
When even our honest passions oft destroy it.

I was to blame, in solitude and shades,
Infectious scenes! to trust their youthful hearts.
Would I had marked the rising flame, that now
Burns out with dangerous force! My daughter owns
Her passion for the king; she, trembling, owned it,
With prayers, and tears, and tender supplications,
That almost shook my firmness—and this blank,
Which his rash fondness gave her, shews how much,
To what a wild extravagance he loves——
I see no means—it foils my deepest thought—
How to controul this madness of the king,
That wears the face of virtue, and will thence
Disdain restraint, will, from his generous heart,
Borrow new rage, even speciously oppose
To reason, reason——But it must be done.
My own advice, of which I more and more
Approve, the strict conditions of the will,
Highly demand his marriage with Constantia;
Or else her party has a fair pretence——
And all at once is horror and confusion——
How issue from this maze?——The crowding barons
Here summoned to the palace, meet already,
To pay their homage, and confirm the will.
On a few moments hangs the public fate,
On a few hasty moments——Ha! there shone
A gleam of hope——Yes, with this very paper
I yet will save him——Necessary means,
For good and noble ends, can ne'er be wrong.
In that resistless, that peculiar case,
Deceit is truth and virtue——But how hold
This lion in the toil?——Oh, I will form it
Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong
With all the ties of honour and of duty,
That his most desperate fury shall not break
The honest snare. Here is the royal hand——
I will beneath it write a perfect, full,
And absolute agreement to the will;
Which read before the nobles of the realm
Assembled, in the sacred face of Sicily,
Constantia present, every heart and eye
Fixed on their monarch, every tongue applauding,
He must submit, his dream of love must vanish.
It shall be done——To me, I know, 'tis ruin;
But safety to the public, to the king.
I will not reason more, I will not listen
Even to the voice of honour. No——'tis fixed!
I here devote me for my prince and country;
Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish!
Behold, Earl Osmond comes, without whose aid
My schemes are all in vain.

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. My lord Siffredi,
I from the council hastened to Constantia,
And have accomplished what we there proposed.
The princess to the will submits her claims.
She with her presence means to grace the senate,
And of your royal charge, young Tancred's hand,
Accept. At first, indeed, it shocked her hopes
Of reigning sole, this new, surprising scene
Of Manfred's son, appointed by the king,
With her joint heir——But I so fully shewed
The justice of the case, the public good,
And sure established peace which thence would rise,
Joined to the strong necessity that urged her,
If on Sicilia's throne she meant to sit,
As to the wise disposal of the will
Her high ambition tamed. Methought, besides,
I could discern, that not from prudence merely
She to this choice submitted.

Sif. Noble Osmond,
You have in this done to the public great
And signal service. Yes, I must avow it;
This frank and ready instance of your zeal,
In such a trying crisis of the state,
When interest and ambition might have warped
Your views, I own this truly generous virtue
Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.

Osm. Siffredi, no. To you belongs the praise;
The glorious work is yours. Had I not seized,
Improved the wished occasion to root out
Division from the land, and save my country,
I had been base and infamous for ever.
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thousands,
That by the barbarous sword of civil war
Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives; to you
The sons of this fair isle, from her first peers
Down to the swain who tills her golden plains,
Owe their safe homes, their soft domestic hours,
And through late time posterity shall bless you,
You who advised this will. I blush to think
I have so long opposed the best good man
In Sicily——With what impartial care
Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and passion.
Nor trust too much the jaundiced eye of party!
Henceforth its vain delusions I renounce,
Its hot determinations, that confine
All merit and all virtue to itself.
To yours I join my hand; with you will own
No interest, and no party but my country.
Nor is your friendship only my ambition:
There is a dearer name, the name of father,
By which I should rejoice to call Siffredi.
Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
Unite my private happiness.

Sif. My lord,
You have my glad consent. To be allied
To your distinguished family and merit,
I shall esteem an honour. From my soul
I here embrace earl Osmond as my friend
And son.

Osm. You make him happy. This assent,
So frank and warm, to what I long have wished,
Engages all my gratitude; at once,
In the first blossom, it matures our friendship.
I from this moment vow myself the friend

And zealous servant of Siffredi's house.

Enter an Officer belonging to the Court.

Offi. [*To Siffredi.*] The king, my lord, demands your speedy presence.

Sif. I will attend him strait—Farewell, my lord;
The senate meets: there, a few moments hence,
I will rejoin you.

Om. There, my noble lord,
We will complete this salutary work;
Will there begin a new auspicious era.

[*Exeunt Siffredi and Officer.*

Siffredi gives his daughter to my wishes—
But does she give herself? Gay, young, and flattered,
Perhaps engaged, will she her youthful heart
Yield to my harsher, uncomplying years?
I am not formed, by flattery and praise,
By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade
Of love, to feed a fair one's vanity;
To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts
Suit not my years nor temper; these be left
To boys and doting age. A prudent father,
By nature charged to guide and rule her choice,
Resigns his daughter to a husband's power,
Who with superior dignity, with reason,
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

Enter Barons.

My lords, I greet you well. This wondrous day
Unites us all in amity and friendship.
We meet to-day with open hearts and looks,
Not gloomed by party, scowling on each other,
But all the children of one happy isle,
The social sons of liberty. No pride,
No passion now, no thwarting views divide us:
Prince Manfred's line, at last to William's joined,
Combine us in one family of brothers.
This to the late good king's well-ordered will,
And wise Siffredi's generous care, we owe.
I truly give you joy. First of you all,
I here renounce those errors and divisions,
That have so long disturbed our peace, and seemed,
Fermenting still, to threaten new commotions—
By time instructed, let us not disdain
To quit mistakes. We all, my lords, have erred.
Men may, I find, be honest, though they differ.

1*st Baron.* Who follows not, my lord, the fair example
You set us all, whate'er be his pretence,
Loves not, with single and unbiassed heart,
His country as he ought.

2*d Baron.* Oh, beauteous peace!
Sweet union of a state! what else but thou
Gives safety, strength, and glory to a people?
I bow, lord constable, beneath the snow
Of many years; yet in my breast revives
A youthful flame. Methinks, I see again
Those gentle days renewed, that blessed our isle,
Ere by this wasteful fury of division,
Worse than our Ætna's most destructive fires,
It desolated sunk. I see our plains
Unbounded waving with the gifts of harvest;
Our seas with commerce thronged; our busy ports
With cheerful toil. Our Enna blooms afresh;
Afresh the sweets of thymy Hybla flow.
Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,
Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed—
The tongue of age is fond—Come, come, my sons;
I long to see this prince, of whom the world
Speaks largely well—His father was my friend,
The brave unhappy Manfred—Come, my lords;
We tarry here too long.

Enter two Officers keeping off the Crowd.

One of the Crowd. Shew us our king,
The valiant Manfred's son, who loved the people—
We must, we will behold him—Give us way.

1*st Offi.* Pray, gentlemen, give back—it must not be—
Give back, I pray——on such a glad occasion,
I would not ill entreat the lowest of you.

2*d Man of the Crowd.* Nay, give us but a glimpse of our young king!
We, more than any baron of them all,
Will pay him due allegiance.

2*d Offi.* Friends—indeed
You cannot pass this way——We have strict orders,
To keep for him himself, and for the barons,
All these apartments clear——Go to the gate
That fronts the sea; you there will find admission.

Omnes. Long live king Tancred! Manfred's son—huzza!

[*Crowd goes off. Shouts within.*

1*st Offi.* I do not marvel at their rage of joy:
He is a brave and amiable prince.
When in my lord Siffredi's house I lived,
Ere, by his favour, I obtained this office,
I there remember well the young count Tancred.
To see him and to love him were the same;
He was so noble in his ways, yet still
So affable and mild——Well, well, old Sicily,
Yet happy days await thee!

2*d Offi.* Grant it, Heaven!
We have seen sad and troublesome times enough.
He is, they say, to wed the late king's sister,
Constantia.

1*st Offi.* Friend, of that I greatly doubt.
Or I mistake, or lord Siffredi's daughter,
The gentle Sigismunda, has his heart.
If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,
And fond assiduous care to please each other,
Most certainly they love——Oh, be they blest,
As they deserve! It were great pity aught
Should part a matchless pair; the glory he,
And she the blooming grace of Sicily!

2*d Offi.* My lord Rodolpho comes.

Enter RODOLPHO *from the senate.*

Rod. My honest friends,
You may retire. [*Officers go out.*] A storm is in the wind.
This will perplexes all. No! Tancred never
Can stoop to these conditions, which at once
Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.
Those wise old men, those plodding, grave state pedants,
Forget the course of youth; their crooked prudence,
To baseness verging still, forgets to take
Into their fine-spun schemes the generous heart,
That, through the cobweb system bursting, lays
Their labours waste—So will this business prove,
Or I mistake the king. Back from the pomp
He seemed at first to shrink, and round his brow
I marked a gathering cloud, when, by his side,
As if designed to share the public homage,
He saw the tyrant's daughter. But confessed,
At least to me, the doubling tempest frowned,
And shook his swelling bosom, when he heard
The unjust, the base conditions of the will.
Uncertain, tost in cruel agitation,
He oft, methought, addressed himself to speak,
And interrupt Siffredi; who appeared,
With conscious haste, to dread that interruption,
And hurried on——But hark! I hear a noise,
As if the assembly rose—Ha! Sigismunda,
Oppressed with grief, and wrapped in pensive sorrow,
Passes along.
[*Sigismunda and attendants pass through the back scene.*]

Enter LAURA.

Laura. Your high-praised friend, the king,
Is false, most vilely false. The meanest slave
Had shewn a nobler heart; nor grossly thus,
By the first bait ambition spread, been gulled.
He Manfred's son! away! it cannot be!
The son of that brave prince could ne'er betray
Those rights so long usurped from his great father,
Which he, this day, by such amazing fortune,
Had just regained; he ne'er could sacrifice
All faith, all honour, gratitude, and love,
Even just resentment of his father's fate,
And pride itself; whate'er exalts a man
Above the grovelling sons of peasant mud,
All in a moment—And for what? why, truly,
For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit
On his own throne with tyrant William's daughter!

Rod. I stand amazed—You surely wrong him, Laura.
There must be some mistake.

Laura. There can be none!
Siffredi read his full and free consent
Before the applauding senate. True, indeed,
A small remain of shame, a timorous weakness,
Even dastardly in falsehood, made him blush
To act this scene in Sigismunda's eye,
Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.
Hence, till to-morrow he adjourned the senate!
To-morrow, fixed with infamy to crown him!
Then, leading off his gay, triumphant princess,
He left the poor unhappy Sigismunda
To bend her trembling steps to that sad home
His faithless vows will render hateful to her——
He comes—Farewell——I cannot bear his presence! [*Exit Laura.*

Enter TANCRED *and* SIFFREDI, *meeting.*

Tan. Avoid me, hoary traitor! Go, Rodolpho,
Give orders that all passages this way
Be shut—Defend me from a hateful world,
The bane of peace and honour—then return—
[*Exit Rodolpho.*
What! dost thou haunt me still? Oh, monstrous insult!
Unparalleled indignity! Just Heaven!
Was ever king, was ever man, so treated;
So trampled into baseness!

Sif. Here, my liege,
Here strike! I nor deserve, nor ask for mercy.

Tan. Distraction!—Oh, my soul!—Hold, reason, hold
Thy giddy seat.—Oh, this inhuman outrage
Unhinges thought!

Sif. Exterminate thy servant.

Tan. All, all but this I could have borne—but this!
This daring insolence beyond example!
This murderous stroke, that stabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human heart
Most exquisitely feels——

Sif. Oh, bear it not,
My royal lord; appease on me your vengeance!

Tan. Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel?
The lowest slave that crawls upon the earth,
Robbed of each comfort Heaven bestows on mortals,
On the bare ground has still his virtue left,
The sacred treasure of an honest heart!
Which thou hast dared, with rash, audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate——

Sif. Behold, my lord, that rash, audacious hand,
Which not repents its crime—Oh, glorious, happy!
If, by my ruin, I can save your honour.

Tan. Such honour I renounce; with sovereign scorn
Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser!
Hast thou not dared beneath my name to shelter—
My name, for other purposes designed,
Given, from the fondness of a faithful heart,
With the best love o'erflowing—Hast thou not,
Beneath thy sovereign's name, basely presumed
To shield a lie—a lie, in public uttered,

To all deluded Sicily? But know,
This poor contrivance is as weak as base.
In such a wretched toil none can be held
But fools and cowards.——Soon thy flimsy arts,
Touched by my just, my burning indignation,
Shall burst, like threads, in flame.—Thy doating prudence
But more secures the purpose it would shake.
Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,
This would confirm them, make them fixed as fate;
This adds the only motive that was wanting,
To urge them on through war and desolation.
What! marry her! Constantia! her! the daughter
Of the fell tyrant who destroyed my father!
The very thought is madness! Ere thou seest
The torch of Hymen light these hated nuptials,
Thou shalt behold Sicilia wrapt in flames,
Her cities razed, her vallies drenched with slaughter——
Love set aside, my pride assumes the quarrel;
My honour now is up; in spite of thee,
A world combined against me, I will give
This scattered will in fragments to the winds,
Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,
And heap perdition on thee!

Sif. Sir, 'tis just.
Exhaust on me thy rage; I claim it all.
But for these public threats thy passion utters,
'Tis what thou canst not do.

Tan. I cannot! ha!
Driven to the dreadful brink of such dishonour,
Enough to make the tamest coward brave,
And into fierceness rouse the mildest nature,
What shall arrest my vengeance? Who?

Sif. Thyself.

Tan. Away! Dare not to justify thy crime!
That, that alone can aggravate its horror;
Add insolence to insolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget——

Sif. Oh, let it burst
On this grey head, devoted to thy service!
But when the storm has vented all its fury,
Thou then must hear—nay, more, I know thou wilt——
Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason.
Thou must reflect, that a whole people's safety,
The weal of trusted millions, should bear down,
Thyself the judge, the fondest partial pleasure.
Thou must reflect, that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,
Superior pleasures far, that will oblige,
Compel thee, to abide by this my deed,
Unwarranted, perhaps, in common justice,
But which necessity, even virtue's tyrant,
With awful voice commanded.—Yes, thou must,
In calmer hours, divest thee of thy love,
These common passions of the vulgar breast,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king,
The lover of thy people!

Tan. Truths, ill employed,
Abused to colour guilt!——A king! a king!
Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave;
In this will be a king; in this my people
Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
When they behold me vindicate my own.
But have I, say, been treated like a king?——
Heavens! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,
I were a mean, a shameless wretch, unworthy
To wield a sceptre in a land of slaves,
A soil abhorred of virtue; should belie
My father's blood, belie those very maxims,
At other times you taught my youth—Siffredi!
[*In a softened tone of voice.*

Sif. Behold, my prince, thy poor old servant,
Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been
To nurse thee up to virtue; who, for thee,
Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,
All interest or ambition can pour forth;
What many a selfish father would pursue
Through treachery and crimes. Behold him here,
Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
With tears to beg thee to controul thy passion,
And save thyself, thy honour, and thy people!
Kneeling with me, behold the many thousands
To thy protection trusted; fathers, mothers,
The sacred front of venerable age,
The tender virgin, and the helpless infant;
The ministers of Heaven, those who maintain,
Around thy throne, the majesty of rule;
And those whose labour, scorched by wind and sun,
Feeds the rejoicing public:—see them all
Here, at thy feet, conjuring thee to save them
From misery and war, from crimes and rapine!
Can there be aught, kind Heaven, in self-indulgence,
To weigh down these, this aggregate of love,
With which compared, the dearest private passion
Is but the wafted dust upon the balance?
Turn not away——Oh! is there not some part
In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness,
And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel
The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice
Of Heaven and earth?

Tan. There is, and thou hast touched it.
Rise, rise, Siffredi——Oh, thou hast undone me!
Unkind old man!——Oh, ill-entreated Tancred!
Which way soe'er I turn, dishonour rears
Her hideous front—and misery and ruin!
Was it for this you took such care to form me!
For this imbued me with the quickest sense
Of shame; these finer feelings, that ne'er vex
The common mass of mortals, dully happy
In blessed insensibility? Oh, rather
You should have seared my heart, taught me, that power,
And splendid interest, lord it still o'er virtue;
That, gilded by prosperity and pride,
There is no shame, no meanness; tempered thus,
I had been fit to rule a venal world.

Alas! what meant thy wantonness of prudence?
Why have you raised this miserable conflict,
Betwixt the duties of the king and man?
Set virtue against virtue?——Ah, Siffredi!
'Tis thy superfluous, thy unfeeling wisdom,
That has involved me in a maze of error
Almost beyond retreat.——But hold, my soul,
Thy steady purpose——Tost by various passions,
To this eternal anchor keep.——There is,
Can be, no public without private virtue——
Then, mark me well, observe what I command;
It is the sole expedient now remaining.
To-morrow, when the senate meets again,
Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit:
Nor that alone; try to repair its mischief;
There all thy power, thy eloquence, and interest,
Exert, to reinstate me in my rights,
And from thy own dark snares to disembroil me.
Start not, my lord—this must, and shall be done!
Or here our friendship ends—Howe'er disguised,
Whatever thy pretence, thou art a traitor.

Sif. I should, indeed, deserve the name of traitor,
And even a traitor's fate, had I so slightly,
From principles so weak, done what I did,
As e'er to disavow it.

Tan. Ha!

Sif. My liege,
Expect not this.—Though practised long in courts,
I have not so far learned their subtle trade,
To veer obedient with each gust of passion.
I honour thee, I venerate thy orders;
But honour more my duty. Nought on earth
Shall ever shake me from that solid rock,
Nor smiles, nor frowns.——

Tan. You will not, then?

Sif. I cannot.

Tan. Away! begone!—Oh, my Rodolpho, come,
And save me from this traitor! Hence, I say!
Avoid my presence strait! and know, old man,
Thou, my worst foe, beneath the mask of friendship,
Who, not content to trample in the dust
My dearest rights, dost, with cool insolence,
Persist, and call it duty; hadst thou not
A daughter, that protects thee, thou shouldst feel
The vengeance thou deservest.——No reply!
Away! [*Exit Siffredi.*

Enter RODOLPHO.

Rod. What can incense my prince so highly
Against his friend Siffredi?

Tan. Friend! Rodolpho?
When I have told thee what this friend has done,
How played me like a boy, a base-born wretch,
Who had not heart nor spirit, thou wilt stand
Amazed, and wonder at my stupid patience.

Rod. I heard, with mixed astonishment and grief,
The king's unjust, dishonourable will,
Void in itself—I saw you stung with rage,
And writhing in the snare; just as I went,
At your command to wait you here—but that
Was the king's deed, not his.

Tan. Oh, be advised it!
These many years he has in secret hatched
This black contrivance, glories in the scheme,
And proudly plumes him with his traiterous virtue.
But that was nought, Rodolpho, nothing, nothing!
Oh, that was gentle, blameless to what followed!
I had, my friend, to Sigismunda given,
To hush her fears, in the full gush of fondness,
A blank signed with my hand—and he, oh, Heavens!
Was ever such a wild attempt!—he wrote,
Beneath my name, an absolute compliance
To this detested will—nay, dared to read it
Before myself, on my insulted throne
His idle pageant placed——Oh! words are weak
To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation,
That whirled, from thought to thought, my soul in tempest,
Now on the point to burst, and now by shame
Repressed——But, in the face of Sicily,
All mad with acclamation, what, Rodolpho,
What could I do? the sole relief that rose
To my distracted mind, was to adjourn
The assembly till to-morrow—But to-morrow
What can be done?—Oh, it avails not what!
I care not what is done—My only care
Is how to clear my faith with Sigismunda.
She thinks me false! She cast a look that killed me!
Oh! I am base in Sigismunda's eye!
The lowest of mankind, the most perfidious!

Rod. This was a strain of insolence indeed,
A daring outrage of so strange a nature
As stuns me quite——

Tan. Cursed be my timid prudence,
That dashed not back, that moment, in his face,
The bold, presumptuous lie!—and cursed this hand,
That, from a start of poor dissimulation,
Led off my Sigismunda's hated rival.
Ah, then! what, poisoned by the false appearance,
What, Sigismunda, were thy thoughts of me?
How, in the silent bitterness of soul,
How didst thou scorn me! hate mankind, thyself,
For trusting to the vows of faithless Tancred?
For such I seemed—I was—the thought distracts me!
I should have cast a flattering world aside,
Rushed from my throne, before them all avowed her,
The choice, the glory of my free-born heart,
And spurned the shameful fetters thrown upon it—
Instead of that—confusion!—what I did
Has clinched the chain, confirmed Siffredi's crime,
And fixed me down to infamy!

Rod. My lord,
Blame not the conduct which your situation
Tore from your tortured heart—What could you do?
Had you, so circumstanced, in open senate,
Before the astonished public, with no friends
Prepared, no party formed, affronted thus
The haughty princess and her powerful faction,
Supported by this will, the sudden stroke,
Abrupt and premature, might have recoiled
Upon yourself, even your own friends revolted,
And turned at once the public scale against you.
Besides, consider, had you then detected
In its fresh guilt this action of Siffredi,
You must, with signal vengeance, have chastised
The treasonable deed—Nothing so mean
As weak, insulted power that dares not punish.
And how would that have suited with your love?
His daughter present too? Trust me, your conduct,
Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,
Was fortunate and wise—Not that I mean
E'er to advise submission———
Tan. Heavens! submission———
Could I descend to bear it, even in thought,
Despise me, you, the world, and Sigismunda!
Submission!—No!—To-morrow's glorious light
Shall flash discovery on the scene of baseness.
Whatever be the risk, by heavens! to-morrow,
I will o'erturn the dirty lie-built schemes
Of these old men, and shew my faithful senate,
That Manfred's son knows to assert and wear,
With undiminished dignity, that crown
This unexpected day has placed upon him.
But this, my friend, these stormy gusts of pride
Are foreign to my love——Till Sigismunda
Be disabused, my breast is tumult all,
And can obey no settled course of reason.
I see her still, I feel her powerful image,
That look, where with reproach complaint was mixed,
Big with soft woe, and gentle indignation,
Which seemed at once to pity and to scorn me——
Oh, let me find her! I too long have left
My Sigismunda to converse with tears,
A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.
But ah! how, clogged with this accursed state,
A tedious world, shall I now find access?
Her father too—Ten thousand horrors crowd
Into the wild, fantastic eye of love———
Who knows what he may do? Come, then, my friend,
And by thy sister's hand, oh, let me steal
A letter to her bosom—I no longer
Can bear her absence, by the just contempt
She now must brand me with, inflamed to madness.
Fly, my Rodolpho, fly! engage thy sister
To aid my letter.
And this very evening
Secure an interview—I would not bear
This rack another day, not for my kingdom.
Till then, deep plunged in solitude and shades,
I will not see the hated face of man.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

SIGISMUNDA *alone, sitting in a disconsolate posture.*

Ah, tyrant prince! ah more than faithless Tancred!
Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falsehood!
Hadst thou this morning, when my hopeless heart,
Submissive to my fortune and my duty,
Had so much spirit left, as to be willing
To give thee back thy vows, ah! hadst thou then
Confessed the sad necessity thy state
Imposed upon thee, and with gentle friendship,
Since we must part at last, our parting softened;
I should indeed—I should have been unhappy,
But not to this extreme—Amidst my grief,
I had, with pensive pleasure, cherished still
The sweet remembrance of thy former love.
Thy image still had dwelt upon my soul,
And made our guiltless woes not undelightful.
But coolly thus—How couldst thou be so cruel?
Thus to revive my hopes, to soothe my love,
And call forth all its tenderness, then sink me
In black despair—What unrelenting pride
Possessed thy breast, that thou couldst bear, unmoved,
To see me bent beneath a weight of shame?
Pangs thou canst never feel! How couldst thou drag me,
In barbarous triumph at a rival's car?
How make me witness to a sight of horror?
That hand, which, but a few short hours ago,
So wantonly abused my simple faith,
Before the attesting world given to another,
Irrevocably given!—There was a time,
When the least cloud that hung upon my brow,
Perhaps imagined only, touched thy pity.
Then, brightened often by the ready tear,
Thy looks were softness all; then the quick heart,
In every nerve alive, forgot itself,
And for each other then we felt alone.
But now, alas! those tender days are fled;
Now thou canst see me wretched, pierced with anguish,
With studied anguish of thy own creating,
Nor wet thy hardened eye—Hold, let me think—
I wrong thee sure; thou canst not be so base,
As meanly in my misery to triumph—

What is it, then!—'Tis fickleness of nature,
'Tis sickly love extinguished by ambition——
Is there, kind Heaven, no constancy in man?
No stedfast truth, no generous fixed affection,
That can bear up against a selfish world?
No, there is none—even Tancred is inconstant!
[*Rising.*
Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,
These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds me,
Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly?
The groves are worse; the soft retreat of Belmont,
Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy summits,
Will wound my busy memory to torture,
And all its shades will whisper—faithless Tancred!—
My father comes—How, sunk in this disorder,
Shall I sustain his presence?

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. Sigismunda,
My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus
A prey to tears. I know the powerful cause
From which they flow, and therefore can excuse them,
But not their wilful obstinate continuance.
Come, rouse thee, then, call up thy drooping spirit,
Awake to reason from this dream of love,
And shew the world thou art Siffredi's daughter.
Sig. Alas! I am unworthy of that name.
Sif. Thou art indeed to blame; thou hast too rashly
Engaged thy heart, without a father's sanction,
But this I can forgive. The king has virtues,
That plead thy full excuse; nor was I void
Of blame, to trust thee to those dangerous virtues.
Then dread not my reproaches. Though he blames,
Thy tender father pities, more than blames thee.
Thou art my daughter still; and, if thy heart
Will now resume its pride, assert itself,
And greatly rise superior to this trial,
I to my warmest confidence again
Will take thee, and esteem thee more, my daughter.
Sig. Oh, you are gentler far than I deserve!
It is, it ever was, my darling pride,
To bend my soul to your supreme commands,
Your wisest will; and though, by love betrayed—
Alas! and punished too—I have transgressed
The nicest bounds of duty, yet I feel
A sentiment of tenderness, a source
Of filial nature springing in my breast,
That, should it kill me, shall controul this passion,
And make me all submission and obedience
To you, my honoured lord, the best of fathers.
Sif. Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age!
Thou only joy and hope of these grey hairs!
Come, let me take thee to a parent's heart;
There, with the kindly aid of my advice,
Even with the dew of these paternal tears,
Revive and nourish this becoming spirit——
Then thou dost promise me, my Sigismunda——
Thy father stoops to make it his request—
Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,
And henceforth never more indulge one thought,
That in the light of love regards the king?
Sig. Hopes I have none!—Those by this fatal day
Are blasted all—But from my soul to banish,
While weeping memory there retains her seat,
Thoughts which the purest bosom might have cherished,
Once my delight, now even in anguish charming,
Is more, my lord, than I can promise.
Sif. Absence, and time, the softener of our passions,
Will conquer this. Meantime, I hope from thee
A generous great effort; that thou wilt now
Exert thy utmost force, nor languish thus
Beneath the vain extravagance of love.
Let not thy father blush to hear it said,
His daughter was so weak, e'er to admit
A thought so void of reason, that a king
Should, to his rank, his honour, and his glory,
The high important duties of a throne,
Even to his throne itself, madly prefer
A wild romantic passion, the fond child
Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours;
That he should quit his heaven-appointed station,
Desert his awful charge, the care of all
The toiling millions which this isle contains;
Nay, more, should plunge them into war and ruin,
And all to soothe a sick imagination,
A miserable weakness. What! must for thee,
To make thee blest, Sicilia be unhappy?
The king himself, lost to the nobler sense
Of manly praise, become the piteous hero
Of some soft tale, and rush on sure destruction?
Canst thou, my daughter, let the monstrous thought
Possess one moment thy perverted fancy?
Rouse thee, for shame! and if a spark of virtue
Lies slumbering in thy soul, bid it blaze forth;
Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson,
This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.
Sig. Ah, that was not from virtue!—Had, my father,
That been his aim, I yield to what you say;
'Tis powerful truth, unanswerable reason.
Then, then, with sad but duteous resignation,
I had submitted as became your daughter;
But in that moment, when my humbled hopes
Were to my duty reconciled, to raise them
To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,

Then rudely dash them down—There is the sting!
The blasting view is ever present to me——
Why did you drag me to a sight so cruel!
Sif. It was a scene to fire thy emulation.
Sig. It was a scene of perfidy!—But know,
I will do more than imitate the king—
For he is false!—I, though sincerely pierced
With the best, truest passion, ever touched
A virgin's breast, here vow to Heaven and you,
Though from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
To cast this prince—What would you more, my father?
Sif. Yes, one thing more—thy father then is happy—
Though by the voice of innocence and virtue
Absolved, we live not to ourselves alone:
A rigorous world, with peremptory sway,
Subjects us all, and even the noblest most.
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
Demands one step; a step, by which, convinced,
The king may see thy heart disdains to wear
A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.
'Tis fitting too, thy sex's pride commands thee,
To shew the approving world thou canst resign,
As well as he, nor with inferior spirit,
A passion fatal to the public weal.
But above all, thou must root out for ever
From the king's breast the least remain of hope,
And henceforth make his mentioned love dishonour.
These things, my daughter, that must needs be done,
Can but this way be done—by the safe refuge,
The sacred shelter, of a husband's arms.
And there is one——
Sig. Good heavens! what means my lord?
Sif. One of illustrious family, high rank,
Yet still of higher dignity and merit,
Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
The king himself—Nay, hear me, Sigismunda—
The noble Osmond courts thee for his bride,
And has my plighted word—This day—
Sig. [*Kneeling.*] My father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees!
Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
When, as I prattling twined around your neck,
You snatched me to your bosom, kissed my eyes,
And melting said you saw my mother there;
Oh, save me from that worst severity
Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree!—I cannot!—'tis impossible!—
So soon withdraw it, give it to another—
Hear me, my dearest father; hear the voice
Of nature and humanity, that plead
As well as justice for me!——Not to choose
Without your wise direction may be duty;
But still my choice is free—that is a right,
Which even the lowest slave can never lose;
And would you thus degrade me!—make me base?
For such it were to give my worthless person
Without my heart, an injury to Osmond,
The highest can be done—Let me, my lord—
Or I shall die, shall, by the sudden change,
Be to distraction shocked—Let me wear out
My hapless days in solitude and silence,
Far from the malice of a prying world;
At least—you cannot sure refuse me this——
Give me a little time—I will do all,
All I can do, to please you!—Oh, your eye
Sheds a kind beam——
Sif. My daughter! you abuse
The softness of my nature—
Sig. Here, my father,
'Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!
Sif. Rise, Sigismunda.—Though you touch my heart,
Nothing can shake the inexorable dictates
Of honour, duty, and determined reason.
Then by the holy ties of filial love,
Resolve, I charge thee, to receive earl Osmond,
As suits the man who is thy father's choice,
And worthy of thy hand—I go to bring him—
Sig. Spare me, my dearest father!
Sif. [*Aside.*] I must rush
From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me!
Oh, grant us, Heaven! that fortitude of mind,
Which listens to our duty, not our passions!
Quit me, my child!
Sig. You cannot, oh, my father!
You cannot leave me thus!
Sif. Come hither, Laura,
Come to thy friend. Now shew thyself a friend.
Combat her weakness; dissipate her tears:
Cherish, and reconcile her to her duty.
[*Exit Siffredi.*

Enter LAURA.

Sig. Oh, woe on woe! distressed by love and duty!
Oh, every way unhappy Sigismunda!
Laura. Forgive me, madam, if I blame your grief.
How can you waste your tears on one so false?
Unworthy of your tenderness; to whom
Nought but contempt is due, and indignation?
Sig. You know not half the horrors of my fate!
I might perhaps have learned to scorn his falsehood;
Nay, when the first sad burst of tears was past,
I might have roused my pride and scorned myself—
But 'tis too much, this greatest last misfortune—
Oh, whither shall I fly? Where hide me, Laura,
From the dire scene my father now prepares?
Laura. What thus alarms you, madam?
Sig. Can it be?
Can!——ah, no!——at once give to another
My violated heart? in one wild moment?
He brings earl Osmond to receive my vows.
Oh, dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond!

Laura. Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outraged heart
Like yours should wish! I should, by Heavens, esteem it
Most exquisite revenge!
Sig. Revenge! on whom?
On my own heart, already but too wretched!
Laura. On him! this Tancred! who has basely sold,
For the dull form of despicable grandeur,
His faith, his love! At once a slave and tyrant!
Sig. Oh, rail at me! at my believing folly!
My vain ill-founded hopes! but spare him, Laura!
Laura. Who raised these hopes? Who triumphs o'er that weakness?
Pardon the word—you greatly merit him;
Better than him, with all his giddy pomp;
You raised him by your smiles, when he was nothing.
Where is your woman's pride, that guardian spirit,
Given us to dash the perfidy of man?
Ye powers! I cannot bear the thought with patience——
Yet recent from the most unsparing vows
The tongue of love e'er lavished; from your hopes
So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded;
Before the public thus, before your father,
By an irrevocable solemn deed,
With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him:
To give his faithless hand, yet warm from thine,
With complicated meanness, to Constantia!
And, to complete his crime, when thy weak limbs
Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,
To lead her off!
Sig. That was indeed a sight
To poison love; to turn it into rage,
And keen contempt. What means this stupid weakness
That hangs upon me! Hence, unworthy tears,
Disgrace my cheek no more! No more, my heart,
For one so coolly false, or meanly fickle——
Oh, it imports not which——dare to suggest
The least excuse!——Yes, traitor, I will wring
Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion!
I will not pine away my days for thee,
Sighing to brooks and groves; while, with vain pity,
You in a rival's arms lament my fate——
No, let me perish, ere I tamely be
That soft, that patient, gentle Sigismunda,
Who can console her with the wretched boast,
She was for thee unhappy!—If I am,
I will be nobly so!—Sicilia's daughters
Shall, wondering, see in me a great example
Of one who punished an ill-judging heart,
Who made it bow to what it most abhorred!
Crushed it to misery! for having thus
So lightly listened to a worthless lover!
Laura. At last it mounts, the kindling pride of virtue;
Trust me, thy marriage will embitter his——
Sig. Oh, may the furies light his nuptial torch!
Be it accursed as mine! for the fair peace,
The tender joys of hymeneal love,
May jealousy awaked, and fell remorse,
Pour all their fiercest venom through his breast!
Where the fates lead, and blind revenge, I follow.——
Let me not think——By injured love! I vow,
Thou shalt, base prince! perfidious and inhuman!
Thou shalt behold me in another's arms;
In his thou hatest! Osmond's!
Laura. That will grind
His heart with secret rage: Ay, that will sting
His soul to madness; set him up a terror,
A spectacle of woe to faithless lovers!
Your cooler thought, besides, will of the change
Approve, and think it happy. Noble Osmond
From the same stock with him derives his birth.
First of Sicilian barons, prudent, brave,
Of strictest honour, and by all revered——
Sig. Talk not of Osmond, but perfidious Tancred!
Rail at him, rail! invent new names of scorn!
Assist me, Laura; lend my rage fresh fuel;
Support my staggering purpose, which already
Begins to fail me—Ah, my vaunts how vain!
How have I lied to my own heart! Alas!
My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me!
Ten thousand crowding images distract
My tortured thought——And is it come to this?
Our hopes, our vows, our oft repeated wishes,
Breathed from the fervent soul, and full of heaven,
To make each other happy—come to this!
Laura. If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
Thy resolution fixed, yet, Sigismunda,
Oh, think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,
Thy father is engaged!
Sig. Ah, wretched weakness!
That thus enthrals my soul, that chases thence
Each nobler thought, the sense of every duty!
And have I then no tears for thee, my father?
Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,
Thy tenderness for me? an eye still beamed
With love; a brow that never knew a frown;
Nor a harsh word thy tongue; Shall I for these
Repay thy stooping venerable age
With shame, disquiet, anguish, and dishonour?
It must not be! Thou first of angels! come,
Sweet filial piety, and firm my breast!
Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit,
Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!——
Laura!—they come! Oh, heavens, I cannot stand

The horrid trial!—Open, open earth!
And hide me from their view.
Laura. Madam!

Enter SIFFREDI *and* OSMOND.

Sif. My daughter,
Behold my noble friend, who courts thy hand,
And whom to call my son I shall be proud;
Nor shall I less be pleased in this alliance,
To see thee happy.
Osm. Think not, I presume,
Madam, on this your father's kind consent,
To make me blest. I love you from a heart,
That seeks your good superior to my own;
And will, by every art of tender friendship,
Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,
Yours does not disavow your father's choice?
Sig. I am a daughter, sir—and have no power
O'er my own heart—I die—Support me, Laura.
[*Faints.*
Sif. Help—Bear her off—She breathes—my daughter!
Sig. Oh,
Forgive my weakness—soft—my Laura, lead me—
To my apartment.
[*Exeunt Sigismunda and Laura.*
Sif. Pardon me, my lord,
If, by this sudden accident alarmed,
I leave you for a moment. [*Exit Siffredi.*
Osm. Let me think——
What can this mean?——Is it to me aversion?
Or is it, as I feared, she loves another?
Ha!—yes—perhaps the king, the young count Tancred;
They were bred up together——Surely that,
That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,
In the most solemn manner, to Constantia?
Does not his crown depend upon the deed?
No—if they loved, and this old statesman knew it,
He could not to a king prefer a subject.
His virtues I esteem—nay more, I trust them—
So far as virtue goes—but could he place
His daughter on the throne of Sicily——
Oh, 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!
What is it then? I care not what it be.
My honour now, my dignity demands,
That my proposed alliance, by her father,
And even herself accepted, be not scorned.
I love her too—I never knew till now
To what a pitch I loved her. Oh, she shot
Ten thousand charms into my inmost soul!
She looked so mild, so amiably gentle,
She bowed her head, she glowed with such confusion,
Such loveliness of modesty! She is,
In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,
The perfect model of all female beauty!
She must be mine—She is!—If yet her heart
Consents not to my happiness, her duty,
Joined to my tender cares, will gain so much
Upon her generous nature—That will follow.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The garden belonging to* SIFFREDI'S *house.*

Enter SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Sig. [*With a letter in her hand.*] 'Tis done!—
I am a slave!—The fatal vow
Has passed my lips!—Methought, in those sad moments,
The tombs around, the saints, the darkened altar,
And all the trembling shrines, with horror shook.
But here is still new matter of distress.
Oh, Tancred, cease to persecute me more!
Oh, grudge me not some calmer state of woe;
Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,
Where I may never hear of love and thee!
Has Laura, too, conspired against my peace?
Why did you take this letter?—Bear it back——
I will not court new pain. [*Giving her the letter.*
Laura. Madam, Rodolpho
Urged me so much, nay, even with tears conjured me,
But this once more to serve the unhappy king—
For such he said he was—that though enraged,
Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,
I could not to my brother's fervent prayers
Refuse this office——Read it——His excuses
Will only more expose his falsehood.
Sig. No:
It suits not Osmond's wife to read one line
From that contagious hand—she knows too well!
Laura. He paints him out distressed beyond expression;
Even on the point of madness. Wild as winds,
And fighting seas, he raves. His passions mix,
With ceaseless rage, all in each giddy moment.
He dies to see you, and to clear his faith.
Sig. Save me from that!—That would be worse than all!
Laura. I but report my brother's words; who then
Began to talk of some dark imposition,
That had deceived us all; when, interrupted,
We heard your father and earl Osmond near,
As summoned to Constantia's court they went.
Sig. Ha! imposition?——Well, if I am doomed
To be, o'er all my sex, the wretch of love,
In vain I would resist—Give me the letter——
To know the worst is some relief——Alas,
It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,
That, Tancred, once I used to read thy letters.
[*Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to Laura.*

Ah, fond remembrance blinds me! Read it, Laura.

Laura. [*Reads.*] 'Deliver me, Sigismunda, 'from that most exquisite misery which a faithful 'heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, 'from whose esteem even virtue borrows new 'charms. When I submitted to my cruel situa- 'tion, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an 'excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I, 'for a while, gave up my honour. Every moment 'till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than 'real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure 'you to meet me in the garden, towards the close 'of the day, when I will explain this mystery. 'We have been most inhumanly abused; and 'that by means of the very paper which I gave 'you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to as- 'sure to you the heart and hand of

TANCRED.'

Sig. There, Laura, there, the dreadful secret sprung!
That paper! ah, that paper! it suggests
A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father
Gave it! and he perhaps—I dare not cast
A look that way—If yet indeed you love me,
Oh, blast me not, kind Tancred, with the truth!
Oh, pitying, keep me ignorant for ever!
What strange peculiar misery is mine?
Reduced to wish the man I love were false!
Why was I hurried to a step so rash?
Repairless woe!—I might have waited, sure,
A few short hours—No duty that forbade—
I owed thy love that justice; till this day
Thy love an image of all perfect goodness!
A beam from heaven that glowed with every virtue!
And have I thrown this prize of life away?
The piteous wreck of one distracted moment?
Ah, the cold prudence of remorseless age!
Ah, parents, traitors to your children's bliss!
Ah, cursed! ah, blind revenge!—On every hand
I was betrayed—You, Laura, too, betrayed me!

Laura. Who, who but he, whate'er he writes, betrayed you?
Or false or pusillanimous. For once,
I will with you suppose, that his agreement
To the king's will was forged—Though forged by whom?
Your father scorns the crime—Yet what avails it?
This, if it clears his truth, condemns his spirit.
A youthful king, by love and honour fired,
Patient to sit on his insulted throne,
And let an outrage, of so high a nature,
Unpunished pass, unchecked, uncontradicted—
Oh, 'tis a meanness equal even to falsehood.

Sig. Laura, no more—We have already judged
Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what seems
A trifle, a mere nothing, by itself,
In some nice situation turns the scale
Of fate, and rules the most important actions.
Yes, I begin to feel a sad presage!
I am undone, from that eternal source
Of human woes—the judgment of the passions.
But what have I to do with these excuses?
Oh, cease, my treacherous heart, to give them room!
It suits not thee to plead a lover's cause:
Even to lament my fate is now dishonour.
Nought now remains, but with relentless purpose,
To shun all interviews, all clearing up
Of this dark scene; to wrap myself in gloom,
In solitude and shades; there to devour
The silent sorrows ever swelling here;
And since I must be wretched—for I must—
To claim the mighty misery myself,
Engross it all, and spare a hapless father.
Hence, let me fly!—The hour approaches—

Laura. Madam,
Behold he comes—the king—

Sig. Heavens! how escape?
No—I will stay—This one last meeting—Leave me. [*Exit Laura.*

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. And are these long, long hours of torture past?
My life! my Sigismunda! [*Throwing himself at her feet.*

Sig, Rise, my lord.
To see my sovereign thus no more becomes me.

Tan. Oh, let me kiss the ground on which you tread!
Let me exhale my soul in softest transport,
Since I again behold my Sigismunda! [*Rising.*
Unkind! how couldst thou ever deem me false?
How thus dishonour love?—Oh, I could much
Embitter my complaint!—how low were then
Thy thoughts of me! How didst thou then affront
The human heart itself? After the vows,
The fervent truth, the tender protestations,
Which mine has often poured, to let thy breast,
Whate'er the appearance was, admit suspicion?

Sig. How! when I heard myself your full consent
To the late king's so just and prudent will?
Heard it before you read, in solemn senate?
When I beheld you give your royal hand
To her, whose birth and dignity of right
Demand that high alliance! Yes, my lord,
You have done well. The man, whom Heaven appoints
To govern others, should himself first learn
To bend his passions to the sway of reason.
In all, you have done well; but when you bid
My humbled hopes look up to you again,
And soothed with wanton cruelty my weakness—
That too was well—My vanity deserved
The sharp rebuke, whose fond extravagance
Could ever dream to balance your repose,
Your glory, and the welfare of a people.

Tan. Chide on, chide on. Thy soft reproaches, now,
Instead of wounding, only soothe my fondness.

No, no, thou charming consort of my soul!
I never loved thee with such faithful ardour,
As in that cruel, miserable moment
You thought me false; when even my honour stooped
To wear for thee a baffled face of baseness.
It was thy barbarous father, Sigismunda,
Who caught me in the toil. He turned that paper,
Meant for the assuring bond of nuptial love,
To ruin it for ever; he, he wrote
That forged consent, you heard, beneath my name,
Nay, dared, before my outraged throne, to read it!
Had he not been thy father——Ha! my love!
You tremble, you grow pale!
Sig. Oh, leave me, Tancred!
Tan. No!—Leave thee!—Never! never till you set
My heart at peace! till these dear lips again
Pronounce thee mine! Without thee, I renounce
Myself, my friends, the world—Here on this hand—
Sig. My lord, forget that hand, which never now
Can be to thine united———
Tan. Sigismunda!
What dost thou mean?—Thy words, thy look, thy manner,
Seem *to* conceal some horrid secret—Heavens!——
No—that was wild——Distraction fires the thought!—
Sig. Inquire no more——I never can be thine.
Tan. What, who shall interpose? Who dares attempt
To brave the fury of an injured king,
Who, ere he sees thee ravished from his hopes,
Will wrap all blazing Sicily in flames?——
Sig. In vain your power, my lord—'Tis fatal error,
Joined to my father's unrelenting will,
Has placed an everlasting bar betwixt us——
I am Earl Osmond's——wife.
Tan. Earl Osmond's wife!——
[*After a long pause, during which they look at one another with the highest agitation, and most tender distress.*]
Heavens! did I hear thee right? What! married! married!
Lost to thy faithful Tancred? lost for ever!
Couldst thou then doom me to such matchless woe,
Without so much as hearing me?—Distraction!——
Alas! what hast thou done? Ah, Sigismunda!
My rash credulity has done a deed,
Which, of two happiest lovers that e'er felt
The blissful power, has made two finished wretches!
It—madness!—Sure, thou knowest it cannot be!
His hand is mine! a thousand thousand vows—

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. [*Snatching her hand from the king.*]
Madam, this hand, by the most solemn rites,
A little hour ago, was given to me;
And did not sovereign honour now command me,
Never but with my life to quit my claim,
I would renounce it—thus!
Tan. Ha! who art thou,
Presumptuous man!
Sig. [*Aside.*] Where is my father? Heaven! [*Goes out.*
Osm. One thou shouldst better know—Yes—view me, one
Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,
Whose first base deed is what a hardened tyrant
Would blush to act.
Tan. Insolent Osmond! know,
This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
Prior to thine—thine, founded on compulsion,
On infamous deceit, while his proceed
From mutual love, and free long plighted faith.
She is, and shall be mine!—I will annul,
By the high power with which the laws invest me,
Those guilty forms in which you have entrapped,
Basely entrapped, to thy detested nuptials,
My queen betrothed, who has my heart, my hand,
And shall partake my throne—If, haughty lord,
If this thou didst not know, then know it now;
And know, besides, as I have told thee this,
Shouldst thou but think to urge thy treason further—
Than treason more! treason against my love!—
Thy life shall answer for it.
Osm. Ha! my life!———
It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.
When was it that a Norman baron's life
Became so vile, as on the frown of kings
To hang?—Of that, my lord, the law must judge:
Or, if the law be weak, my guardian sword——
Tan. Dare not to touch it, traitor, lest my rage
Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. My gracious lord, what is it I behold!
My sovereign in contention with his subjects?
Surely this house deserves from royal Tancred
A little more regard, than to be made
A scene of trouble, and unseemly jars.
It grieves my soul, it baffles every hope,
It makes me sick of life, to see thy glory
Thus blasted in the bud.—Heavens! can your highness,
From your exalted character descend,
The dignity of virtue; and, instead
Of being the protector of our rights,
The holy guardian of domestic bliss,

Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,
The secret peace of families, for which
Alone the free-born race of man to laws
And government submitted?

Tan. My lord Siffredi,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station
Are not to me unknown. But thou, old man,
Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded,
And of our best, our dearest bliss disturbed;
Thou, who, with more than barbarous perfidy,
Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,
Humanity itself, beneath thy feet?
Thou knowest thou hast—I could, to thy confusion,
Return thy hard reproaches; but I spare thee
Before this lord, for whose ill-sorted friendship
Thou hast most basely sacrificed thy daughter!
Farewell, my lord.—For thee, lord constable,
Who dost presume to lift thy surly eye
To my soft love, my gentle Sigismunda,
I once again command thee, on thy life——
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No furthur urge thy arrogant pretensions!
[*Exit Tan.*

Osm. Ha! Arrogant pretensions! Heaven and earth!
What! arrogant pretensions to my wife?
My wedded wife! Where are we? in a land
Of civil rule, of liberty, and laws?——
Not, on my life, pursue them?—Giddy prince!
My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift
Of parent Heaven, who gave me, too, an arm,
A spirit to defend it against tyrants.
The Norman race, the sons of mighty Rollo,
Who, rushing in a tempest from the north,
Great nurse of generous freemen, bravely won,
With their own swords, their seats, and still possess them
By the same noble tenure, are not used
To hear such language.—— If I now desist,
Then brand me for a coward! deem me villain!
A traitor to the public! By this conduct
Deceived, betrayed, insulted, tyrannized!
Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,
Mixed with my own, the rights of each Sicilian,
Of social life, and of mankind in general.
Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,
Which this illegal, this perfidious usage,
Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins!—
Constantia is my queen!

Sif. Lord constable,
Let us be stedfast in the right; but let us
Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
As well as manly firmness. True, I own,
The indignities you suffer are so high,
As might even justify what now you threaten.
But if, my lord, we can prevent the woes,
The cruel horrors of intestine war,
Yet hold, untouched, our liberties and laws;
Oh, let us, raised above the turbid sphere
Of little selfish passions, nobly do it!
Nor to our hot, intemperate pride, pour out
A dire libation of Sicilian blood.
'Tis godlike magnanimity to keep,
When most provoked, our reason calm and clear,
And execute her will, from a strong sense
Of what is right, without the vulgar aid
Of heat and passion, which, though honest, bears us
Often too far. Remember that my house
Protects my daughter still; and ere I saw her
Thus ravished from us, by the arm of power,
This arm should act the Roman father's part.
Fear not; be temperate; all will yet be well.
I know the king. At first his passions burst,
Quick as the lightning's flash; but in his breast
Honour and justice dwell—Trust me, to reason
He will return.

Osm. He will!—By Heavens, he shall!——
You know the king—I wish, my lord Siffredi,
That you had deigned to tell me all you knew—
And would you have me wait, with duteous patience,
Till he return to reason? Ye just powers!
When he has planted on our necks his foot,
And trod us into slaves; when his vain pride
Is cloyed with our submission; if, at last,
He finds his arm too weak to shake the frame
Of wide-established order out of joint,
And overturn all justice; then, perchance,
He, in a fit of sickly kind repentance,
May make a merit to return to reason.
No, no, my lord! there is a nobler way,
To teach the blind oppressive fury reason:
Oft has the lustre of avenging steel
Unsealed her stupid eyes—The sword is reason!

Enter RODOLPHO *with Guards.*

Rod. My lord high constable of Sicily,
In the king's name, and by his special order,
I here arrest you prisoner of state.

Osm. What king? I know no king of Sicily,
Unless he be the husband of Constantia.

Rod. Then know him now—behold his royal orders,
To bear you to the castle of Palermo.

Sif. Let the big torrent foam its madness off!
Submit, my lord.—No castle long can hold
Our wrongs—This, more than friendship or alliance,
Confirms me thine; this binds me to thy fortunes.
By the strong tie of common injury,
Which nothing can dissolve.—I grieve, Rodolpho,
To see the reign in such unhappy sort
Begin.

Osm. The reign! the usurpation call it!
This meteor king may blaze awhile, but soon
Must spend his idle terrors—Sir, lead on——
Farewell, my lord—more than my life and fortune,
Remember well, is in your hands—my honour!

Sif. Our honour is the same. My son, farewell——

We shall not long be parted. On these eyes
Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee
Restored to freedom, or partake thy bonds!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. THE prospect lowers around. I found the king,
Though calmed a little, with subsiding tempest,
As suits his generous nature, yet in love
Abated nought, most ardent in his purpose;
Inexorably fixed, whate'er the risk,
To claim my daughter, and dissolve this marriage——
I have embarked, upon a perilous sea,
A mighty treasure. Here the rapid youth,
The impetuous passions of a lover king,
Check my bold purpose; and there, the jealous pride,
The impatient honour, of a haughty lord,
Of the first rank, in interest and dependance
Near equal to the king, forbid retreat.
My honour, too, the same unchanged conviction,
That these my measures were, and still remain,
Of absolute necessity, to save
The land from civil fury, urge me on.
But how proceed?——I only faster rush
Upon the desperate evils I would shun.
Whatever the motive be, deceit, I fear,
And harsh unnatural force, are not the means
Of public welfare, or of private bliss.——
Bear witness, Heaven! thou mind inspecting eye!
My breast is pure. I have preferred my duty,
The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,
To all those views that fire the selfish race
Of mortal men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an Officer belonging to SIFFREDI.

Off. My lord, a man of noble port, his face
Wrapped in disguise, is earnest for admission.
Sif. Go, bid him enter—— [*Officer goes out.*
Ha! wrapped in disguise!
And at this late unseasonable hour!
When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,
By the dire gloom of raging tempest doubled!

Enter OSMOND, *discovering himself.*

Sif. What! ha! earl Osmond, you?——Welcome, once more,
To this glad roof!——But why in this disguise?
Would I could hope the king exceeds his promise!
I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
Shall gild Sicilia's cliffs, you shall be free.
Has some good angel turned his heart to justice?
Osm. It is not by the favour of count Tancred
That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
As I defy his tyranny and threats.——
Our friend Goffredo, who commands the castle,
On my parole, ere dawn to render back
My person, has permitted me this freedom.
Know then, the faithless outrage of to-day,
By him committed whom you call the king,
Has roused Constantia's court. Our friends, the friends
Of virtue, justice, and of public faith,
Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
This, this, they say, exceeds whate'er deformed
The miserable days we saw beneath
William the Bad. This saps the solid base,
At once, of government and private life:
This shameless imposition on the faith,
The majesty of senates, this lewd insult,
This violation of the rights of men;
Added to these, his ignominious treatment
Of her, the illustrious offspring of our kings,
Sicilia's hope, and now our royal mistress.
You know, my lord, how grossly these infringe
The late king's will; which orders, if count Tancred
Make not Constantia partner of his throne,
That he be quite excluded the succession,
And she to Henry given, king of the Romans,
The potent emperor Barbarossa's son,
Who seeks, with earnest instance, her alliance.
I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
As guardian of this will, to you intrusted,
Desire, nay, more, demand your instant aid,
To see it put in vigorous execution.
Sif. You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence.
Who, more than I, have laboured this great point?
'Tis my own plan; and if I drop it now,
I should be justly branded with the shame
Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.
But let us not precipitate the matter.
Constantia's friends are numerous and strong;
Yet Tancred's, trust me, are of equal force:
E'er since the secret of his birth was known,
The people all are in a tumult hurled,
Of boundless joy, to hear there lives a prince
Of mighty Guiscard's line. Numbers, besides,
Of powerful barons, who at heart had pined,
To see the reign of their renowned forefathers,
Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,
Pass from the gallant Normans to the Suevi,
Will, with a kind of rage, espouse his cause.
'Tis so, my lord—be not by passion blinded——
'Tis surely so.——Oh, if our prating virtue
Dwells not in words alone—Oh, let us join,
My generous Osmond, to avert these woes,
And yet sustain our tottering Norman kingdom!
Osm. But how, Siffredi, how?—If, by soft means,

We can maintain our rights, and save our country,
May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,
Who, with unpitying fury, first shall draw it!
Sif. I have a thought—The glorious work be thine!
But it requires an awful flight of virtue,
Above the passions of the vulgar breast,
And thence from thee I hope it, noble Osmond.
—Suppose my daughter, to her god devoted,
Were placed within some convent's sacred verge,
Beneath the dread protection of the altar.——
Osm. Ere then, by Heavens! I would devoutly shave
My holy scalp, turn whining monk myself,
And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety.
What! how! because an insolent invader,
A sacrilegious tyrant, in contempt
Of all those noblest rights, which to maintain
Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;
That I shall thus betray the common cause
Of human kind!——
Tamely yield her up,
Even in the manner you propose!——Oh, then
I were supremely vile! degraded! shamed!
The scorn of manhood! and abhorred of honour!
Sif. There is, my lord, an honour, the calm child
Of reason, of humanity, and mercy,
Superior far to this punctilious dæmon,
That singly minds itself, and oft embroils,
With proud barbarian niceties, the world.
Osm. My lord, my lord, I cannot brook your prudence;
It holds a pulse unequal to my blood——
Unblemished honour is the flower of virtue!
The vivifying soul! and he, who slights it,
Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.
Sif. No more—you are too warm.
Osm. You are too cool.
Sif. Too cool, my lord? I were indeed too cool,
Not to resent this language, and to tell thee—
I wish earl Osmond were as cool as I
To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm
To that of others—But of this no more—
My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,
And will, against all force, maintain her thine.
But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,
Whirled in a blaze of madness o'er the land;
Or, till the last extremity compel me,
Risk the dire means of war—The king, to morrow,
Will set you free; and, if by gentle means,
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,
And wed Constantia, as the will requires,
Why then expect me on the side of justice—
Let that suffice.
Osm. It does—Forgive my heat.
My rankled mind, by injuries inflamed,
May be too prompt to take, and give offence.
Sif. 'Tis past—Your wrongs, I own, may well transport
The wisest mind—But henceforth, noble Osmond,
Do me more justice, honour more my truth,
Nor mark me with an eye of squint suspicion.
These jars apart, you may repose your soul
On my firm faith, and unremitting friendship.
Of that I sure have given exalted proof,
And the next sun we see shall prove it further.
Return, my son, and from your friend Goffredo
Release your word. There try, by soft repose,
To calm your breast.
Osm. Bid the vext ocean sleep,
Swept by the pinions of the raging north——
But your frail age, by care and toil exhausted,
Demands the balm of all repairing rest.
Sif. Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the skies,
I, with my friends, in solemn state assembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom;
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face
Of Sicily, my daughter shall be yours.
Farewell.
Osm. My lord, good night. [*Exit Sifredi.*
[*After a long pause.*] I like him not——
Yes—I have mighty matter of suspicion.
'Tis plain. I see it lurking in his breast;
He has a foolish fondness for this king—
My honour is not safe, while here my wife
Remains—Who knows but he this very night
May bear her to some convent, as he mentioned—
The king too—though I smothered up my rage,
I marked it well—will set me free to-morrow.
Why not to-night? He has some dark design—
By heavens, he has!—I am abused most grossly;
Made the vile tool of this old statesman's scheme;
Married to one—ay, and he knew it—one
Who loves young Tancred! Hence her swooning tears,
And all her soft distress, when she disgraced me,
By basely giving her perfidious hand
Without her heart—Hell and perdition! this,
This is the perfidy!—this is the fell,
The keen, envenomed, exquisite disgrace,
Which, to a man of honour, even exceeds
The falsehood of the person—But I now
Will rouse me from the poor tame lethargy,
By my believing fondness cast upon me.
I will not wait his crawling timid motions,
Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow
Has promised to pursue. No! ere his eyes
Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,
I will convince him that earl Osmond never
Was formed to be his dupe—I know full well
The important weight and danger of the deed:
But to a man, whom greater dangers press,
Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,
Rashness itself, and utter desperation,
Are the best prudence.—I will bear her off
This night, and lodge her in a place of safety:
I have a trusty band that waits not far.
Hence! let me lose no time—One rapid moment

Should ardent form, at once, and execute
A bold design—'Tis fixed—'Tis done!—yes, then,
When I have seized the prize of love and honour,
And with a friend secured her; to the castle
I will repair, and claim Goffredo's promise
To rise with all his garrison—My friends
With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,
And only wants my kindling touch to spring.
[*Exit Osm.*

SCENE II.—SIGISMUNDA's *Apartment.—Thunder.*

Enter SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Laura. Heavens! 'tis a fearful night!
Sig. Ah! the black rage
Of midnight tempest, or the assuring smiles
Of radiant morn, are equal all to me.
Nought now has charms or terrors to my breast,
The seat of stupid woe!—Leave me, my Laura.
Kind rest, perhaps, may hush my woes a little.
Oh, for that quiet sleep that knows no morning!
Laura. Madam, indeed I know not how to go.
Indulge my fondness—Let me watch a while
By your sad bed, 'till these dread hours shall pass.
Sig. Alas! what is the toil of elements,
[*Thunder.*
This idle perturbation of the sky,
To what I feel within?—Oh, that the fires
Of pitying heaven would point their fury here!
Good night, my dearest Laura.
Laura. Oh, I know not
What this oppression means—But 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you—
Well then—Good night, my dearest Sigismunda.
[*Exit.*
Sig. And am I then alone!—The most undone,
Most wretched being now beneath the cope
Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world—
I said I did not fear—Ah, me! I feel
A shivering horror run through all my powers!
Oh, I am nought but tumult, fears, and weakness!
And yet how idle fear when hope is gone,
Gone, gone for ever!—Oh, thou gentle scene
[*Looking towards her bed.*
Of sweet repose, where, by the oblivious draught
Of each sad toilsome day, to peace restored,
Unhappy mortals lose their woes awhile,
Thou hast no peace for me!—What shall I do?
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror?—
Here, with the midnight shades, here will I sit,
[*Sitting down.*
A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep
The hours away—Bless me—I heard a noise—
[*Starting up.*
No—I mistook—nothing but silence reigns,
And awful midnight round—Again!—Oh, heavens!
My lord the king!

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. Be not alarmed, my love!
Sig. My royal lord, why at this midnight hour,
How came you hither?
Tan. By that secret way
My love contrived, when we, in happier days,
Used to devote these hours, so much in vain,
To vows of love, and everlasting friendship.
Sig. Why will you thus persist to add new stings
To her distress, who never can be thine?
Oh, fly me! fly! you know———
Tan. I know too much.
Oh, how I could reproach thee, Sigismunda!
Pour out my injured soul in just complaints!
But now the time permits not; these swift moments—
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forced me to seem perfidious in thy eyes.
Ah, fatal blindness! not to have observed
The mingled pangs of rage and love that shook me!
When by the cruel public situation
Compelled, I only feigned consent, to gain
A little time, and more secure thee mine.
E'er since—a dreadful interval of care!
My thoughts have been employed, not without hope,
How to defeat Siffredi's barbarous purpose.
But thy credulity has ruined all;
Thy rash, thy wild—I know not what to name it——
Oh, it has proved the giddy hopes of man
To be delusion all, and sickening folly!
Sig. Ah, generous Tancred! ah, thy truth destroys me!
Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am false!
My hasty rage, joined to my tame submission,
More than the most exalted filial duty
Could e'er demand, has dashed our cup of fate
With bitterness unequalled—But, alas!
What are thy woes to mine?—to mine! just Heaven!
Now is thy turn of vengeance—Hate, renounce me!
Oh, leave me to the fate I well deserve,
To sink in hopeless misery!—at least,
Try to forget the worthless Sigismunda!
Tan. Forget thee! No! Thou art my soul itself!
I have no thought, no hope, no wish but thee!
Even this repented injury, the fears,
That rouse me all to madness, at the thought
Of losing thee, the whole collected pains
Of my full heart, serve but to make thee dearer.
Ah, how forget thee!—Much must be forgot,
Ere Tancred can forget his Sigismunda!
Sig. But you, my lord, must make that great effort.
Tan. Can Sigismunda make it?
Sig. Ah! I know not

With what success—But all that feeble woman,
And love-entangled reason, can perform,
I, to the utmost, will exert to do it.
Tan. Fear not—'Tis done!—If thou canst form the thought,
Success is sure—I am forgot already.
Sig. Ah, Tancred!—But, my lord, respect me more.
Think who I am—What can you now propose?
Tan. To claim the plighted vows which Heaven has heard,
To vindicate the rights of holy love,
By faith and honour bound, to which compared,
These empty forms, which have ensnared thy hand,
Are impious guile, abuse, and profanation——
Nay, as a king, whose high prerogative
By this unlicensed marriage is affronted,
To bid the laws themselves pronounce it void.
Sig. Honour, my lord, is much too proud to catch
At every slender twig of nice distinctions.
These, for the unfeeling vulgar, may do well:
But those, whose souls are by the nicer rule
Of virtuous delicacy nobly swayed,
Stand at another bar than that of laws.
Then cease to urge me—Since I am not born
To that exalted fate to be your queen——
Or, yet a dearer name——to be your wife!——
I am the wife of an illustrious lord,
Of your own princely blood; and what I am,
I will with proper dignity remain.
Retire, my royal lord. There is no means
To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.
We meet no more!
Tan. Oh, barbarous Sigismunda!
And canst thou talk thus steadily? thus treat me
With such unpitying, unrelenting rigour?
Poor is the love, that, rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity, can bear to see
The man, whose heart was once so dear to thine,
By many a tender vow so mixed together,
A prey to anguish, fury, and distraction!
Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch;
Thou canst not, Sigismunda!—Yet relent!
Oh, save us yet!—Rodolpho, with my guards,
Waits in the garden—Let us seize the moments,
We ne'er may have again—With more than power
I will assert thee mine, with fairest honour.
The world shall even approve; each honest bosom
Swell with a kindred joy to see us happy.
Sig. The world approve! what is the world to me!
The conscious mind is its own awful world.
And yet, perhaps, if thou wert not a king,
I know not, Tancred, what I might have done.
Then, then, my conduct, sanctified by love,
Could not be deemed, by the severest judge,
The mean effect of interest or ambition.
But now, not all my partial heart can plead,
Shall ever shake the unalterable dictates
That tyrannize my breast.
Tan. 'Tis well—No more—
I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes, inhuman!
Since thy barbarian heart is steeled by pride,
Shut up to love and pity, here behold me
Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch!
Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties!
Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,
Here at thy feet—Death, death alone shall part us!
Sig. Have you then vowed to drive me to perdition!
What can I more?—Yes, Tancred! once again
I will forget the dignity my station
Commands me to sustain—for the last time
Will tell thee, that, I fear, no ties, no duty,
Can ever root thee from my hapless bosom.
Oh, leave me! fly me! were it but in pity!—
To see what once we tenderly have loved,
Cut off from every hope—cut off for ever,
Is pain thy generosity should spare me.
Then rise, my lord; and if you truly love me,
If you respect my honour, nay, my peace,
Retire! for though the emotions of my heart
Can ne'er alarm my virtue; yet, alas!
They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish—
Oh, 'tis too much!—I cannot bear the conflict!

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. Turn, tyrant, turn! and answer to my honour,
For this thy base insufferable outrage!
Tan. Insolent traitor! think not to escape
Thyself my vengeance!
[*They fight, Osmond falls.*
Sig. Help, here! Help!—Oh, heavens!
[*Throwing herself down by him.*
Alas, my lord, what meant your headlong rage?
That faith, which I this day, upon the altar,
To you devoted, is unblemished, pure
As vestal truth: was resolutely yours,
Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.
Osm. Perfidious woman! die!—[*Shortening his sword, he plunges it into her breast.*]
And to the grave attend a husband, yet but half avenged!
Tan. Oh, horror! horror! execrable villain!
Osm. And, tyrant! thou!—thou shalt not o'er my tomb
Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great!—I die content!—
[*Dies.*

Enter RODOLPHO *and* LAURA.

Tan. [*Throwing himself down by Sigismunda.*] Quick! here! bring aid!—All in Palermo bring,
Whose skill can save her!—Ah, that gentle bosom
Pours fast the streams of life.

Sig. All aid is vain;
I feel the powerful hand of death upon me—
But, oh! it sheds a sweetness through my fate,
That I am thine again; and, without blame,
May in my Tancred's arms resign my soul!
Tan. Oh, death is in that voice! so gently mild,
So sadly sweet, as mixes even with mine
The tears of hovering angels!—Mine again!—
And is it thus the cruel fates have joined us?
Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare
For love like ours?—Is virtue thus rewarded?
Let not my impious rage accuse just Heaven!
Thou, Tancred, thou, hast murdered Sigismunda!
That furious man was but the tool of fate,
I, I the cause!—But I will do thee justice
On this deaf heart! that to thy tender wisdom
Refused an ear—Yes, death shall soon unite us.
Sig. Live, live, my Tancred!—Let my death suffice
To expiate all that may have been amiss.
May it appease the fates, avert their fury
From thy propitious reign! Meantime, of me
And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,
To guard our friends, and make thy people happy—

Enter SIFFREDI, *fixed in astonishment and grief.*

My father!——Oh, how shall I lift my eyes
To thee, my sinking father!
Sif. Awful Heaven!
I am chastised——My dearest child!——
Sig. Where am I?
A fearful darkness closes all around—
My friends! We needs must part—I must obey
The impetuous call—Farewell, my Laura! cherish
My poor afflicted father's age—Rodolpho,
Now is the time to watch the unhappy king,
With all the care and tenderness of friendship.
Oh, my dear father, bowed beneath the weight
Of age and grief—the victim even of virtue,
Receive my last adieu!—Where art thou, Tancred?
Give me thy hand—But, ah,—it cannot save me
From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power
Creeps o'er my heart——Oh!
Tan. How these pangs distract me!
Oh, lift thy gracious eyes!——Thou leavs't me, then!
Thou leav'st me, Sigismunda!
Sig. Yet a moment——
I had, my Tancred, something more to say——
Yes——but thy love and tenderness for me,
Sure makes it needless—Harbour no resentment
Against my father; venerate his zeal,
That acted from a principle of goodness,
From faithful love to thee—Live, and maintain
My innocence embalmed, with holiest care
Preserve my spotless memory! Oh——I die——
Eternal mercy take my trembling soul!
Oh, 'tis the only sting of death to part
From those we love—from thee—farewell, my Tancred! [*Dies.*
Tan. Thus then!
[*Flying to his sword, is held by Rodolpho.*
Rod. Hold, hold, my lord!—Have you forgot
Your Sigismunda's last request already?
Tan. Off! set me free! Think not to bind me down,
With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!
What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates,
Which death still opens to the woes of mortals?—
I shall find means—No power in earth or heaven
Can force me to endure the hateful light,
Thus robbed of all that lent it joy and sweetness!
Off, traitors, off! or my distracted soul
Will burst indignant from this jail of nature,
To where she beckons yonder—No, mild seraph,
Point not to life——I cannot linger here,
Cut off from thee, the miserable pity,
The scorn of humankind!——A trampled king!
Who let his mean poor-hearted love one moment
To coward prudence stoop! who made it not
The first undoubting action of his reign,
To snatch thee to his throne, and there to shield thee,
Thy helpless bosom, from a ruffian's fury!
Oh, shame! Oh, agony! Oh, the fell stings
Of late, of vain repentance!——Ha, my brain
Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!
The infernal world discloses! See! Behold him!
Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,
And mocks my feeble tears.—Hence, quickly, hence!
Spurn his vile carcase! give it to the dogs!
Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!
Or hurl it down that fiery steep to hell,
There, with his soul, to toss in flames for ever.
Ah, impotence of rage!——
What am I? Where?
Sad, silent all? The forms of dumb despair,
Around some mournful tomb.—What do I see?
This soft abode of innocence and love
Turned to the house of death! a place of horror!——
Ah, that poor corse! pale! pale! deformed with murder!
Is that my Sigismunda?
[*Throws himself down by her.*
Sif. After a pathetic pause, looking on the scene before him.
Have I lived
To these enfeebled years, by heaven reserved
To be a dreadful monument of justice?——
Rodolpho, raise the king, and bear him hence
From this distracting scene of blood and death.
Alas, I dare not give him my assistance;
My care would only more inflame his rage.
Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,
That by rude force the passions would command,

That ruthless thought to root them from the breast;
They may be ruled, but will not be opprest.
Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature stray,
And the great ties of social life betray;
Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part:
'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart.
Ye vainly wise, who o'er mankind preside,
Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride;
Keep virtue's simple path before your eyes,
Nor think from evil good can ever rise.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

IRENE.

BY

JOHNSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MAHOMET, *emperor of the Turks.*
CALI BASSA, *first vizier.*
MUSTAPHA, *a Turkish aga.*
ABDALLA, *an officer.*
HASSAN, CARAZA, } *Turkish captains.*
DEMETRIUS, LEONTIUS, } *Greek noblemen.*
MURZA, *an eunuch.*

WOMEN.

ASPASIA, IRENE, } *Greek ladies.*
Attendants on IRENE.

Scene—Turkey.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.

DEMETRIUS *and* LEONTIUS *in Turkish habits.*

Leon. AND is it thus Demetrius meets his friend,
Hid in the mean disguise of Turkish robes,
With servile secrecy to lurk in shades,
And vent our sufferings in clandestine groans?
Dem. Till breathless fury rested from destruction,
These groans were fatal, these disguises vain:
But now our Turkish conquerors have quenched
Their rage, and palled their appetite of murder;
No more the glutted sabre thirsts for blood,
And weary cruelty remits her tortures.
Leon. Yet Greece enjoys no gleam of transient hope,
No soothing interval of peaceful sorrow;
The lust of gold succeeds the rage of conquest,
The lust of gold, unfeeling and remorseless!
The last corruption of degenerate man!
Urged by the imperious soldier's fierce command,
The groaning Greeks break up their golden caverns,
Pregnant with stores, that India's mines might envy,
The accumulated wealth of toiling ages.
Dem. That wealth, too sacred for their country's use!
That wealth, too pleasing to be lost for freedom!
That wealth, which, granted to their weeping prince,
Had ranged embattled nations at our gates—
But thus reserved to lure the wolves of Turkey,
Adds shame to grief, and infamy to ruin.
Lamenting avarice now too late discovers
Her own neglected, in the public safety.
Leon. Reproach not misery.——The sons of Greece,
Ill-fated race! so oft besieged in vain,
With false security beheld invasion.
Why should they fear!—That Power that kindly spreads
The clouds, a signal of impending showers,
To warn the wandering linnet to the shade,
Beheld, without concern, expiring Greece,
And not one prodigy foretold our fate.
Dem. A thousand horrid prodigies foretold it.
A feeble government, eluded laws,

A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
And all the maladies of sinking states.
When public villany, too strong for justice,
Shows his bold front, the harbinger of ruin,
Can brave Leontius call for airy wonders,
Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?
When some neglected fabric nods beneath
The weight of years, and totters to the tempest,
Must Heaven dispatch the messengers of light,
Or wake the dead to warn us of its fall?
Leon. Well might the weakness of our empire sink
Before such foes of more than human force;
Some power invisible, from Heaven or hell,
Conducts their armies, and asserts their cause.
Dem. And yet, my friend, what miracles were wrought
Beyond the power of constancy and courage?
Did unresisted lightning aid their cannon?
Did roaring whirlwinds sweep us from the ramparts?
'Twas vice that shook our nerves; 'twas vice, Leontius,
That froze our veins, and withered all our powers.
Leon. Whate'er our crimes, our woes demand compassion.
Each night, protected by the friendly darkness,
Quitting my close retreat, I range the city,
And, weeping, kiss the venerable ruins:
With silent pangs I view the towering domes,
Sacred to prayer, and wander through the streets;
Where commerce lavished unexhausted plenty,
And jollity maintained eternal revels.——
Dem. How changed alas!——Now, ghastly desolation
In triumph sits upon our shattered spires;
Now superstition, ignorance, and error,
Usurp our temples, and profane our altars.
Leon. From every palace burst a mingled clamour,
The dreadful dissonance of barbarous triumph,
Shrieks of affright, and wailings of distress.
Oft when the cries of violated beauty
Arose to Heaven, and pierced my bleeding breast,
I felt thy pains, and trembled for Aspasia.
Dem. Aspasia! spare that loved, that mournful name!
Dear hapless maid! tempestuous grief o'erbears
My reasoning powers—Dear, hapless, lost Aspasia!
Leon. Suspend the thought.
Dem. All thought on her is madness:
Yet let me think—I see the helpless maid!
Behold the monsters gaze with savage rapture,
Behold how lust and rapine struggle round her!
Leon. Awake, Demetrius, from this dismal dream;
Sink not beneath imaginary sorrows:
Call to your aid your courage and your wisdom;
Think on the sudden change of human scenes;
Think on the various accidents of war;
Think on the mighty power of awful virtue;
Think on that providence that guards the good.
Dem. O Providence! extend thy care to me,
For courage droops unequal to the combat,
And weak philosophy denies her succours.
Sure some kind sabre, in the heat of battle,
Ere yet the foe found leisure to be cruel,
Dismissed her to the sky.
Leon. Some virgin martyr,
Perhaps, enamoured of resembling virtue,
With gentle hand restrained the streams of life,
And snatched her timely from her country's fate.
Dem. From those bright regions of eternal day,
Where now thou shin'st among thy fellow saints,
Arrayed in purer light, look down on me!
In pleasing visions, and assuasive dreams,
O! soothe my soul, and teach me how to lose thee!
Leon. Enough of unavailing tears, Demetrius:
I came obedient to thy friendly summons,
And hoped to share thy counsels, not thy sorrows:
While thus we mourn the fortune of Aspasia,
To what are we reserved?
Dem. To what I know not:
But hope, yet hope, to happiness and honour—
If happiness can be without Aspasia.
Leon. But whence this new-sprung hope?
Dem. From Cali Bassa:
The chief, whose wisdom guides the Turkish counsels.
He, tired of slavery, though the highest slave,
Projects at once our freedom and his own;
And bids us, thus disguised, await him here.
Leon. Can he restore the state he could not save!
In vain, when Turkey's troops assailed our walls,
His kind intelligence betrayed their measures;
Their arms prevailed, though Cali was our friend.
Dem. When the tenth sun had set upon our sorrows,
At midnight's private hour, a voice unknown
Sounds in my sleeping ear, 'Awake, Demetrius!
'Awake, and follow me to better fortunes.'
Surprized, I start, and bless the happy dream;
Then, rousing, know the fiery chief Abdallah,
Whose quick impatience seized my doubtful hand,
And led me to the shore where Cali stood,
Pensive, and listening to the beating surge.
There, in soft hints, and in ambiguous phrase,
With all the diffidence of long experience,
That oft had practised fraud, and oft detected,
The veteran courtier half revealed his project.

By his command, equipped for speedy flight,
Deep in a winding creek a galley lies,
Manned with the bravest of our fellow captives,
Selected by my care, a hardy band,
That long to hail thee chief.
Leon. But what avails
So small a force? Or why should Cali fly?
Or how can Cali's flight restore our country?
Dem. Reserve these questions for a safer hour,
Or hear himself; for see, the Bassa comes.

Enter CALI BASSA.

Cali. Now summon all thy soul, illustrious Christian!
Awake each faculty that sleeps within thee,
The courtier's policy, the sage's firmness,
The warrior's ardour, and the patriot's zeal;
If chasing past events with vain pursuit,
Or wandering in the wilds of future being,
A single thought now rove, recall it home.
But can thy friend sustain the glorious cause,
The cause of liberty, the cause of nations?
Dem. Observe him closely with a statesman's eye,
Thou, that hast long perused the draughts of nature,
And know'st the characters of vice and virtue,
Left by the hand of heaven on human clay.
Cali. His mien is lofty, his demeanour great;
Nor sprightly folly wantons in his air,
Nor dull serenity becalms his eye.
Such had I trusted once as soon as seen;
But cautious age suspects the flattering form,
And only credits what experience tells.
Has silence pressed her seal upon his lips?
Does adamantine faith invest his heart?
Will he not bend beneath a tyrant's frown?
Will he not melt before ambition's fire?
Will he not soften in a friend's embrace?
Or flow dissolving in a woman's tears?
Dem. Sooner these trembling leaves shall find a voice,
And tell the secrets of their concious walks;
Sooner the breeze shall catch the flying sounds,
And shock the tyrant with a tale of treason.
Your slaughtered multitudes, that swell the shore
With monuments of death, proclaim his courage;
Virtue and liberty engross his soul,
And leave no place for perfidy or fear.
Leon. I scorn a trust unwillingly reposed;
Demetrius will not lead me to dishonour;
Consult in private; call me when your scheme
Is ripe for action, and demands the sword.
[*Going.*
Dem. Leontius, stay.
Cali. Forgive an old man's weakness,
And share the deepest secrets of my soul,
My wrongs, my fears, my motives, my designs—
When unsuccessful wars, and civil factions,
Embroiled the Turkish state——our sultan's father,
Great Amurath, at my request, forsook
The cloister's ease, resumed the tottering throne,
And snatched the reins of abdicated power
From giddy Mahomet's unskilful hand.
This fired the youthful king's ambitious breast;
He murmurs vengeance at the name of Cali,
And dooms my rash fidelity to ruin.
Dem. Unhappy lot of all that shine in courts!
For forced compliance, or for zealous virtue,
Still odious to the monarch or the people.
Cali. Such are the woes, when arbitrary power,
And lawless passion, hold the sword of justice.
If there be any land, as fame reports,
Where common laws restrain the prince and subject,
A happy land, where circulating power
Flows through each member of the embodied state;
Sure, not unconscious of the mighty blessing,
Her grateful sons shine bright with every virtue;
Untainted with the lust of innovation,
Sure all unite to hold her league of rule
Unbroken as the sacred chain of nature,
That links the jarring elements in peace.
Leon. But say, great Bassa, why the Sultan's anger,
Burning in vain, delays the stroke of death?
Cali. Young, and unsettled in his father's kingdoms,
Fierce as he was, he dreaded to destroy
The empire's darling, and the soldier's boast;
But now confirmed, and swelling with his conquests,
Secure he tramples my declining fame,
Frowns unrestrained, and dooms me with his eyes.
Dem. What can reverse thy doom?
Cali. The tyrant's death.
Dem. But Greece is still forgot.
Cali. On Asia's coast,
Which lately blessed my gentle government,
Soon as the sultan's unexpected fate
Fills all the astonished empire with confusion,
My policy shall raise an easy throne;
The Turkish powers from Europe shall retreat,
And harrass Greece no more with wasteful war:
A galley manned with Greeks, thy charge, Leontius,
Attends to waft us to repose and safety.
Dem. That vessel, if observed, alarms the court,
And gives a thousand fatal questions birth;
Why stored for flight? And why prepared by Cali?
Cali. This hour I'll beg, with unsuspecting face,
Leave to perform my pilgrimage to Mecca;
Which, granted, hides my purpose from the world,
And, though refused, conceals it from the sultan.

Leon. How can a single hand attempt a life,
Which armies guard, and citadels inclose?
Cali. Forgetful of command, with captive beauties,
Far from his troops, he toys his hours away.
A roving soldier seized in Sophia's temple
A virgin, shining with distinguished charms,
And brought his beauteous plunder to the sultan.
Dem. In Sophia's temple!—What alarm!—Proceed.
Cali. The sultan gazed, he wondered and he loved;
In passion lost, he bade the conquering fair
Renounce her faith, and be the queen of Turkey;
The pious maid, with modest indignation,
Threw back the glittering bribe.
Dem. Celestial goodness!
It must, it must be she! her name?
Cali. Aspasia.
Dem. What hopes, what terrors rush upon my soul!
O lead me quickly to the scene of fate;
Break through the politician's tedious forms!
Aspasia calls me, let me fly to save her.
Leon. Did Mahomet reproach or praise her virtue?
Cali. His offers oft repeated, still refused,
At length rekindled his accustomed fury,
And changed the endearing smile and amorous whisper
To threats of torture, death and violation.
Dem. These tedious narratives of frozen age
Distract my soul! dispatch thy lingering tale;
Say, did a voice from Heaven restrain the tyrant?
Did interposing angels guard her from him?
Cali. Just in the moment of impending fate,
Another plunderer brought the bright Irene;
Of equal beauty, but of softer mien,
Fear in her eye, submission on her tongue,
Her mournful charms attracted his regards,
Disarmed his rage, and in repeated visits
Gained all his heart; at length his eager love
To her transferred the offer of a crown.
Leon. Nor found again the bright temptation fail?
Cali. Trembling to grant, nor daring to refuse,
While Heaven and Mahomet divide her fears,
With coy caresses and with pleasing wiles
She feeds his hopes, and soothes him to delay.
For her, repose is banished from the night,
And business from the day. In her apartments
He lives———
Leon. And there must fall.
Cali. But yet the attempt
Is hazardous.
Leon. Forbear to speak of hazards!
What has the wretch that has survived his country,
His friends, his liberty, to hazard?
Cali. Life.
Dem. The inestimable privilege of breathing!
Important hazard! What's that airy bubble,
When weighed with Greece, with virtue, with Aspasia?
A floating atom, dust that falls unheeded
Into the adverse scale, nor shakes the balance.
Cali. At least this day be calm——If we succeed,
Aspasia's thine, and all thy life is rapture—
See! Mustapha, the tyrant's minion comes;
Invest Leontius with his new command;
And wait Abdalla's unsuspected visits:
Remember freedom, glory, Greece, and love.
[*Exeunt Demetrius and Leontius.*

Enter MUSTAPHA.

Mus. By what enchantment does this lovely Greek
Hold in her chains the captivated sultan?
He tires his favourites with Irene's praise,
And seek the shades to muse upon Irene;
Irene steals unheeded from his tongue,
And mingles unperceived with every thought.
Cali. Why should the sultan shun the joys of beauty,
Or arm his breast against the force of love?
Love, that with sweet vicissitude relieves
The warrior's labours, and the monarch's cares.
But will she yet receive the faith of Mecca?
Mus. Those powerful tyrants of the female breast,
Fear and ambition, urge her to compliance;
Dressed in each charm of gay magnificence,
Alluring grandeur courts her to his arms;
Religion calls her from the wished embrace,
Paints future joys, and points to distant glories.
Cali. Soon will the unequal contest be decided;
Prospects obscured by distance faintly strike,
Each pleasure brightens at its near approach,
And every danger shocks with double horror.
Must. How shall I scorn the beautiful apostate!
How will the bright Aspasia shine above her!
Cali. Should she, for proselytes are always zealous,
With pious warmth receive our prophet's law—
Must. Heaven will contemn the mercenary fervour,
Which love of greatness, not of truth, inflames.
Cali. Cease, cease thy censures; for the sultan comes
Alone, with amorous haste, to seek his love.

Enter MAHOMET.

Cali. Hail, terror of the monarchs of the world!
Unshaken be thy throne, as earth's firm base,
Live till the sun forgets to dart his beams,
And weary planets loiter in their courses!
Mah. But, Cali, let Irene share thy prayers;
For what is length of days without Irene?
I come from empty noise, and tasteless pomp,
From crowds, that hide a monarch from himself,
To prove the sweets of privacy and friendship,

And dwell upon the beauties of Irene.
Cali. O may her beauties last, unchanged by time,
As those that bless the mansions of the good!
Mah. Each realm, where beauty turns the graceful shape,
Swells the fair breast, or animates the glance,
Adorns my palace with its brightest virgins;
Yet, unacquainted with these soft emotions,
I walked superior, through the blaze of charms,
Praised without rapture, left without regret.
Why rove I now, when absent from my fair,
From solitude to crowds, from crowds to solitude,
Still restless, till I clasp the lovely maid,
And ease my loaded soul upon her bosom?
Mus. Forgive, great sultan, that intrusive duty
Inquires the final doom of Menodorus,
The Grecian counsellor.
Mah. Go, see him die;
His martial rhetoric taught the Greeks resistance;
Had they prevailed, I ne'er had known Irene.
[*Exit Mustapha.*
Remote from tumult, in the adjoining palace,
Thy care shall guard this treasure of my soul;
There let Aspasia, since my fair entreats it,
With converse chase the melancholy moments.
Sure, chilled with six wintry camps, thy blood,
At sight of female charms, will glow no more.
Cali. These years, unconquered Mahomet, demand
Desires more pure, and other cares than love.
Long have I wished, before our prophet's tomb,
To pour my prayers for thy successful reign,
To quit the tumults of the noisy camp,
And sink into the silent grave in peace.
Mah. What! Think of peace while haughty Scanderbeg,
Elate with conquest, in his native mountains,
Prowls o'er the wealthy spoils of bleeding Turkey?
While fair Hungaria's unexhausted vallies
Pour forth their legions, and the roaring Danube
Rolls half his floods, unheard, through shouting camps?
Nor couldst thou more support a life of sloth,
Than Amurath——
Cali. Still full of Amurath! [*Aside.*
Mah. Than Amurath, accustomed to command,
Could bear his son upon the Turkish throne.
Cali. This pilgrimage our lawgiver ordained—
Mah. For those who could not please by nobler service.
Our warlike prophet loves an active faith.
The holy flame of enterprising virtue,
Mocks the dull vows of solitude and penance,
And scorns the lazy hermit's cheap devotion;
Shine thou, distinguished by superior merit,
With wonted zeal pursue the task of war,
Till every nation reverence the Koran,
And every suppliant lift his eyes to Mecca.
Cali. This regal confidence, this pious ardour,
Let prudence moderate, though not suppress.
Is not each realm, that smiles with kinder suns,
Or boasts a happier soil, already thine?
Extended empire, like expanded gold,
Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendour.
Mah. Preach thy dull politics to vulgar kings!
Thou knowest not yet thy master's future greatness,
His vast designs, his plans of boundless power.
When every storm in my domain shall roar,
When every wave shall beat a Turkish shore;
Then, Cali, shall the toils of battle cease,
Then dream of prayer, and pilgrimage, and peace!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.

Enter ASPASIA *and* IRENE.

Irene. ASPASIA, yet pursue the sacred theme;
Exhaust the stores of pious eloquence,
And teach me to repell the sultan's passion.
Still, at Aspasia's voice, a sudden rapture
Exalts my soul, and fortifies my heart.
The glittering vanities of empty greatness,
The hopes and fears, the joys and pains, of life,
Dissolve in air, and vanish into nothing.
Asp. Let nobler hopes, and juster fears, succeed,
And bar the passes of Irene's mind
Against returning guilt.
Irene. When thou art absent,
Death rises to my view, with all his terrors;
Then visions, horrid as a murderer's dream,
Chill my resolves, and blast my blooming virtue;
Stern torture shakes his bloody scourge before me,
And anguish gnashes on the fatal wheel!
Asp. Since fear predominates in every thought,
And sways thy breast with absolute dominion,
Think on the insulting scorn, the conscious pangs,
The future miseries that wait the apostate;
So shall timidity assist thy reason,
And wisdom into virtue turn thy frailty.
Irene. Will not that power, that formed the heart of woman,
And wove the feeble texture of her nerves,
Forgive those fears that shake the tender frame?
Asp. The weakness we lament, ourselves create.
Instructed from our infant years to court,
With counterfeited fears, the aid of man;
We learn to shudder at the rustling breeze,
Start at the light, and tremble in the dark;
Till, affectation ripening to belief,
And Folly frighted at her own chimeras,
Habitual cowardice usurps the soul.

Irene. Not all like thee can brave the shocks of fate;
Thy soul, by nature great, enlarged by knowledge,
Soars unencumbered with our idle cares,
And all Aspasia, but her beauty, is man.
Asp. Each generous sentiment is thine, Demetrius,
Whose soul, perhaps, yet mindful of Aspasia,
Now hovers o'er this melancholy shade,
Well pleased to find thy precepts not forgotten.
O! could the grave restore the pious hero,
Soon would his art or valour set us free,
And bear us far from servitude and crimes!
Irene. He yet may live.
Asp. Alas! delusive dream!
Too well I know him; his immoderate courage,
The impetuous sallies of excessive virtue,
Too strong for love, have hurried him on death.

Enter CALI *and* ABDALLA.

Cali. [*To Abdalla, as they advance.*] Behold our future sultaness, Abdalla;
Let artful flattery now, to lull suspicion,
Glide through Irene to the sultan's ear.
Wouldst thou subdue the obdurate cannibal
To tender friendship, praise him to his mistress.
[*To Irene.*
Well may those eyes, that view these heavenly charms,
Reject the daughters of contending kings;
For what are pompous titles, proud alliance,
Empire or wealth, to excellence like thine?
Abd. Receive the impatient sultan to thy arms;
And may a long posterity of monarchs,
The pride and terror of succeeding days,
Rise from the happy bed; and future queens
Diffuse Irene's beauty through the world.
Irene. Can Mahomet's imperial hand descend
To clasp a slave? or, can a soul like mine,
Unused to power, and formed for humbler scenes,
Support the splendid miseries of greatness?
Cali. No regal pageant, decked with casual honours,
Scorned by his subjects, trampled by his foes;
No feeble tyrant of a petty state
Courts thee to shake on a dependent throne;
Born to command, as thou to charm mankind,
The sultan from himself derives his greatness.
Observe, bright maid, as his resistless voice
Drives on the tempest of destructive war,
How nation after nation falls before him.
Abd. At his dread name the distant mountains shake
Their cloudy summits, and the sons of fierceness,
That range uncivilized from rock to rock,
Distrust the eternal fortresses of nature,
And wish their gloomy caverns more obscure.
Asp. Forbear this lavish pomp of dreadful praise;
The horrid images of war and slaughter
Renew our sorrows, and awake our fears.
Abd. Cali, methinks yon waving trees afford
A doubtful glimpse of our approaching friends;
Just as I marked them, they forsook the shore,
And turned their hasty steps towards the garden.
Cali. Conduct these queens, Abdalla, to the palace:
Such heavenly beauty, formed for adoration,
The pride of monarchs, the reward of conquest—
Such beauty must not shine to vulgar eyes.
[*Exeunt Abdalla and Aspasia.*
How Heaven, in scorn of human arrogance,
Commits to trivial chance the fate of nations!
While, with incessant thought, laborious man
Extends his mighty schemes of wealth and power,
And towers and triumphs in ideal greatness;
Some accidental gust of opposition
Blasts all the beauties of his new creation,
O'erturns the fabric of presumptuous reason,
And whelms the swelling architect beneath it!
Had not the breeze untwined the meeting boughs,
And through the parted shade disclosed the Greeks,
The important hour had passed unheeded by,
In all the sweet oblivion of delight,
In all the fopperies of meeting lovers;
In sighs and tears, in transports and embraces,
In soft complaints, and idle protestations.

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* LEONTIUS.

Could omens fright the resolute and wise,
Well might we fear impending disappointments.
Leon. Your artful suit, your monarch's fierce denial,
The cruel doom of hapless Menodorus——
Dem. And your new charge, that dear, that heavenly maid.——
Leon. All this we know already from Abdalla.
Dem. Such slight defeats but animate the brave
To stronger efforts, and maturer counsels.
Cali. My doom confirmed establishes my purpose;
Calmly he heard, till Amurath's resumption
Rose to his thought, and set his soul on fire:
When from his lips the fatal name burst out,
A sudden pause the imperfect sense suspended,
Like the dread stillness of condensing storms.
Dem. The loudest cries of nature urge us forward;
Despotic rage pursues the life of Cali;
His groaning country claims Leontius' aid;
And yet another voice—forgive me, Greece—
The powerful voice of love, inflames Demetrius,
Each lingering hour alarms me for Aspasia.
Cali. What passions reign among thy crew, Leontius?
Does cheerless diffidence oppress their hearts?
Or sprightly hope exalt their kindling spirits?
Do they with pain repress the struggling shout,
And listen eager to the rising wind?
Leon. All there is hope, and gaiety, and courage,
No cloudy doubts, or languishing delays;
Ere I could range them on the crowded deck,

At once a hundred voices thundered round me,
And every voice was liberty and Greece.
Dem. Swift, let us rush upon the careless tyrant,
Nor give him leisure for another crime.
Leon. Then let us now resolve, nor idly waste
Another hour in dull deliberation.
Cali. But see, where, destined to protract our counsels,
Comes Mustapha. Your Turkish robes conceal you—
Retire with speed, while I prepare to meet him
With artificial smiles, and seeming friendship.—
[*Exeunt Demetrius and Leontius.*

Enter MUSTAPHA.

I see the gloom, that lowers upon thy brow;
These days of love and pleasure charm not thee;
Too slow these gentle constellations roll;
Thou long'st for stars, that frown on human kind,
And scatter discord from their baleful beams.
Mus. How blest art thou, still jocund and serene,
Beneath the load of business, and of years!
Cali. Sure by some wondrous sympathy of souls
My heart still beats responsive to the sultan's;
I share, by secret instinct, all his joys,
And feel no sorrow, while my sovereign smiles.
Mus. The sultan comes, impatient for his love;
Conduct her hither; let no rude intrusion
Molest these private walks, or care invade
These hours assigned to pleasure and Irene.
[*Exit Cali.*

Enter MAHOMET.

Mah. Now, Mustapha, pursue thy tale of horror.
Has treason's dire infection reached my palace?
Can Cali dare the stroke of heavenly justice,
In the dark precincts of the gaping grave,
And load with perjuries his parting soul?
Was it for this, that, sickening in Epirus,
My father called me to his couch of death,
Joined Cali's hand to mine, and, faltering, cried,
Restrain the fervour of impetuous youth
With venerable Cali's faithful counsels!
Are these the counsels! This the faith of Cali?
Were all our favours lavished on a villain?
Confest?
Mus. Confest by dying Menodorus.
In his last agonies the gasping coward,
Amidst the tortures of the burning steel,
Still fond of life, groaned out the dreadful secret,
Held forth this fatal scroll, then sunk to nothing.
Mah. [*Examining the paper.*] His correspondence with our foes of Greece!
His hand! His seal! The secrets of my soul
Concealed from all but him! All! all conspire
To banish doubt, and brand him for a villain.
Our schemes for ever crossed, our mines discovered,
Betrayed some traitor lurking near my bosom.
Oft have I raged, when their wide-wasting cannon
Lay pointed at our batteries yet unformed,
And broke the meditated lines of war.
Detested Cali too, with artful wonder,
Would shake his wily head, and closely whisper,
Beware of Mustapha, beware of treason.
Mus. The faith of Mustapha disdains suspicion;
But yet, great emperor, beware of treason;
The insidious Bassa, fired by disappointment—
Mah. Shall feel the vengeance of an injured king.
Go, seize him, load him with reproachful chains;
Before the assembled troops proclaim his crimes;
Then leave him stretched upon the lingering rack,
Amidst the camp to howl his life away.
Mus. Should we before the troops proclaim his crimes,
I dread his arts of seeming innocence,
His bland address, and sorcery of tongue;
And should he fall unheard, by sudden justice,
The adoring soldiers would revenge their idol.
Mah. Cali, this day, with hypocritic zeal,
Implored my leave to visit Mecca's temple;
Struck with the wonder of a statesman's goodness,
I raised his thoughts to more sublime devotion.
Now let him go, pursued by silent wrath,
Meet unexpected daggers in his way,
And, in some distant land, obscurely die.
Mus. There will his boundless wealth, the spoil of Asia,
Heaped by your father's ill-placed bounties on him,
Disperse rebellion through the eastern world;
Bribe to his cause and lift beneath his banners
Arabia's roving troops, the sons of swiftness,
And arm the Persian heretic against thee;
There shall he waste thy frontiers, check thy conquests,
And though at length subdued, elude thy vengeance.
Mah. Elude my vengeance! no—my troops shall range
The eternal snows that freeze beyond Meotis,
And Afric's torrid sands, in search of Cali.
Should the fierce North upon his frozen wings
Bear him aloft above the wondering clouds,
And set him in the Pleiad's golden chariots,
Thence should my fury drag him down to tortures;
Wherever guilt can fly, revenge can follow.
Mus. Wilt thou dismiss the savage from the toils,
Only to hunt him round the ravaged world?
Mah. Suspend his sentence——Empire and Irene
Claim my divided soul. This wretch, unworthy
To mix with nobler cares, I'll throw aside
For idle hours, and crush him at my leisure.

Mus. Let not the unbounded greatness of his mind
Betray my king to negligence of danger.
Perhaps the clouds of dark conspiracy
Now roll, full fraught with thunder, o'er your head.
Twice since the morning rose I saw the Bassa,
Like a fell adder, swelling in a brake,
Beneath the covert of this verdant arch,
In private conference; beside him stood
Two men unknown, the partners of his bosom;
I marked them well, and traced in either face
The gloomy resolution, horrid greatness,
And stern composure, of despairing heroes;
And, to confirm my thought, at sight of me,
As blasted by my presence, they withdrew,
With all the speed of terror and of guilt.
Mah. The strong emotions of my troubled soul
Allow no pause for art or for contrivance;
And dark perplexity distracts my counsels.
Do thou resolve: For see, Irene comes!
At her approach, each ruder gust of thought
Sinks, like the sighing of a tempest spent,
And gales of softer passion fan my bosom.

CALI *enters with* IRENE, *and departs with* MUSTAPHA.

Mah. Wilt thou descend, fair daughter of perfection,
To hear my vows, and give mankind a queen?
Ah! cease, Irene, cease those flowing sorrows,
That melt a heart, impregnable till now,
And turn thy thoughts henceforth to love and empire.
How will the matchless beauties of Irene,
Thus bright in tears, thus amiable in ruin,
With all the graceful pride of greatness heightened,
Amidst the blaze of jewels and of gold,
Adorn a throne, and dignify dominion!
Irene. Why all this glare of splendid eloquence,
To paint the pageantries of guilty state?
Must I for these renounce the hope of Heaven,
Immortal crowns, and fulness of enjoyment?
Mah. Vain raptures all—For your inferior natures,
Formed to delight, and happy by delighting,
Heaven has reserved no future paradise,
But bids you rove the paths of bliss, secure
Of total death, and careless of hereafter;
While Heaven's high minister, whose awful volume
Records each act, each thought of sovereign man,
Surveys your plays with inattentive glance,
And leaves the lovely trifler unregarded.
Irene. Why, then, has Nature's vain munificence
Profusely poured her bounties upon woman?
Whence, then, those charms thy tongue has deigned to flatter,
That air resistless, and enchanting blush,
Unless the beauteous fabric was designed
A habitation for a fairer soul?
Mah. Too high, bright maid, thou ratest exterior grace;
Not always do the fairest flowers diffuse
The richest odours, nor the speckled shells
Conceal the gem; let female arrogance
Observe the feathered wanderers of the sky,
With purple varied, and bedrop'd with gold;
They prune the wing, and spread the glossy plumes,
Ordained, like you, to flutter and to shine,
And cheer the weary passenger with music.
Irene. Mean as we are, this tyrant of the world
Implores our smiles, and trembles at our feet:
Whence flow the hopes and fears, despair and rapture,
Whence all the bliss and agonies of love?
Mah. Why, when the balm of sleep descends on man,
Do gay delusions, wandering o'er the brain,
Soothe the delighted soul with empty bliss,
To want give affluence, and to slavery freedom?
Such are love's joys, the lenitives of life,
A fancied treasure, and a waking dream.
Irene. Then let me once, in honour of our sex,
Assume the boastful arrogance of man.
The attractive softness, and the endearing smile,
And powerful glance, 'tis granted, are our own;
Nor has impartial Nature's frugal hand
Exhausted all her nobler gifts on you;
Do not we share the comprehensive thought,
The enlivening wit, the penetrating reason?
Beats not the female breast with generous passions,
The thirst of empire, and the love of glory?
Mah. Illustrious maid! new wonders fix me thine;
Thy soul compleats the triumphs of thy face.
I thought, forgive, my fair! the noblest aim,
The strongest effort of a female soul,
Was but to chuse the graces of the day;
To tune the tongue, to teach the eyes to roll,
Dispose the colours of the flowing robe,
And add new roses to the faded cheek.
Will it not charm a mind, like thine exalted,
To shine the goddess of applauding nations,
To scatter happiness and plenty round thee,
To bid the prostrate captive rise and live,
To see new cities tower at thy command,
And blasted kingdoms flourish at thy smile?
Irene. Charmed with the thought of blessing human kind,
Too calm I listen to the flattering sounds.
Mah. O seize the power to bless—Irene's nod
Shall break the fetters of the groaning Christian;
Greece, in her lovely patroness secure,
Shall mourn no more her plundered palaces.
Irene. Forbear—O do not urge me to my ruin!
Mah. To state and power I court thee, not to ruin:
Smile on my wishes, and command the globe.
Security shall spread her shield before thee,
And love infold thee with his downy wings.

If greatness please thee, mount the imperial seat;
If pleasure charm thee, view this soft retreat;
Here every warbler of the sky shall sing;
Here every fragrance breathe of every spring:
To deck these bowers each region shall combine,
And ev'n our prophet's gardens envy thine:
Empire and love shall share the blissful day,
And varied life steal unperceived away. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CALI *enters with a discontented air; to him enters* ABDALLA.

Cali. Is this the fierce conspirator, Abdalla?
Is this the restless diligence of treason?
Where hast thou lingered, while the encumbered hours
Fly labouring with the fate of future nations,
And hungry slaughter scents imperial blood?
Abd. Important cares detained me from your counsels.
Cali. Some petty passion, some domestic trifle,
Some vain amusement of a vacant soul;
A weeping wife, perhaps, or dying friend,
Hung on your neck, and hindered your departure.
Is this a time for softness or for sorrow?
Unprofitable, peaceful, female virtues?
When eager vengeance shows a naked foe,
And kind ambition points the way to greatness?
Abd. Must then ambition's votaries infringe
The laws of kindness, break the bonds of nature?
And quit the names of brother, friend, and father?
Cali. This sovereign passion, scornful of restraint,
Ev'n from the birth affects supreme command,
Swells in the breast, and, with resistless force,
O'erbears each gentler motion of the mind;
As, when a deluge overspreads the plains,
The wandering rivulet, and silver lake,
Mix undistinguished with the general roar.
Abd. Yet can ambition in Abdalla's breast
Claim but the second place: there mighty love
Has fixed his hopes, inquietudes, and fears,
His glowing wishes, and his jealous pangs.
Cali. Love is indeed the privilege of youth;
Yet, on a day like this, when expectation
Pants for the dread event—But let us reason—
Abd. Hast thou grown old amidst the crowd of courts,
And turned the instructive page of human life,
To cant, at last, of reason to a lover?
Such ill-timed gravity, such serious folly,
Might well befit the solitary student,
The unpractised dervise, or sequestered faquir.
Know'st thou not yet, when love invades the soul,
That all her faculties receive his chains?
That reason gives her scepter to his hand,
Or only struggles to be more enslaved?
Aspasia! who can look upon thy beauties,
Who hear thee speak, and not abandon reason?
Reason! the hoary dotard's dull directress,
That loses all because she hazards nothing:
Reason! the timorous pilot, that to shun
The rocks of life, for ever flies the port.
Cali. But why this sudden warmth?
Abd. Because I love:
Because my slighted passion burns in vain!
Why roars the lioness distressed by hunger?
Why foam the swelling waves when tempests rise?
Why shakes the ground, when subterraneous fires
Fierce through the bursting caverns rend their way?
Cali. Not till this day thou saw'st this fatal fair;
Did ever passion make so swift a progress?
Once more reflect, suppress this infant folly.
Abd. Gross fires, enkindled by a mortal hand,
Spread by degrees, and dread the oppressing stream;
The subtler flames, emitted from the sky,
Flash out at once, with strength above resistance.
Cali. How did Aspasia welcome your address?
Did you proclaim this unexpected conquest?
Or pay with speaking eyes a lover's homage?
Abd. Confounded, awed, and lost in admiration,
I gazed, I trembled; but I could not speak:
When, even as love was breaking off from wonder,
And tender accents quivered on my lips,
She marked my sparkling eyes, and heaving breast,
And smiling, conscious of her charms, withdrew.
Cali. Now be some moments master of thyself,
Nor let Demetrius know thee for a rival.
Hence! or be calm—To disagree is ruin.

Enter DEMETRIUS, LEONTIUS.

Dem. When will occasion smile upon our wishes,
And give the tortures of suspense a period?
Still must we linger in uncertain hope?
Still languish in our chains, and dream of freedom,
Like thirsty sailors gazing on the clouds,
Till burning death shoots through their withered limbs?
Cali. Deliverance is at hand; for Turkey's tyrant,
Sunk in his pleasure, confident and gay,
With all the hero's dull security,
Trusts to my care his mistress and his life,
And laughs and wantons in the jaws of death.
Leon. So weak is man, when destined to destruction,
The watchful slumber, and the crafty trust.

Cali. At my command yon iron gates unfold;
At my command the sentinels retire;
With all the licence of authority,
Through bowing slaves, I range the private rooms,
And of to-morrow's action fix the scene.
Dem. To-morrow's action? Can that hoary wisdom,
Borne down with years, still doat upon to-morrow?
That fatal mistress of the young, the lazy,
The coward, and the fool condemned to lose
An useless life in waiting for to-morrow,
To gaze with longing eyes upon to-morrow,
Till interposing death destroys the prospect!
Strange! that this general fraud from day to day
Should fill the world with wretches undetected.
The soldier, labouring through a winter's march,
Still sees to-morrow drest in robes of triumph;
Still to the lover's long-expecting arms,
To-morrow brings the visionary bride;
But thou, too old to bear another cheat,
Learn, that the present hour alone is man's.
Leon. The present hour with open arms invites;
Seize the kind fair, and press her to thy bosom.
Dem. Who knows, ere this important morrow rise,
But fear, or mutiny may taint the Greeks?
Who knows if Mahomet's awaking anger
May spare the fatal bow-string till to-morrow?
Abd. Had our first Asian foes but known this ardour,
We still had wandered on Tartarian hills.
Rouse, Cali! shall the sons of conquered Greece
Lead us to danger, and abash their victors?
This night with all her conscious stars be witness
Who merits most, Demetrius or Abdalla.
Dem. Who merits most!—I knew not we were rivals.
Cali. Young man, forbear—The heat of youth, no more—
Well—'tis decreed—This night shall fix our fate.
Soon as the veil of evening clouds the sky,
With cautious secrecy, Leontius, steer
The appointed vessel to yon shaded bay,
Formed by this garden on the shaded deep;
There, with your soldiers armed, and sails expanded,
Await our coming, equally prepared
For speedy flight, or obstinate defence.
[*Exit Leontius.*
Dem. Now pause, great Bassa, from the thoughts of blood,
And kindly grant an ear to gentler sounds!
If e'er thy youth has known the pangs of absence,
Or felt the importance of obstructed love,
Give me, before the approaching hour of fate,
Once to behold the charms of bright Aspasia,
And draw new virtue from her heavenly tongue.
Cali. Let prudence, ere the suit be further urged,
Impartial weigh the pleasure with the danger.
A little longer, and she's thine for ever.
Dem. Prudence and love conspire in this request,
Lest, unacquainted with our bold attempt,
Surprize o'erwhelm her, and retard our flight.
Cali. What I can grant, you cannot ask in vain—
Dem. I go to wait thy call; this kind consent
Completes the gift of freedom and of life.
[*Exit Demetrius.*
Abd. And this is my reward—to burn, to languish,
To rave unheeded, while the happy Greek,
The refuse of our swords, the dross of conquest,
Throws his fond arms about Aspasia's neck,
Dwells on her lips, and sighs upon her breast;
Is't not enough, he lives by our indulgence,
But he must live to make his masters wretched!
Cali. What claim hast thou to plead?
Abd. The claim of power,
The unquestioned claim of conquerors and kings!
Cali. Yet, in the use of power, remember justice.
Abd. Can then the assassin lift his treacherous hand
Against his king, and cry, Remember justice?
Justice demands the forfeit life of Cali;
Justice demands—But see the approaching sultan.
Oppose my wishes, and—Remember justice.
Cali. Disorder sits upon thy face—retire.
[*Exit Abdalla.*

Enter MAHOMET.

Long be the sultan blessed with happy love!
My zeal marks gladness dawning on thy cheek,
With raptures such as fire the pagan crowds,
When pale, and anxious for their years to come,
They see the sun surmount the dark eclipse,
And hail unanimous their conquering god.
Mah. My vows, 'tis true, she hears with less aversion;
She sighs, she blushes, but she still denies.
Cali. With warmer courtship press the yielding fair,
Call to your aid, with boundless promises,
Each rebel wish, each traitor inclination,
That raises tumults in the female breast,
The love of power, of pleasure, and of show.
Mah. These arts I tried, and, to inflame her more,
By hateful business hurried from her sight,
I bade a hundred virgins wait around her,
Soothe her with all the pleasures of command,
Applaud her charms, and court her to be great.
[*Exit Mahomet.*
Cali. He's gone—Here rest, my soul, thy fainting wing,
Here recollect thy dissipated powers.
Our distant interests, and our different passions
Now haste to mingle in one common centre,
And fate lies crowded in a narrow space.

Yet in that narrow space what dangers rise?—
Far more I dread Abdalla's fiery folly,
Than all the wisdom of the grave divan.
Reason with reason fights on equal terms;
The raging madman's unconnected schemes
We cannot obviate, for we cannot guess.
Deep in my breast be treasured this resolve,
When Cali mounts the throne Abdalla dies!
Too fierce, too faithless for neglect or trust.—

Enter IRENE, *and* ASPASIA, *with attendants.*

Amidst the splendour of encircling beauty,
Superior majesty proclaims the queen,
And nature justifies our monarch's choice.

Irene. Reserve this homage for some other fair;
Urge me not on to glittering guilt, nor pour
In my weak ear the intoxicating sounds.

Cali. Make haste, bright maid, to rule the willing world;
Awed by the rigour of the sultan's justice,
We court thy gentleness.

Asp. Can Cali's voice
Concur to press a hapless captive's ruin?

Cali. Long would my zeal for Mahomet and thee
Detain me here. But nations call upon me,
And duty bids me choose a distant walk,
Nor taint with care the privacies of love.

[*Exit Cali.*

Asp. If yet this shining pomp, these sudden honours,
Swell not thy soul beyond advice or friendship,
Not yet inspire the follies of a queen,
Or tune thine ear to soothing adulation,
Suspend awhile the privilege of power,
To hear the voice of truth; dismiss thy train,
Shake off the incumbrances of state a moment,
And lay the towering sultaness aside,

[*Irene signs to her attendants to retire.*

While I foretell thy fate; that office done—
No more I boast the ambitious name of friend,
But sink among thy slaves without a murmur.

Irene. Did regal diadems invest my brow,
Yet should my soul, still faithful to her choice,
Esteem Aspasia's breast the noblest kingdom.

Asp. The soul, once tainted with so foul a crime,
No more shall glow with friendship's hallowed ardour:
Those holy beings, whose superior care
Guides erring mortals to the paths of virtue,
Affrighted at impiety like thine,
Resign their charge to baseness and to ruin.

Irene. Upbraid me not with fancied wickedness;
I am not yet a queen, or an apostate.
But should I sin beyond the hope of mercy,
If, when religion prompts me to refuse,
The dread of instant death restrains my tongue!

Asp. Reflect, that life and death, affecting sounds!
Are only varied modes of endless being:

Reflect that life, like every other blessing,
Derives its value from its use alone;
Not for itself, but for a nobler end,
The Eternal gave it—and that end is virtue.
When inconsistent with a greater good,
Reason commands to cast the less away:
Thus life, with loss of wealth, is well preserved,
And virtue cheaply saved with loss of life.

Irene. If, built on settled thought, this constancy
Not idly flutters on a boastful tongue,
Why, when destruction raged around our walls,
Why fled this haughty heroine from the battle?
Why, then, did not this warlike amazon
Mix in the war, and shine among the heroes?

Asp. Heaven, when its hand poured softness on our limbs
Unfit for toil, and polished into weakness,
Made passive fortitude the praise of women:
Our only arms are innocence and meekness.
Not then with raving cries I filled the city,
But, while Demetrius, dear lamented name!
Poured storms of fire upon our fierce invaders,
Implored the eternal Power to shield my country,
With silent sorrows, and with calm devotion.

Irene. Oh! did Irene shine the queen of Turkey,
No more should Greece lament those prayers rejected!
Again should golden splendour grace her cities,
Again her prostrate palaces should rise,
Again her temples sound with holy music:
No more should danger fright, or want distress,
The smiling widows, and protected orphans.

Asp. Be virtuous ends pursued by virtuous means;
Nor think the intention sanctifies the deed:
That maxim, published in an impious age,
Would loose the wild enthusiast to destroy,
And fix the fierce usurper's bloody title.
Then bigotry might send her slaves to war,
And bid success become the test of truth.
Unpitying massacre might waste the world,
And persecution boast the call of Heaven.

Irene. Shall I not wish to cheer afflicted kings,
And plan the happiness of mourning millions?

Asp. Dream not of power thou canst not attain:
When social laws first harmonized the world,
Superior man possessed the charge of rule,
The scale of justice, and the sword of power,
Nor left us aught but flattery and state.

Irene. To me, my lover's fondness will restore
Whate'er man's pride has ravished from our sex.

Asp. When soft security shall prompt the sultan,
Freed from the tumults of unsettled conquest,
To fix his court, and regulate his pleasures,
Soon shall the dire seraglio's horrid gates
Close, like the eternal bars of death, upon thee:
Immured, and buried in perpetual sloth,
That gloomy slumber of the stagnant soul,

There shalt thou view, from far, the quiet cottage,
And sigh for cheerful poverty in vain;
There wear the tedious hours of life away,
Beneath each curse of unrelenting Heaven,
Despair, and slavery, solitude, and guilt!
Irene. There shall we find the yet untasted bliss,
Of grandeur and tranquillity combined.
Asp. Tranquillity and guilt, disjoined by Heaven,
Still stretch, in vain, their longing arms afar,
Nor dare to pass the insuperable bound;
Ah! let me rather seek the convent's cell;
There, when my thoughts, at interval of prayer,
Descend to range these mansions of misfortune,
Oft shall I dwell on our disastrous friendship,
And shed the pitying tear for lost Irene.
Irene. Go, languish on in dull obscurity!
Thy dazzled soul, with all its boasted greatness,
Shrinks at the o'erpowering gleams of regal state,
Stoops from the blaze, like a degenerate eagle,
And flies for shelter to the shades of life.
Asp. On me should Providence, without a crime,
The weighty charge of royalty confer;
Call me to civilize the Russian wilds,
Or bid soft science polish Briton's heroes:
Soon shouldst thou see, how false thy weak reproach.
My bosom feels, enkindled from the sky,
The lambent flames of mild benevolence,
Untouched by fierce ambition's raging fires.
Irene. Ambition is the stamp, impressed by Heaven,
To mark the noblest minds; with active heat
Informed, they mount the precipice of power,
Grasp at command, and tower in quest of empire;
While vulgar souls compassionate their cares,
Gaze at their height, and tremble at their danger:
Thus meaner spirits, with amazement, mark
The varying seasons, and revolving skies,
And ask, what guilty power's rebellious hand
Rolls, with eternal toil, the ponderous orbs;
While some archangel, nearer to perfection,
In easy state, presides o'er all their motions,
Directs the planets with a careless nod,
Conducts the sun, and regulates the spheres.
Asp. Well mayest thou hide, in labyrinths of sound,
The cause that shrieks from reason's powerful voice.
Stoop from thy flight, trace back the entangled thought,
And set the glittering fallacy to view.
Not power I blame, but power obtained by crime.
Angelic greatness is angelic virtue.
Amidst the glare of courts, the shout of armies,
Will not the apostate feel the pangs of guilt,
And wish, too late, for innocence and peace?
Curst as the tyrant of the infernal realms,
With gloomy state, and agonizing pomp!

Enter a Maid.

Maid. A Turkish stranger, of majestic mien,
Asks, at the gate, admission to Aspasia,
Commissioned, as he says, by Cali Bassa.
Irene. Whoe'er thou art, or whatsoe'er thy message,
Thanks for this kind relief—[*Aside.*]—with speed admit him.
Asp. He comes, perhaps, to separate us for ever:
When I am gone, remember, Oh! remember
That none are great, or happy, but the virtuous!
[*Exit Irene.*

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. 'Tis she—my hope, my happiness, my love!
Aspasia! Do I once again behold thee?
Still, still the same—unclouded by misfortune!
Let my blest eyes for ever gaze——
Asp. Demetrius!
Dem. Why does the blood forsake thy lovely cheek?
Why shoots this chillness through thy shaking nerves?
Why does thy soul retire into herself?
Recline upon my breast thy sinking beauties:
Revive—revive to freedom and to love!
Asp. What well known voice pronounced the grateful sounds,
Freedom and love? Alas! I'm all confusion;
A sudden mist o'ercasts my darkened soul;
The present, past, and future, swim before me,
Lost in a wild perplexity of joy.
Dem. Such ecstacy of love, such pure affection,
What worth can merit, or what faith reward?
Asp. A thousand thoughts, imperfect and distracted,
Demand a voice, and struggle into birth;
A thousand questions press upon my tongue,
But all give way to rapture and Demetrius!
Dem. O say, bright being! in this age of absence,
What fears, what griefs, what dangers hast thou known?
Say, how the tyrant threatened, flattered, sighed,
Say, how he threatened, flattered, sighed in vain!
Say, how the hand of violence was raised,
Say, how thou calledst in tears upon Demetrius!
Asp. Inform me, rather, how thy happy courage
Stemmed in the breach the deluge of destruction,
And passed uninjured through the walks of death?
Did savage anger and licentious conquest
Behold the hero with Aspasia's eyes?
And, thus protected in the general ruin,
O say, what guardian power conveyed thee hither!
Dem. Such strange events, such unexpected chances,
Beyond my warmest hope, or wildest wishes,
Concurred to give me to Aspasia's arms,
I stand amazed, and ask, if yet I clasp thee.

Asp. Sure Heaven (for wonders are not wrought in vain),
That joins us thus, will never part us more.

Enter ABDALLA.

Abd. It parts you now—the hasty sultan signed
The laws unread, and flies to his Irene.
Dem. Fixed and intent on his Irene's charms,
He envies none the converse of Aspasia.
Abd. Aspasia's absence will inflame suspicion;
She cannot, must not, shall not linger here,
Prudence and friendship bid me force her from you.
Dem. Force her! profane her with a touch, and die!
Abd. 'Tis Greece, 'tis freedom calls Aspasia hence;
Your careless love betrays your country's cause.
Dem. If we must part——
Asp. No! let us die together.
Dem. If we must part——
Abd. Dispatch! the encreasing danger
Will not admit a lover's long farewell,
The long drawn intercourse of sighs and kisses.
Dem. Then——O my fair, I cannot bid thee go;
Receive her, and protect her, gracious Heaven!
Yet let me watch her dear departing steps,
If fate pursues me, let it find me here.
Reproach not Greece, a lover's fond delays,
Nor think thy cause neglected while I gaze;
New force, new courage, from each glance I gain,
And find our passions not infused in vain. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* ASPASIA.

Asp. ENOUGH——resistless reason calms my soul——
Approving justice smiles upon your cause,
And nature's rights entreat the asserting sword.
Yet when your hand is lifted to destroy,
Think—but excuse a woman's needless caution—
Purge well thy mind from every private passion,
Drive interest, love, and vengeance from thy thoughts,
Fill all thy ardent breast with Greece and virtue!
Then strike secure, and heaven assist the blow!
Dem. Thou kind assistant of my better angel,
Propitious guide of my bewildered soul,
Calm of my cares, and guardian of my virtue!
Asp. My soul, first kindled by thy bright example,
To noble thought and generous emulation,
Now but reflects those beams that flowed from thee.
Dem. With native lustre, and unborrowed greatness,
Thou shin'st, bright maid, superior to distress;
Unlike the trifling race of vulgar beauties,
Those glittering dew-drops of a vernal morn,
That spread their colours to the genial beam,
And, sparkling, quiver to the breath of May;
But when the tempest, with sonorous wing,
Sweeps o'er the grove, forsake the labouring bough,
Dispersed in air, or mingled with the dust.
Asp. Forbear this triumph—still new conflicts wait us,
Foes unforeseen, and dangers unsuspected.
Oft, when the fierce besieger's eager host
Beholds the fainting garrison retire,
And rushes joyful to the naked wall,
Destruction flashes from the insidious mine,
And sweeps the exulting conqueror away:
Perhaps in vain the sultan's anger spared me,
To find a meaner fate from treacherous friendship—
Abdalla—
Dem. Can Abdalla then dissemble?
That fiery chief, renowned for generous freedom,
For zeal unguarded, undissembled hate,
For daring truth, and turbulence of honour?
Asp. This open friend, this undesigning hero,
With noisy falsehoods forced me from your arms,
To shock my virtue with a tale of love.
Dem. Did not the cause of Greece restrain my sword,
Aspasia should not fear a second insult.
Asp. His pride and love by turns inspired his tongue,
And intermixed my praises with his own;
His wealth, his rank, his honours he recounted,
Till, in the midst of arrogance and fondness,
The approaching sultan forc'd me from the palace;
Then while he gazed upon his yielding mistress,
I stole, unheeded, from their ravished eyes,
And sought this happy grove in quest of thee.
Dem. Soon may the final stroke decide our fate,
Lest baneful discord crush our infant scheme,
And strangled freedom perish in the birth.
Asp. My bosom harassed with alternate passions,
Now hopes, now fears——.
Dem. The anxieties of love!
Asp. Think how the sovereign arbiter of kingdoms
Detests thy false associates' black designs,
And frowns on perjury, revenge, and murder.
Embarked with treason on the seas of fate,
When Heaven shall bid the swelling billows rage,
And point vindictive lightnings at rebellion,
Will not the patriot share the traitor's danger?
Oh, could thy hand, unaided, free thy country,
Nor mingled guilt pollute the sacred cause!

Dem. Permitted oft, though not inspired by Heaven,
Successful treasons punish impious kings.
Asp. Nor end my terrors with the sultan's death;
Far as futurity's untravelled waste
Lies open to conjecture's dubious ken,
On every side confusion, rage, and death,
Perhaps the phantoms of a woman's fear,
Beset the treacherous way with fatal ambush;
Each Turkish bosom burns for thy destruction;
Ambitious Cali dreads the statesman's arts,
And hot Abdalla hates the happy lover.
Dem. Capricious man! to good and ill inconstant;
Too much to fear or trust, is equal weakness.
Sometimes the wretch, unawed by heaven or hell,
With mad devotion idolizes honour.
The Bassa, reeking with his master's murder,
Perhaps may start at violated friendship.
Asp. How soon, alas! will interest, fear, or envy,
O'erthrow such weak, such accidental virtue,
Nor built on faith, nor fortified by conscience?
Dem. When desperate ills demand a speedy cure,
Distrust is cowardice, and prudence folly.
Asp. Yet think a moment, ere you court destruction,
What hand, when death has snatched away Demetrius,
Shall guard Aspasia from triumphant lust!
Dem. Dismiss these needless fears—a troop of Greeks,
Well known, long tried, expect us on the shore.
Borne on the surface of the smiling deep,
Soon shalt thou scorn, in safety's arms reposed,
Abdalla's rage and Cali's stratagems.
Asp. Still, still distrust sits heavy on my heart.
Will e'er an happier hour revisit Greece!
Dem. Should Heaven, yet unappeased, refuse its aid,
Disperse our hopes, and frustrate our designs,
Yet shall the conscience of the great attempt
Diffuse a brightness on our future days;
Nor will his country's groans reproach Demetrius.
But how canst thou support the woes of exile?
Canst thou forget hereditary splendours,
To live obscure upon a foreign coast,
Content with science, innocence, and love?
Asp. Nor wealth, nor titles, make Aspasia's bliss.
O'erwhelmed and lost amidst the public ruins,
Unmoved I saw the glittering trifles perish,
And thought the petty dross beneath a sigh.
Chearful I follow to the rural cell;
Love be my wealth, and my distinction virtue!
Dem. Submissive and prepared for each event,
Now let us wait the last award of Heaven,
Secure of happiness from flight or conquest,
Nor fear the fair and learned can want protection.
The mighty Tuscan courts the banished arts
To kind Italia's hospitable shades;
There shall soft leisure wing the excursive soul,
And peace propitious smile on fond desire;
There shall despotic eloquence resume
Her ancient empire o'er the yielding heart;
There poetry shall tune her sacred voice,
And wake from ignorance the western world.

Enter CALI.

Cali. At length the unwilling sun resigns the world
To silence and to rest. The hours of darkness,
Propitious hours to stratagem and death!
Pursue the last remains of lingering light.
Dem. Count not these hours as parts of vulgar time;
Think them a sacred treasure lent by Heaven,
Which, squandered by neglect, or fear, or folly,
No prayer recalls, no diligence redeems;
To-morrow's dawn shall see the Turkish king
Stretched in the dust, or towering on his throne;
To-morrow's dawn shall see the mighty Cali,
The sport of tyranny, or lord of nations.
Cali. Then waste no longer these important moments
In soft endearments, and in gentle murmurs;
Nor lose in love the patriot and the hero.
Dem. 'Tis love combined with guilt alone, that melts
The softened soul to cowardice and sloth;
But virtuous passion prompts the great resolve,
And fans the slumbering spark of heavenly fire.
Retire, my fair; that power, that smiles on goodness
Guide all thy steps, calm every stormy thought,
And still thy bosom with the voice of peace!
Asp. Soon may we meet again, secure and free,
To feel no more the pangs of separation! [*Exit.*
Dem. This night alone is ours—Our mighty foe,
No longer lost in amorous solitude,
Will now remount the slighted seat of empire,
And show Irene to the shouting people:
Aspasia left her sighing in his arms,
And listening to the pleasing tale of power;
With softened voice she dropped the faint refusal,
Smiling consent she sat, and blushing love.
Cali. Now, tyrant, with satiety of beauty,
Now feast thine eyes, thine eyes that ne'er hereafter
Shall dart their amorous glances at the fair,
Or glare on Cali with malignant beams!

Enter LEONTIUS, ABDALLA.

Leon. Our bark, unseen, has reached the appointed bay,
And where yon trees wave o'er the foaming surge
Reclines against the shore: Our Grecian troop

Extends its lines along the sandy beach,
Elate with hope, and panting for a foe.
Abd. The favouring winds assist the great design,
Sport in our sails, and murmur o'er the deep.
Cali. 'Tis well—A single blow completes our wishes:
Return with speed, Leontius, to your charge;
The Greeks, disordered by their leader's absence,
May droop dismayed, or kindle into madness.
Leon. Suspected still?—What villain's poisnous tongue
Dares join Leontius' name with fear or falsehood?
Have I, for this, preserved my guiltless bosom,
Pure as the thoughts of infant innocence?
Have I, for this, defied the chiefs of Turkey,
Intrepid in the flaming front of war?
Cali. Hast thou not searched my soul's profoundest thoughts?
Is not the fate of Greece and Cali thine?
Leon. Why has thy choice then pointed out Leontius,
Unfit to share this night's illustrious toils?
To wait remote from action, and from honour,
An idle list'ner to the distant cries
Of slaughtered infidels, and clash of swords!
Tell me the cause, that while thy name, Demetrius,
Shall soar triumphant on the wings of glory,
Despised and cursed, Leontius must descend
Through hissing ages, a proverbial coward,
The tale of women, and the scorn of fools?
Dem. Can brave Leontius be the slave of glory?
Glory, the casual gift of thoughtless crouds!
Glory, the bribe of avaricious virtue!
Be but my country free, be thine the praise;
I ask no witness, but attesting conscience,
No records, but the records of the sky.
Leon. Wilt thou, then, head the troop upon the shore,
While I destroy the oppressor of mankind?
Dem. What canst thou boast superior to Demetrius?
Ask to whose sword the Greeks will trust their cause,
My name shall echo through the shouting field;
Demand whose force yon Turkish heroes dread,
The shuddering camp shall murmur out Demetrius.
Cali. Must Greece, still wretched by her children's folly,
For ever mourn their avarice or factions?
Demetrius justly pleads a double title;
The lover's interest aids the patriot's claim.
Leon. My pride shall ne'er protract my country's woes;
Succeed, my friend, unenvied by Leontius.
Dem. I feel new spirit shoot along my nerves,
My soul expands to meet approaching freedom.
Now hover o'er us with propitious wings,
Ye sacred shades of patriots and of martyrs;
All ye, whose blood tyrannic rage effused,
Or persecution drank, attend our call;
And from the mansions of perpetual peace
Descend, to sweeten labours once your own!
Cali. Go, then, and with united eloquence
Confirm your troops; and when the moon's fair beam
Plays on the quivering waves, to guide our flight,
Return, Demetrius, and be free for ever.
[*Exeunt Dem. and Leon.*
Abd. How the new monarch, swelled with airy rule,
Looks down, contemptuous, from his fancied height,
And utters fate, unmindful of Abdalla!
Cali. Far be such black ingratitude from Cali!
When Asia's nations own me for their lord,
Wealth, and command, and grandeur shall be thine.
Abd. Is this the recompence reserved for me?
Dar'st thou thus dally with Abdalla's passion?
Henceforward, hope no more my slighted friendship,
Wake from thy dream of power to death and tortures,
And bid thy visionary throne farewell!
Cali. Name and enjoy thy wish——
Abd. I need not name it;
Aspasia's lovers know but one desire,
Nor hope, nor wish, nor live but for Aspasia.
Cali. That fatal beauty, plighted to Demetrius,
Heaven makes not mine to give.
Abd. Nor to deny.
Cali. Obtain her and possess; thou know'st thy rival.
Abd. Too well I know him, since on Thracia's plains
I felt the force of his tempestuous arm,
And saw my scattered squadrons fly before him.
Nor will I trust the uncertain chance of combat;
The rights of princes let the sword decide,
The petty claims of empire and of honour:
Revenge and subtle jealousy shall teach
A surer passage to his hated heart.
Cali. O spare the gallant Greek! in him we lose
The politician's arts, and hero's flame.
Abd. When next we meet before we storm the palace,
The bowl shall circle to confirm our league;
Then shall these juices taint Demetrius' draught,
[*Shewing a phial.*
And stream destructive through his freezing veins.
Thus shall he live to strike the important blow,
And perish ere he tastes the joys of conquest.

Enter MAHOMET *and* MUSTAPHA.

Mah. Henceforth for ever happy be this day,
Sacred to love, to pleasure, and Irene:

The matchless fair has blessed me with compliance;
Let every tongue resound Irene's praise,
And spread the general transport through mankind!
Cali. Blest prince, for whom indulgent Heaven ordains
At once the joys of paradise and empire,
Now join thy people's, and thy Cali's prayers!
Suspend thy passage to the seats of bliss,
Nor wish for houries in Irene's arms.
Mah. Forbear—I know the long tried faith of Cali.
Cali. O could the eyes of kings, like those of Heaven,
Search to the dark recesses of the soul,
Oft would they find ingratitude and treason,
By smiles, and oaths, and praises ill disguised.
How rarely would they meet, in crowded courts,
Fidelity so firm, so pure, as mine!
Mus. Yet ere we give our loosened thoughts to rapture,
Let prudence obviate an impending danger.
Tainted by sloth, the parent of sedition,
The hungry janizary burns for plunder,
And growls in private o'er his idle sabre.
Mah. To still their murmurs, ere the twentieth sun
Shall shed his beams upon the bridal bed,
I rouse to war, and conquer for Irene.
Then shall the Rhodian mourn his sinking towers,
And Buda fall, and proud Vienna tremble;
Then shall Venetia feel the Turkish power,
And subject seas roar round their queen in vain.
Abd. Then seize fair Italy's delightful coast,
To fix your standard in imperial Rome.
Mah. Her sons malicious clemency shall spare,
To form new legions, sanctify new crimes,
To canonize the slaves of superstition,
And fill the world with follies and impostures,
Till angry Heaven shall mark them out for ruin,
And war o'erwhelm them in their dream of vice.
O could her fabled saints, and boasted prayers,
Call forth her ancient heroes to the field,
How should I joy, midst the fierce shock of nations,
To cross the towerings of an equal soul,
And bid the master genius rule the world!
Abdalla, Cali, go—proclaim my purpose.
[*Exeunt Cali and Abdalla.*
Still Cali lives; and must he live to-morrow?
That fawning villain's forced congratulations
Will cloud my triumphs, and pollute the day.
Mus. With cautious vigilance, at my command,
Two faithful captains, Hassan and Caraza,
Pursue him through his labyrinths of treason,
And wait your summons to report his conduct.
Mah. Call them, but let them not prolong their tale,
Nor press too much upon a lover's patience.
[*Exit Mustapha.*

Whome'er the hope, still blasted, still renewed,
Of happiness, lures on from toil to toil,
Remember Mahomet, and cease thy labour.
Behold him here, in love, in war, successful,
Behold him wretched in his double triumph;
His favourite faithless, and his mistress base.
Ambition only gave her to my arms,
By reason not convinced, nor won by love.
Ambition was her crime, but meaner folly
Dooms me to loath at once, and doat on falsehood,
And idolize the apostate I contemn.
If thou art more than the gay dream of fancy,
More than a pleasing sound without a meaning,
O happiness! sure thou art all Aspasia's.

Enter MUSTAPHA, HASSAN, *and* CARAZA.

Caraza speak—have ye remarked the Bassa?
Car. Close as we might, unseen, we watched his steps;
His air disordered, and his gait unequal,
Betrayed the wild emotions of his mind.
Sudden he stops, and inward turns his eyes,
Absorbed in thought; then starting from his trance,
Constrains a sullen smile, and shoots away.
With him Abdalla we beheld—
Mus. Abdalla!
Mah. He wears, of late, resentment on his brow,
Denied the government of Servia's province.
Car. We marked him storming in excess of fury,
And heard within the thicket that concealed us,
An undistinguished sound of threatening rage.
Mus. How guilt, once harboured in the conscious breast,
Intimidates the brave, degrades the great!
See Cali, dread of kings, and pride of armies,
By treason levelled with the dregs of men.
Ere guilty fear depressed the hoary chief,
An angry murmur, a rebellious frown,
Had stretched the fiery boaster in the grave.
Mah. Shall monarchs fear to draw the sword of justice,
Awed by the crowd, and by their slaves restrained?
Seize him this night, and through the private passage
Convey him to the prison's inmost depths,
Reserved to all the pangs of tedious death.
[*Exeunt Mahomet and Mustapha.*
Has. Shall then the Greeks, unpunished and concealed,
Contrive, perhaps, the ruin of our empire,
League with our chiefs, and propagate sedition?
Car. Whate'er their scheme the Bassa's death defeats it,
And gratitude's strong ties restrain my tongue.
Has. What ties to slaves? what gratitude to foes?

Cer. In that black day, when slaughtered thousands fell
Around these fatal walls, the tide of war
Bore me victorious onward, where Demetrius
Tore, unresisted, from the giant hand
Of stern Sebalias, the triumphant crescent,
And dashed the might of Asem from the ramparts.
There I became, nor blush to make it known,
The captive of his sword. The coward Greeks,
Enraged by wrongs, exulting with success,
Doomed me to die, with all the Turkish captains.
But brave Demetrius scorned the mean revenge,
And gave me life—
Has. Do thou repay the gift,
Lest unrewarded mercy lose its charms.
Profuse of wealth, or bounteous of success,
When Heaven bestows the privilege to bless,
Let no weak doubt the generous hand restrain,
For when was power beneficent in vain?
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ASPASIA *solus.*

Asp. In these dark moments of suspended fate,
While yet the future fortune of my country
Lies in the womb of Providence concealed,
And anxious angels wait the mighty birth;
O grant thy sacred influence, powerful Virtue!
Attention rise, survey the fair creation,
Till, conscious of the encircling deity,
Beyond the mists of care thy pinion towers.
This calm, these joys, dear innocence! are thine;
Joys ill exchanged for gold, and pride, and empire.

Enter IRENE, *and attendants.*

Irene. See how the moon, through all the unclouded sky,
Spreads her mild radiance, and descending dews
Revive the languid flowers! thus nature shone
New from the Maker's hand, and fair arrayed
In the bright colours of primeval spring;
When purity, while fraud was yet unknown,
Played fearless in the inviolated shades.
This elemental joy, this general calm,
Is sure the smile of unoffended Heaven.
Yet, why——
Maid. Behold, within the embowering grove,
Aspasia stands——
Irene. With melancholy mien,
Pensive, and envious of Irene's greatness.
Steal, unperceived, upon her meditations—
But see! the lofty maid, at our approach,
Resumes the imperious air of haughty virtue.
Are these the unceasing joys, the unmingled pleasures,
For which Aspasia scorned the Turkish crown?
[*To Aspasia.*
Is this the unshaken confidence in Heaven?
Is this the boasted bliss of conscious virtue?
When did content sigh out her cares in secret?
When did felicity repine in deserts?
Asp. Ill suits with guilt the gaieties of triumph;
When daring vice insults eternal justice,
The ministers of wrath forget compassion,
And snatch the flaming bolt with hasty hand.
Irene. Forbear thy threats, proud prophetess of ill,
Versed in the secret counsels of the sky!
Asp. Forbear—but thou art sunk beneath reproach;
In vain affected raptures flush the cheek,
And songs of pleasure warble from the tongue,
When fear and anguish labour in the breast,
And all within is darkness and confusion.
Thus, on deceitful Ætna's flowery side,
Unfading verdure glads the roving eye;
While secret flames, with unextinguished rage,
Insatiate on her wasted entrails prey,
And melt her treacherous beauties into ruin!

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Fly, fly, my love! destruction rushes on us!
The rack expects us, and the sword pursues!
Asp. Is Greece delivered? Is the tyrant fallen?
Dem. Greece is no more; the prosperous tyrant lives,
Reserved, for other lands, the scourge of Heaven.
Asp. Say, by what fraud, what force, were you defeated?
Betrayed by falsehood, or by crowds o'erborne?
Dem. The pressing exigence forbids relation.
Abdalla——
Asp. Hated name! his jealous rage
Broke out in perfidy—Oh, cursed Aspasia!
Born to complete the ruin of her country!
Hide me! oh, hide me from upbraiding Greece!
Oh, hide me from myself!
Dem. Be fruitless grief,
The doom of guilt alone, nor dare to seize
The breast where virtue guards the throne of peace!
Devolve, dear maid, thy sorrows on the wretch,
Whose fear, or rage, or treachery, betrayed us!
Irene. [*Aside.*] A private station may discover more!
Then let me rid them of Irene's presence:
Proceed, and give a loose to love and treason!
[*Withdraws.*
Asp. Yet tell.
Dem. To tell, or hear, were waste of life.
Asp. The life, which only this design supported,
Were now well lost, in hearing how you failed.
Dem. Or meanly fraudulent, or madly gay,

Abdalla, while we waited near the palace,
With ill-timed mirth, proposed the bowl of love.
Just as it reached my lips, a sudden cry
Urged me to dash it to the ground untouched,
And seize my sword with disencumbered hand.

Asp. What cry? The stratagem? Did then Abdalla——

Dem. At once a thousand passions fired his cheek:
Then all is past, he cried—and darted from us:
Nor at the call of Cali deigned to turn.

Asp. Why did you stay, deserted and betrayed?
What more could force attempt, or art contrive?

Dem. Amazement seized us, and the hoary Bassa
Stood torpid in suspence; but soon Abdalla
Returned with force, that made resistance vain,
And bade his new confederates seize the traitors.
Cali, disarmed, was borne away to death;
Myself escaped, or favoured or neglected.

Asp. O Greece! renowned for science and for wealth,
Behold thy boasted honours snatched away!

Dem. Though disappointment blast our general scheme,
Yet much remains to hope. I shall not call
The day disastrous, that secures our flight;
Nor think that effort lost which rescues thee.

Enter ABDALLA.

Abd. At length the prize is mine.—The haughty maid,
That bears the fate of empires in her air,
Henceforth shall live for me; for me alone
Shall plume her charms, and, with attentive watch,
Steal from Abdalla's eye the sign to smile!

Dem. Cease this wild roar of savage exultation;
Advance, and perish in the frantic boast!

Asp. Forbear, Demetrius, 'tis Aspasia calls thee;
Thy love, Aspasia, calls; restrain thy sword;
Nor rush on useless wounds with idle courage.

Dem. What now remains?

Asp. It now remains to fly.

Dem. Shall, then, the savage live, to boast his insult,
Tell how Demetrius shunned his single hand,
And stole his life and mistress from his sabre?

Abd. Infatuate loiterer! has fate, in vain,
Unclasped his iron gripe to set thee free?
Still dost thou flutter in the jaws of death,
Snared with thy fears, and mazed in stupefaction?

Dem. Forgive, my fair; 'tis life, 'tis nature calls.
Now, traitor, feel the fear that chills my hand!

Asp. 'Tis madness to provoke superfluous danger,
And cowardice to dread the boast of folly.

Abd. Fly, wretch, while yet my pity grants thee flight;
The power of Turkey waits upon my call.
Leave but this maid, resign a hopeless claim,
And drag away thy life in scorn and safety;
Thy life, too mean a prey to lure Abdalla!

Dem. Once more I dare thy sword; behold the prize!
Behold I quit her to the chance of battle!
[*Quitting Aspasia.*

Abd. Well mayst thou call thy master to the combat,
And try the hazard, that hast nought to stake;
Alike my death or thine is gain to thee;
But soon thou shalt repent: another moment
Shall throw the attending Janizaries round thee!
[*Exit, hastily, Abdalla.*

Irene. Abdalla fails; now fortune all is mine.
[*Aside.*
Haste, Murza, to the palace; let the sultan
[*To one of her attendants.*
Dispatch his guards to stop the flying traitors,
While I protract their stay. Be swift and faithful.
[*Exit Murza.*
This lucky stratagem shall charm the sultan,
Secure his confidence, and fix his love. [*Aside.*

Dem. Behold a boaster's worth! Now snatch, my fair,
The happy moment; hasten to the shore,
Ere he return with thousands at his side.

Asp. In vain I listen to the inviting call
Of freedom and of love: My trembling joints,
Relaxed with fear, refuse to bear me forward!
Depart, Demetrius, lest my fate involve thee;
Forsake a wretch abandoned to despair,
To share the miseries herself has caused.

Dem. Let us not struggle with the Eternal Will,
Nor languish o'er irreparable ruins;
Come, haste, and live—Thy innocence and truth
Shall bless our wanderings, and propitiate Heaven.

Irene. Press not her flight, while yet her feeble nerves
Refuse their office, and uncertain life
Still labours with imaginary woe.
Here, let me tend her with officious care,
Watch each unquiet flutter of the breast,
And joy to feel the vital warmth return,
To see the cloud forsake her kindling cheek,
And hail the rosy dawn of rising health.

Asp. Oh! rather scornful of fugitious greatness,
Resolve to share our dangers and our toils,
Companion of our flight, illustrious exile,
Leave slavery, guilt, and infamy behind.

Irene. My soul attends thy voice, and banished virtue
Strives to regain her empire of the mind:
Assist her efforts with thy strong persuasion!
Sure 'tis the happy hour ordained above,
When vanquished vice shall tyrannize no more.

Dem. Remember, peace and anguish are before thee,

And honour and reproach, and heaven and hell.
Asp. Content with freedom, and precarious greatness.
Dem. Now make thy choice, while yet the power of choice
Kind heaven affords thee, and inviting mercy
Holds out her hand to lead thee back to truth.
Irene. Stay—in this dubious twilight of conviction,
The gleams of reason, and the clouds of passion,
Irradiate and obscure my breast by turns:
Stay but a moment, and prevailing truth
Will spread resistless light upon my soul.
Dem. But since none knows the danger of a moment,
And Heaven forbids to lavish life away,
Let kind compulsion terminate the contest.
[*Seizing her hand.*
Ye christian captives, follow me to freedom!
A galley waits us, and the winds invite.
Irene. Whence is this violence?
Dem. Your calmer thought
Will teach a gentler term.
Irene. Forbear this rudeness,
And learn the reverence due to Turkey's queen.
Fly, slaves, and call the sultan to my rescue!
Dem. Farewell, unhappy maid! may every joy
Be thine, that wealth can give, or guilt receive.
Asp. And when, contemptuous of imperial power,
Disease shall chase the phantoms of ambition,
May penitence attend thy mournful bed,
And wing thy latest prayer to pitying Heaven.
[*Exeunt Demetrius, Aspasia, with part of the attendants.*

IRENE *walks at a distance from her attendants. After a pause—*

Against the head which innocence secures,
Insidious malice aims her darts in vain,
Turned backwards by the powerful breath of Heaven.
Perhaps even now, the lovers, unpursued,
Bound o'er the sparkling waves. Go, happy bark,
Thy sacred freight shall still the raging main.
To guide thy passage shall the aerial spirits
Fill all the starry lamps with double blaze;
The applauding sky shall pour forth all its beams
To grace the triumph of victorious virtue:
While I, not yet familiar to my crimes,
Recoil from thought, and shudder at myself.
How am I changed! How lately did Irene
Fly from the busy pleasures of her sex,
Well pleased to search the treasures of remembrance,
And live her guiltless moments o'er anew!
Come, let us seek new pleasures in the palace,
[*To her attendants, going off.*
Till soft fatigue invite us to repose.

Enter MUSTAPHA, *meeting and stopping her.*

Mus. Fair falsehood, stay!
Irene. What dream of sudden power
Has taught my slave the language of command!
Henceforth be wise, nor hope a second pardon.
Mus. Who calls for pardon from a wretch condemned?
Irene. Thy look, thy speech, thy action, all is wildness—
Who charges guilt on me?
Mus. Who charges guilt?
Ask of thy heart? attend the voice of conscience—
Who charges guilt? lay by this proud resentment,
That fires thy cheek, and elevates thy mien,
Nor thus usurp the dignity of virtue.
Review this day.
Irene. Whate'er thy accusation,
The sultan is my judge.
Mus. That hope is past;
Hard was the strife of justice and of love,
But now 'tis o'er, and justice has prevailed.
Know'st thou not Cali? know'st thou not Demetrius?
Irene. Bold slave, I know them both—I know them traitors.
Mus. Perfidious!—yes—too well thou know'st them traitors.
Irene. Their treason throws no stain upon Irene.
This day has proved my fondness for the sultan;
He knew Irene's truth.
Mus. The sultan knows it;
He knows how near apostacy to treason—
But 'tis not mine to judge—I scorn and leave thee.
I go, lest vengeance urge my hand to blood,
To blood, too mean to stain a soldier's sabre.
[*Exit Mustapha.*
Irene. Go, blustring slave.—He has not heard of Murza. [*Irene to her attendants.*
That dexterous message frees me from suspicion.

Enter HASSAN, CARAZA, *with mutes, who throw the black robe upon* IRENE, *and sign to her attendants to withdraw.*

Has. Forgive, fair excellence, the unwilling tongue,
The tongue, that, forced by strong necessity,
Bids beauty, such as thine, prepare to die!
Irene. What wild mistake is this? Take hence, with speed,
Your robe of mourning, and your dogs of death.
Quick from my sight, you inauspicious monsters!
Nor dare henceforth to shock Irene's walks!
Has. Alas! they come, commanded by the sultan,
The unpitying ministers of Turkish justice,
Nor dare to spare the life his frown condemns.
Irene. Are these the rapid thunderbolts of war,
That pour with sudden violence on kingdoms,
And spread their flames resistless o'er the world?
What sleepy charms benumb these active heroes,
Depress their spirits, and retard their speed

Beyond the fear of lingering punishment?
Aspasia, now within her lover's arms,
Securely sleeps, and, in delightful dreams,
Smiles at the threatenings of defeated rage.
Car. We come, bright virgin, though relenting nature
Shrinks at the hated task, for thy destruction;
When, summoned by the sultan's clamorous fury,
We asked, with timorous tongue, the offender's name,
He struck his tortured breast, and roared, 'Irene:'
We started at the sound; again enquired;
Again his thundering voice returned, 'Irene!'
Irene. Whence is this rage? what barbarous tongue has wronged me?
What fraud misleads him, or what crimes incense?
Has. Expiring Cali named Irene's chamber
The place appointed for his master's death.
Irene. Irene's chamber! From my faithful bosom
Far be the thought!—But hear my protestation.
Car. 'Tis ours, alas! to punish, not to judge;
Not called to try the cause, we heard the sentence,
Ordained the mournful messengers of death.
Irene. Some ill designing statesman's base intrigue!
Some cruel stratagem of jealous beauty!
Perhaps yourselves the villains that defame me,
Now haste to murder, ere returning thought
Recall the extorted doom.—It must be so;
Confess your crime, or lead me to the sultan.
There, dauntless truth shall blast the vile accuser;
Then shall you feel what language cannot utter,
Each piercing torture, every change of pain,
That vengeance can invent, or power inflict.

Enter ABDALLA, *he stops short and listens.*

Abd. [*Aside.*] All is not lost, Abdalla; see the queen,
See the last witness of thy guilt and fear,
Enrobed in death—Dispatch her, and be great.
Car. Unhappy fair! Compassion calls upon me
To check this torrent of imperious rage.
While unavailing anger crowds thy tongue
With idle threats and fruitless exclamation,
The fraudful moments ply their silent wings,
And steal thy life away. Death's horrid angel
Already shakes his bloody sabre o'er thee.
The raging sultan burns till our return,
Curses the dull delays of lingering mercy,
And thinks his fatal mandates ill obeyed.
Abd. Is then your sovereign's life so cheaply rated,
That thus you parley with detected treason?
Should she prevail to gain the sultan's presence,
Soon might her tears engage a lover's credit;
Perhaps her malice might transfer the charge;
Perhaps her poisonous tongue might blast Abdalla.
Irene. O let me but be heard, nor fear from me
Or flights of power, or projects of ambition!
My hopes, my wishes, terminate in life,
A little life for grief, and for repentance.
Abd. I marked her wily messenger afar,
And saw him skulking in the closest walks:
I guessed her dark designs, and warned the sultan,
And bring her former sentence new confirmed.
Has. Then call it not our cruelty, nor crime;
Deem us not deaf to woe, nor blind to beauty,
That, thus constrained, we speed the stroke of death. [*Beckons the mutes.*
Irene. O name not death! Distraction and amazement,
Horror and agony, are in that sound!
Let me but live, heap woes on woes upon me;
Hide me with murderers in the dungeon's gloom;
Send me to wander on some pathless shore;
Let shame and hooting infamy pursue me;
Let slavery harass, and let hunger gripe!
Car. Could we reverse the sentence of the sultan,
Our bleeding bosoms plead Irene's cause.
But cries and tears are vain; prepare, with patience,
To meet that fate we can delay no longer.
[*The mutes, at the sign, lay hold of her.*
Abd. Dispatch, ye lingering slaves! or nimbler hands,
Quick at my call, shall execute your charge;
Dispatch, and learn a fitter time for pity.
Irene. Grant me one hour, O grant me but a moment,
And bounteous Heaven repay the mighty mercy
With peaceful death, and happiness eternal!
Car. The prayer I cannot grant——I dare not hear.
Short be thy pains. [*Signs again to the mutes.*
Irene. Unutterable anguish!
Guilt and despair! pale spectres grin around me,
And stun me with the yellings of damnation!
O, hear my prayers! accept, all-pitying Heaven,
These tears, these pangs, these last remains of life,
Nor let the crimes of this detested day
Be charged upon my soul. O, mercy! mercy!
[*Mutes force her out.*
Abd. [*Aside.*] Safe in her death, and in Demetrius' flight,
Abdalla, bid thy troubled breast be calm;
Now shalt thou shine the darling of the sultan,
The plot all Cali's, the detection thine.
Has. [*To Caraza.*] Does not thy bosom, for I know thee tender,
A stranger to the oppressor's savage joy,
Melt at Irene's fate, and share her woes?
Car. Her piercing cries yet fill the loaded air,
Dwell on my ear, and sadden all my soul;
But let us try to clear our clouded brows,
And tell the horrid tale with cheerful face;
The stormy sultan rages at our stay.

Abd. Frame your report with circumspective art,
Inflame her crimes, exalt your own obedience,
But let no thoughtless hint involve Abdalla.
Car. What need of caution to report the fate
Of her the sultan's voice condemned to die?
Or why should he, whose violence of duty
Has served his prince so well, demand our silence?
Abd. Perhaps my zeal, too fierce, betrayed my prudence;
Perhaps my warmth exceeded my commission;
Perhaps I will not stoop to plead my cause;
Or argue with the slave that saved Demetrius.
Car. From his escape learn thou the power of virtue,
Nor hope his fortune while thou want'st his worth.
Has. The sultan comes, still gloomy, still enraged.

Enter MAHOMET *and* MUSTAPHA.

Mah. Where's this fair traitress? Where's this smiling mischief,
Whom neither vows could fix, nor favours bind?
Has. Thine orders, mighty sultan! are performed,
And all Irene now is breathless clay!
Mah. Your hasty zeal defrauds the claim of justice,
And disappointed vengeance burns in vain;
I came to heighten tortures by reproach,
And add new terrors to the face of death.
Was this the maid whose love I bought with empire!
True, she was fair; the smile of innocence
Played on her cheek—So shone the first apostate—
Irene's chamber! Did not roaring Cali,
Just as the rack forced out his struggling soul,
Name, for the scene of death, Irene's chamber?
Mus. His breath, prolonged but to detect her treason,
Then, in short sighs, forsook his broken frame.
Mah. Decreed to perish in Irene's chamber!
There had she lulled me with endearing falsehoods,
Clasped in her arms, or slumbering on her breast,
And bared my bosom to the ruffian's dagger.

Enter MURZA.

Mur. Forgive, great sultan! that, by fate prevented,
I bring a tardy message from Irene.
Mah. Some artful wile of counterfeited love!
Some soft decoy to lure me to destruction!
And thou, the cursed accomplice of her treason,
Declare thy message, and expect thy doom.
Mur. The queen requested, that a chosen troop
Might intercept the traitor Greek, Demetrius,
Then lingering with his captive mistress here.
Mus. The Greek, Demetrius, whom the expiring Bassa
Declared the chief associate of his guilt!
Mah. A chosen troop—to intercept—Demetrius—
The queen requested—Wretch, repeat the message;
And if one varied accent prove thy falsehood,
Or but one moment's pause betray confusion,
Those trembling limbs—Speak out, thou shivering traitor!
Mur. The queen requested—
Mah. Who? the dead Irene?
Was she then guiltless! Has my thoughtless rage
Destroyed the fairest workmanship of heaven!
Doomed her to death, unpitied and unheard,
Amidst her kind solicitudes for me!
Ye slaves of cruelty, ye tools of rage,
[*To Has. and Car.*
Ye blind officious ministers of folly,
Could not her charms repress your zeal for murder?
Could not her prayers, her innocence, her tears,
Suspend the dreadful sentence for an hour?
One hour had freed me from the fatal error;
One hour had saved me from despair and madness.
Car. Your fierce impatience forced us from your presence,
Urged us to speed, and bade us banish pity,
Nor trust our passions with her fatal charms.
Mah. What hadst thou lost by slighting those commands?
Thy life perhaps—Were but Irene spared,
Well if a thousand lives like thine had perished;
Such beauty, sweetness, love, were cheaply bought,
With half the grovelling slaves that load the globe.
Mus. Great is thy woe! but think, illustrious sultan,
Such ills are sent for souls like thine to conquer.
Shake off this weight of unavailing grief;
Rush to the war, display thy dreadful banners,
And lead thy troops victorious round the world.
Mah. Robbed of the maid, with whom I wished to triumph,
No more I burn for fame or for dominion;
Success and conquest now are empty sounds,
Remorse and anguish seize on all my breast;
Those groves, whose shades embowered the dear Irene,
Heard her last cries, and fanned her dying beauties,
Shall hide me from the tasteless world for ever.
[*Mahomet goes back and returns.*
Yet ere I quit the sceptre of dominion,
Let one just act conclude the hateful day.
Hew down, ye guards, those vassals of distraction,
[*Pointing to Hasan and Carasa.*

Those hounds of blood, that catch the hint to kill;
Bear off, with eager haste, the unfinished sentence,
And speed the stroke lest mercy should o'ertake them.
Car. Then hear, great Mahomet, the voice of truth!
Mah. Hear? shall I hear thee! didst thou hear Irene?
Car. Hear but a moment!
Mah. Hadst thou heard a moment,
Thou mightst have lived, for thou hadst spared Irene.
Car. I heard her, pitied her, and wished to save her.
Mah. And wished—Be still thy fate to wish in vain.
Car. I heard, and softened, till Abdalla brought
Her final doom, and hurried her destruction.
Mah. Abdalla brought her doom! Abdalla brought it!
The wretch, whose guilt, declared by tortured Cali,
My rage and grief had bid from my remembrance!
Abdalla brought her doom!
Has. Abdalla brought it,
While she yet begged to plead her cause before thee.
Mah. O seize me, madness! Did she call on me?
I feel, I see the ruffian's barbarous rage.
He seized her melting in the fond appeal,
And stopped the heavenly voice that called on me.
My spirits fail, awhile support me, vengeance—
Be just, ye slaves, and to be just, be cruel,
Contrive new racks, imbitter every pang,
Inflict whatever treason can deserve,
Which murdered innocence that called on me.
[*Exit Mahomet, Abdalla,* &c.
Must. [*To Murza.*] What plagues, what tortures are in store for thee,
Thou sluggish idler, dilatory slave!
Behold the model of consummate beauty,
Torn from the mourning earth by thy neglect.
Mur. Such was the will of Heaven—A band of Greeks,
That marked my course, suspicious of my purpose,
Rushed out and seized me, thoughtless and unarmed,
Breathless, amazed, and on the guarded beach
Detained me, till Demetrius set me free.
Mus. So sure the fall of greatness raised on crimes;
So fixed the justice of all-conscious Heaven.
When haughty guilt exults with impious joy,
Mistake shall blast, or accident destroy;
Weak man, with erring rage, may throw the dart,
But Heaven shall guide it to the guilty heart.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

ROMAN FATHER.

BY

WHITEHEAD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
TULLUS HOSTILIUS, *king of Rome.*	HORATIA, *daughter to Horatius.*
HORATIUS, *a Roman senator.*	VALERIA, *sister to Valerius.*
PUBLIUS HORATIUS, *his son.*	
VALERIUS, *a young Patrician.*	

Citizens, Guards, and Attendants.

Scene—Rome.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in* HORATIUS'S *house.*

A Soldier crosses the stage, HORATIA *following.*

Horatia. STAY, soldier. As you parted from my father,
Something I overheard, of near concern,
But all imperfectly. Said you not Alba
Was on the brink of fate, and Rome determined,
This day, to crush her haughty rival's power,
Or perish in the attempt?

Sold. 'Twas so resolved
This morning, lady, ere I left the camp.
Our heroes are tired out with lingering war,
And half-unmeaning fight.

Horatia. Alas! I hoped
The kind remorse, which touched the kindred states,
And made their swords fall lightly on the breasts
Of foes they could not hate, might have produced
A milder resolution. Then this day
Is fixed for death or conquest? [*He bows.*] To me death,
Whoever conquers! [*Aside.*] I detain you, sir.
Commend me to my brothers; say, I wish——
But wherefore should I wish? The gods will crown
Their virtues with the just success they merit—
Yet let me ask you, sir——

Sold. My duty, lady,
Commands me hence. Ere this they have engaged;
And conquest's self would lose its charms to me,
Should I not share the danger.

As the Soldier goes out, VALERIA *enters, who looks first on him, and then on* HORATIA.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, wherefore wilt thou court
The means to be unhappy? Still enquiring,
Still more to be undone. I heard it too;
And flew to find thee, ere the fatal news
Had hurt thy quiet, that thou mightst have learnt it
From a friend's tongue, and dressed in gentler terms.

Horatia. Oh, I am lost, Valeria! lost to virtue!
Even while my country's fate, the fate of Rome,
Hangs on the conqueror's sword, this breast can feel
A softer passion, and divide its cares!
Alba to me is Rome. Wouldst thou believe it?
I would have sent, by him thou saw'st departing,

Kind wishes to my brothers; but my tongue
Denied its office, and this rebel heart
Even dreaded their success. Oh, Curiatius!
Why art thou there, or why an enemy?
Valeria. Forbear this self reproach; he is thy husband,
And who can blame thy fears? If fortune make him
Awhile thy country's foe, she cannot cancel
Vows registered above. What though the priest
Had not confirmed it at the sacred altar;
Yet were your hearts united, and that union
Approved by each consenting parent's choice.
Your brothers loved him as a friend, a brother:
And all the ties of kindred pleaded for him,
And still must plead, whate'er our heroes teach us,
Of patriot-strength. Our country may demand
We should be wretched, and we must obey;
But never can require us not to feel,
That we are miserable: nature there
Will give the lie to virtue.
Horatia. True; yet sure
A Roman virgin should be more than woman.
Are we not early taught to mock at pain,
And look on danger with undaunted eyes?
But what are dangers? what the ghastliest form
Of death itself?—Oh, were I only bid,
To rush into the Tiber's foaming wave,
Swoln with uncommon floods, or from the height
Of yon Tarpeian rock, whose giddy steep
Has turned me pale with horror at the sight,
I'd think the task were nothing!—but to bear
These strange vicissitudes of torturing pain,
To fear, to doubt, and to despair as I do!——
Valeria. And why despair? Have we so idly learned
The noblest lessons of our infant days,
Our trust above? Does there not still remain
The wretch's last retreat—the gods, Horatia?
'Tis from their awful wills our evils spring,
And at their altars may we find relief.
Say, shall we thither?—Look not thus dejected,
But answer me. A confidence in them,
E'en in this crisis of our fate, will calm
Thy troubled soul, and fill thy breast with hope.
Horatia. Talk not of hope; the wretch on yonder plain,
Who hears the victor's threats, and sees his sword
Impending o'er him, feels no surer fate,
Though less delayed than mine! What should I hope?
That Alba conquer?—Cursed be every thought
Which looks that way! The shrieks of captive matrons
Sound in my ears!
Valeria. Forbear, forbear, Horatia;
Nor fright me with the thought. Rome cannot fall.
Think on the glorious battles she has fought;
Has she once failed, though oft exposed to danger?
And has not her immortal founder promised,
That she should rise the mistress of the world?
Horatia. And if Rome conquers, then Horatia dies!
Valeria. Why wilt thou form vain images of horror,
Industrious to be wretched? Is it, then,
Become impossible that Rome should triumph,
And Curiatius live? He must, he shall;
Protecting gods shall spread their shields around him,
And love shall combat in Horatia's cause.
Horatia. Think'st thou so meanly of him?—No, Valeria,
His soul's too great to give me such a trial;
Or could it ever come, I think, myself,
Thus lost in love, thus abject as I am,
I should despise the slave who dared survive
His country's ruin. Ye immortal powers!
I love his fame too well, his spotless honour,
At least I hope I do, to wish him mine
On any terms which he must blush to own.
Hor. [*Without.*] What ho! Vindicius!
Horatia. What means that shout?—Might we not ask, Valeria?
Didst thou not wish me to the temple?—Come,
I will attend thee thither: the kind gods
Perhaps may ease this throbbing heart, and spread
At least a temporary calm within.
Valeria. Alas, Horatia, 'tis not to the temple
That thou wouldst fly; the shout alone alarms thee.
But do not thus anticipate thy fate;
Why shouldst thou learn each chance of varying war,
Which takes a thousand turns, and shifts the scene
From bad to good, as fortune smiles or frowns?
Stay but an hour perhaps, and thou shalt know
The whole at once.—I'll send—I'll fly myself
To ease thy doubts, and bring thee news of joy.
Horatia. Again, and nearer too—I must attend thee.
Valeria. Hark! 'tis thy father's voice; he comes to cheer thee.

Enter HORATIUS *and* VALERIUS.

Horatius. [*Entering.*] News from the camp, my child!
Save you, sweet maid! [*Seeing Valeria.*
Your brother brings the tidings, for, alas!
I am no warrior now; my useless age,
Far from the paths of honour, loiters here
In sluggish inactivity at home.
Yet I remember——
Horatia. You'll forgive us, sir,
If with impatience we expect the tidings.
Horatius. I had forgot; the thoughts of what I was
Engrossed my whole attention.—Pray, young soldier,
Relate it for me; you beheld the scene,
And can report it justly.

Val. Gentle lady,
The scene was piteous, though its end be peace.
Horatia. Peace? O, my fluttering heart! by what kind means?
Val. 'Twere tedious, lady, and unnecessary,
To paint the disposition of the field;
Suffice it, we were armed, and front to front
The adverse legions heard the trumpet's sound:
But vain was the alarm, for motionless,
And wrapt in thought, they stood; the kindred ranks
Had caught each other's eyes, nor dared to lift
The faultering spear against the breast they loved.
Again the alarm was given, and now they seemed
Preparing to engage, when once again
They hung their drooping heads, and inward mourned;
Then nearer drew, and at the third alarm,
Casting their swords and useless shields aside,
Rushed to each other's arms.
Hor. 'Twas so, just so,
(Though I was then a child, yet I have heard
My mother, weeping, oft relate the story)
Soft pity touched the breasts of mighty chiefs,
Romans and Sabines, when the matrons rushed
Between their meeting armies, and opposed
Their helpless infants, and their heaving breasts,
To their advancing swords, and bade them there
Sheath all their vengeance.——But I interrupt you—
Proceed, Valerius, they would hear the event.
—And yet, methinks, the Albans—pray go on.
Val. Our king Hostilius, from a rising mound,
Beheld the tender interview, and joined
His friendly tears with theirs; then swift advanced,
Even to the thickest press, and cried, 'My friends,
'If thus we love, why are we enemies?
'Shall stern ambition, rivalship of power,
'Subdue the soft humanity within us?
'Are we not joined by every tie of kindred?
'And can we find no method to compose
'These jars of honour, these nice principles
'Of virtue, which infest the noblest minds?'
Hor. There spoke his country's father! this transcends
The flight of earth-born kings, whose low ambition
But tends to lay the face of nature waste,
And blast creation!—How was it received?
Val. As he himself could wish, with eager transport.
In short, the Roman and the Alban chiefs
In council have determined, that since glory
Must have her victims, and each rival state,
Aspiring to dominion, scorns to yield,
From either army shall be chose three champions,
To fight the cause alone, and whate'er state
Shall prove superior, there acknowledged power
Shall fix the imperial seat, and both unite
Beneath one common head.
Horatia. Kind Heaven, I thank thee!
Blessed be the friendly grief that touched their souls!
Blessed be Hostilius for the generous counsel!
Blessed be the meeting chiefs! and blessed the tongue,
Which brings the gentle tidings!
Valeria. Now, Horatia,
Your idle fears are o'er.
Horatia. Yet one remains.
Who are the champions? Are they yet elected?
Has Rome———
Val. The Roman chiefs now meet in council,
And ask the presence of the sage Horatius.
Hor. [*After having seemed some time in thought.*
But still, methinks, I like not this, to trust
The Roman cause to such a slender hazard—
Three combatants!—'tis dangerous——
Horatia. [*In a fright.*] My father!
Hor. I might, perhaps, prevent it——
Horatia. Do not, sir,
Oppose the kind decree!
Val. Rest satisfied,
Sweet lady! 'tis so solemnly agreed to,
Not even Horatius's advice can shake it.
Hor. And yet 'twere well to end these civil broils:
The neighbouring states might take advantage of them.
—Would I were young again! How glorious
Were death in such a cause!—And yet, who knows—
Some of my boys may be selected for it——
Perhaps may conquer——Grant me that, kind gods,
And close my eyes in transport!—Come, Valerius,
I'll but dispatch some necessary orders,
And strait attend thee.—Daughter, if thou lov'st
Thy brothers, let thy prayers be poured to Heaven,
That one at least may share the glorious task.
[*Exit.*
Val. Rome cannot trust her cause to worthier hands.
They bade me greet you, lady. [*To Horatia.*
Well, Valeria,
This is your home, I find: your lovely friend,
And you, I doubt not, have indulged strange fears,
And run o'er all the horrid scenes of war?
Valeria. Though we are women, brother, we are Romans,
Not to be scared with shadows, though not proof
'Gainst all alarms, when real danger threatens.
Horatia. [*With some hesitation.*] My brothers, gentle sir, you said were well.
Saw you their noble friends, the Curiatii?
The truce, perhaps, permitted it.
Val. Yes, lady,
I left them jocund in your brothers' tent,
Like friends, whom envious storms awhile had parted,
Joying to meet again.

Horatia. Sent they no message?
Val. None, fair one, but such general salutation
As friends would bring unbid.
Horatia. Said Caius nothing?
Val. Caius?
Horatia. Ay, Caius! did he mention me?
Val. 'Twas slightly, if he did, and 'scapes me now——
O yes, I do remember, when your brother
Asked him, in jest, if he had aught to send,
A sigh's soft waftage, or the tender token
Of tresses breeding to fantastic forms,
To soothe a love-sick maid (your pardon, lady),
He smiled, and cried, 'Glory's the soldier's mistress.'
Horatia. Sir, you'll excuse me—something of importance——
My father may have business——Oh, Valeria!
[*Aside to Valeria.*
Talk to thy brother, know the fatal truth
I dread to hear, and let me learn to die,
If Curiatius has indeed forgot me! [*Exit.*
Val. She seems disordered!
Valeria. Has she not cause?
Can you administer the baneful potion,
And wonder at the effect?
Val. You talk in riddles!
Valeria. They're riddles, brother, which your heart unfolds,
Though you affect surprise. Was Curiatius
Indeed so cold? Poor shallow artifice!
The trick of hopeless love! I saw it plainly.
Yet what could you propose? An hour's uneasiness
To poor Horatia; for be sure by that time
She sees him, and your deep-wrought schemes are air.
Val. What could I do? this peace has ruined me;
While war continued, I had gleams of hope;
Some lucky chance might rid me of my rival,
And time efface his image in her breast.
But now———
Valeria. Yes, now you must resolve to follow
The advice I gave you first, and root this passion
Entirely from your heart; for know, she doats,
Even to distraction doats on Curiatius;
And every fear she felt, while danger threatened,
Will now endear him more.
Val. Cruel Valeria,
You triumph in my pain!
Valeria. By Heaven, I do not;
I only would extirpate every thought
Which gives you pain, nor leave one foolish wish
For hope to dally with. When friends are mad,
'Tis most unkind to humour their distraction;
Harsh means are necessary.
Val. Yet we first
Should try the gentler.
Valeria. Did I not? Ye powers!
Did I not soothe your griefs, indulge your fondness,
While the least prospect of success remained?
Did I not press you still to urge your suit,
Intreat you daily to declare your passion,
Seek out unnumbered opportunities,
And lay the follies of my sex before you?
Val. Alas! thou knowest, Valeria, woman's heart
Was never won by tales of bleeding love:
'Tis by degrees the sly enchanter works,
Assuming friendship's name, and fits the soul
For soft impressions, ere the faultering tongue,
And guilty-blushing cheek, with many a glance
Shot inadvertent, tells the secret flame.
Valeria. True, these are arts for those that love at leisure;
You had no time for tedious stratagem;
A dangerous rival pressed, and has succeeded.
Val. I own my error—yet once more assist me—
Nay, turn not from me, by my soul I meant not
To interrupt their loves.—Yet, should some accident—
'Tis not impossible—divide their hearts,
I might, perhaps, have hope: therefore 'till marriage
Cuts off all commerce, and confirms me wretched,
Be it thy task, my sister, with fond stories,
Such as our ties of blood may countenance,
To paint thy brother's worth, his power in arms,
His favour with the king, but most of all,
That certain tenderness of soul which steals
All women's hearts; then mention many a fair,
No matter whom, that sighs to call you sister.
Valeria. Well, well, away—Yet tell me, ere you go,
How did this lover talk of his Horatia?
Val. Why will you mention that ungrateful subject?
Think what you've heard me breathe a thousand times,
When my whole soul dissolved in tenderness:
'Twas rapture all; what lovers only feel,
Or can express when felt. He had been here,
But sudden orders from the camp detained him.
Farewell, Horatius waits me—but remember,
My life, nay, more than life, depends on you.
[*Exit.*
Valeria. Poor youth! he knows not how I feel his anguish,
Yet dare not seem to pity what I feel.
How shall I act betwixt this friend and brother?
Should she suspect his passion, she may doubt
My friendship too; and yet to tell it her
Were to betray his cause. No, let my heart
With the same blameless caution still proceed;
To each inclining most as most distrest,
Be just to both, and leave to Heaven the rest!
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia. ALAS, how easily do we admit
The thing we wish were true! yet sure, Valeria,
This seeming negligence of Curiatius
Betrays a secret coldness at the heart.
May not long absence, or the charms of war,
Have damped, at least, if not effaced his passion?
I know not what to think.
Valeria. Think, my Horatia,
That you're a lover, and have learned the art
To raise vain scruples, and torment yourself
With every distant hint of fancied ill.
Your Curiatius still remains the same.
My brother idly trifled with your passion,
Or might, perhaps, unheedingly relate
What you too nearly feel. But see, your father.
Horatia. He seems transported; sure some happy news
Has brought him back thus early. Oh, my heart!
I long, yet dread to ask him. Speak, Valeria.

Enter HORATIUS.

Valeria. You're soon returned, my lord.
Hor. Returned, Valeria!
My life, my youth's returned; I tread in air!
—I cannot speak; my joy's too great for utterance.
—Oh, I could weep!—my sons, my sons are chosen
Their country's combatants; not one, but all!
Horatia. My brothers, said you, sir!
Hor. All three, my child,
All three are champions in the cause of Rome.
Oh, happy state of fathers! thus to feel
New warmth revive, and springing life renewed
Even on the margin of the grave!
Valeria. The time
Of combat, is it fixed?
Hor. This day, this hour,
Perhaps, decides our doom.
Valeria. And is it known
With whom they must engage?
Hor. Not yet, Valeria;
But with impatience we expect each moment
The resolutions of the Alban senate.
And soon may they arrive, that ere we quit
Yon hostile field, the chiefs, who dared oppose
Rome's rising glories, may, with shame, confess
The gods protect the empire they have raised.
Where are thy smiles, Horatia? Whence proceeds
This sullen silence, when my thronging joys
Want words to speak them? Prithee, talk of empire,
Talk of those darlings of my soul, thy brothers.
Call them whate'er wild fancy can suggest,
Their country's pride, the boast of future times,
The dear defence, the guardian gods of Rome!—
By Heaven, thou stand'st unmoved, nor feels thy breast
The charms of glory, the extatic warmth,
Which beams new life, and lifts us nearer Heaven!
Horatia. My gracious father, with surprize and transport
I heard the tidings, as becomes your daughter.
And like your daughter, were our sex allowed
The noble privilege which man usurps,
Could die with pleasure in my country's cause.
But yet, permit a sister's weakness, sir,
To feel the pangs of nature, and to dread
The fate of those she loves, however glorious.
And sure they cannot all survive a conflict
So desperate as this.
Hor. Survive! By Heaven,
I could not hope that they should all survive.
No; let them fall. If from their glorious deaths
Rome's freedom spring, I shall be nobly paid
For every sharpest pang the parent feels.
Had I a thousand sons, in such a cause
I could behold them bleeding at my feet,
And thank the gods with tears!

Enter PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

Pub. My father! [*Offering to kneel.*
Hor. Hence!
Kneel not to me—stand off; and let me view
At distance, and with reverential awe,
The champion of my country!—Oh, my boy!
That I should live to this—my soul's too full;
Let this and this speak for me. Bless thee, bless thee! [*Embracing him.*
But wherefore art thou absent from the camp?
Where are thy brothers? Has the Alban state
Determined? Is the time of combat fixed?
Pub. Think not, my lord, that filial reverence,
However due, had drawn me from the field,
Where nobler duty calls; a patriot's soul
Can feel no humbler ties, nor knows the voice
Of kindred, when his country claims his aid.
It was the king's command I should attend you,
Else had I staid till wreaths immortal graced
My brows, and made thee proud indeed to see
Beneath thy roof, and bending for thy blessing,
Not thine, Horatius, but the son of Rome!
Hor. Oh, virtuous pride!—'tis bliss too exquisite
For human sense!—thus, let me answer thee. [*Embracing him again.*
Where are my other boys?
Pub. They only wait
Till Alba's loitering chiefs declare her champions,
Our future victims, sir, and with the news
Will greet their father's ear.
Hor. It shall not need;
Myself will to the field. Come, let us haste!

My old blood boils, and my tumultuous spirits
Pant for the onset. O, for one short hour
Of vigorous youth, that I might share the toil
Now with my boys, and be the next my last!
Horatia. My brother!
Pub My Horatia! ere the dews
Of evening fall, thou shalt, with transport, own me;
Shalt hold thy country's saviour in thy arms,
Or bathe his honest bier with tears of joy.
Thy lover greets thee, and complains of absence
With many a sigh, and many a longing look
Sent toward the towers of Rome.
Horatia. Methinks, a lover
Might take the advantage of the truce, and bear
His kind complaints himself; not trust his vows
To other tongues, or be obliged to tell
The passing winds his passion.
Pub. Dearest sister,
He with impatience waits the lucky moment,
That may with honour bear him to your arms.
Didst thou but hear how tenderly he talks,
How blames the dull delay of Alban councils,
And chides the lingering minutes as they pass,
Till fate determines, and the tedious chiefs
Permit his absence, thou wouldst pity him.
But soon, my sister, soon shall every bar,
Which thwarts thy happiness, be far away.
We are no longer enemies to Alba;
This day unites us, and to-morrow's sun
May hear my vows, and make my friend my brother.
Hor. [*Having talked apart with Valeria.*]
'Tis truly Roman. Here's a maid, Horatia,
Laments her brother lost the glorious proof
Of dying for his country. Come, my son,
Her softness will infect thee; prithee, leave her.
Horatia. [*Looking first on her father, and then tenderly on her brother.*] Not till my soul has poured its wishes for him.
Hear me, dread God of War! protect and save him! [*Kneeling.*
For thee, and thy immortal Rome, he fights!
Dash the proud spear from every hostile hand
That dare oppose him! may each Alban chief
Fly from his presence, or his vengeance feel!
And when in triumph he returns to Rome,
[*Rising.*
Hail him, ye maids, with grateful songs of praise,
And scatter all the blooming spring before him;
Cursed be the envious brow that smiles not then,
Cursed be the wretch that wears one mark of sorrow,
Or flies not thus with open arms to greet him!

Enter TULLUS HOSTILIUS, VALERIUS, *and Guards.*

Val. The king, my lord, approaches.
Hor. Gracious sir,
Whence comes this condescension?
Tul. Good old man,
Could I have found a nobler messenger,
I would have spared myself the ungrateful task
Of this day's embassy, for much I fear
My news will want a welcome.
Hor. Mighty king!
Forgive an old man's warmth——They have not sure
Made choice of other combatants!—My sons,
Must they not fight for Rome?
Tul. Too sure they must.
Hor. Then I am blest!
Tul. But that they must engage
Will hurt thee most, when thou shalt know with whom.
Hor. I care not whom.
Tul. Suppose your nearest friends,
The Curiatii, were the Alban choice,
Could you bear that? Could you, young man, support
A conflict there?
Pub. I could perform my duty,
Great sir, though even a brother should oppose me.
Tul. Thou art a Roman! Let thy king embrace thee!
Hor. And let thy father catch thee from his arms!
Tul. [*To Publius.*] Know then, that trial must be thine. The Albans
With envy saw one family produce
Three chiefs, to whom their country dared entrust
The Roman cause, and scorned to be outdone.
Horatia. Then I am lost indeed! was it for this,
For this, I prayed! [*Swoons.*
Pub. My sister!
Valeria. My Horatia!
Hor. Oh, foolish girl, to shame thy father thus!
Here, bear her in.
[*Horatia is carried in, Valerius and Valeria follow.*]
I am concerned, my sovereign,
That even the meanest part of me should blast,
With impious grief, a cause of so much glory.
But let the virtue of my boy excuse it.
Tul. It does most amply. She has cause for sorrow.
The shock was sudden, and might well alarm
A firmer bosom. The weak sex demand
Our pity, not our anger; their soft breasts
Are nearer touched, and more exposed to sorrows
Than man's experter sense. Nor let us blame
That tenderness, which smooths our rougher natures,
And softens all the joys of social life.
We leave her to her tears. For you, young soldier,
You must prepare for combat. Some few hours
Are all that are allowed you. But, I charge you,
Try well your heart, and strengthen every thought

Of patriot in you. Think, how dreadful 'tis
To plant a dagger in the breast you love;
To spurn the ties of nature, and forget,
In one short hour, whole years of virtuous friendship.
Think well on that.
Pub. I do, my gracious sovereign;
And think, the more I dare subdue affection,
The more my glory.
Tul. True; but yet consider,
Is it an easy task to change affections?
In the dread onset can your meeting eyes
Forget their usual intercourse, and wear
At once the frown of war, and stern defiance?
Will not each look recal the fond remembrance
Of childhood past, when the whole open soul
Breathed cordial love, and plighted many a vow
Of tenderest import? Think on that, young soldier,
And tell me if thy breast be still unmoved?
Pub. Think not, oh, king, howe'er resolved on combat,
I sit so loosely to the bonds of nature,
As not to feel their force. I feel it strongly.
I love the Curiatii, and would serve them
At life's expence: but here a nobler cause
Demands my sword: for all connections else,
All private duties, are subordinate
To what we owe the public. Partial ties
Of son and father, husband, friend, or brother,
Owe their enjoyments to the public safety,
And without that were vain. Nor need we, sir,
Cast off humanity, and to be heroes,
Cease to be men. As in our earliest days,
While yet we learned the exercise of war,
We strove together, not as enemies,
Yet conscious each of his peculiar worth,
And scorning each to yield; so will we now
Engage, with ardent, not with hostile minds,
Not fired with rage, but emulous of fame.
Tul. Now I dare trust thee; go and teach thy brothers
To think like thee, and conquest is your own.
This is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He, who thinks,
Without their aid, to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown;
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him. Come, Horatius,
Thy other sons shall meet you at the camp,
For now I do bethink me, 'tis not fit
They should behold their sister thus alarmed.
Haste, soldier, and detain them.
[*To one of the guards.*
Hor. Gracious sir,
We'll follow on the instant.
Tul. Then, farewell!
When next we meet, 'tis Rome and liberty!
[*Exit with guards.*
Hor. Come, let me arm thee for the glorious toil.
I have a sword, whose lightning oft has blazed
Dreadfully fatal to my country's foes;
Whose tempered edge has cleft their haughty crests,
And stained with life-blood many a reeking plain.
This shalt thou bear; myself will gird it on,
And lead thee forth to death or victory. [*Going.*
——And yet, my Publius, shall I own my weakness?
Though I detest the cause from whence they spring,
I feel thy sister's sorrows like a father.
She was my soul's delight.
Pub. And may remain so.
This sudden shock has but alarmed her virtue,
Not quite subdued its force. At least, my father,
Time's lenient hand will teach her to endure
The ills of chance, and reason conquer love.
Hor. Should we not see her?
Pub. By no means, my lord;
You heard the king's commands about my brothers,
And we have hearts as tender sure as they.
Might I advise, you should confine her closely,
Lest she infect the matrons with her grief,
And bring a stain we should not wish to fix
On the Horatian name.
Hor. It shall be so.
We'll think no more of her. 'Tis glory calls,
And humbler passions beat alarms in vain.
[*Exit.*

As HORATIUS *goes off,* HORATIA *enters at another door.*

Horatia. Where is my brother? Oh, my dearest Publius,
If e'er you loved Horatia, ever felt
That tenderness which you have seemed to feel,
Oh, hear her now!
Pub. What wouldst thou, my Horatia?
Horatia. I know not what I would—I am on the rack,
Despair and madness tear my labouring soul.
—And yet, my brother, sure you might relieve me!
Pub. How? by what means? By heaven, I'll die to do it.
Horatia. You might decline the combat.
Pub. Ha!
Horatia. I do not
Expect it from thee. Prithee, look more kindly!
—And yet, is the request so very hard?
I only ask thee not to plunge thy sword
Into the breast thou lovest, not kill thy friend;
Is that so hard? I might have said thy brother!
Pub. What canst thou mean? Beware, beware, Horatia;
Thou knowest I dearly love thee, nay, thou knowest
I love the man with whom I must engage.
Yet hast thou faintly read thy brother's soul,

If thou canst think entreaties have the power,
Though urged with all the tenderness of tears,
To shake his settled purpose: they may make
My task more hard, and my soul bleed within me,
But cannot touch my virtue.
Horatia. 'Tis not virtue
Which contradicts our nature, 'tis the rage
Of over-weening pride. Has Rome no champions
She could oppose but you? Are there not thousands
As warm for glory, and as tried in arms,
Who might, without a crime, aspire to conquest,
Or die with honest fame?
Pub. Away, away!
Talk to thy lover thus. But 'tis not Caius
Thou wouldst have infamous.
Horatia. Oh, kill me not
With such unkind reproaches! Yes, I own
I love him, more——
Pub. Than a chaste Roman maid
Should dare confess.
Horatia. Should dare! What means my brother?
I had my father's sanction on my love,
And duty taught me first to feel its power.
Should dare confess! Is that the dreadful crime?
Alas, but spare him, spare thy friend, Horatius,
And I will cast him from my breast for ever!
Will that oblige thee? Only let him die
By other hands, and I will learn to hate him.
Pub. Why wilt thou talk thus madly? Love him still!
And if we fall the victims of our country,
(Which Heaven avert!) wed, and enjoy him freely.
Horatia. Oh, never, never. What, my country's bane!
The murderer of my brothers! may the gods
First tear me, blast me, scatter me on winds,
And pour out each unheard-of vengeance on me!
Pub. Do not torment thyself thus idly—Go,
Compose thyself, and be again my sister.

Re-enter HORATIUS, *with the sword.*

Hor. This sword in Veii's field—What dost thou here?
Leave him, I charge thee, girl——Come, come, my Publius,
Let us haste where duty calls.
Horatia. What! to the field?
He must not, shall not go; here will I hang—
Oh, if you have not quite cast off affection!
If you detest not your distracted sister——
Hor. Shame of thy race, why dost thou hang upon him?
Wouldst thou entail eternal infamy
On him, on me, on all?
Horatia. Indeed I would not;
I know I ask impossibilities;
Yet pity me, my father!
Pub. Pity thee!
Begone, fond wretch, nor urge my temper thus.
By Heaven! I love thee as a brother ought.
Then hear my last resolve; if fate, averse
To Rome and us, determine my destruction,
I charge thee wed thy lover; he will then
Deserve thee nobly. Or, if kinder gods,
Propitious, hear the prayers of suppliant Rome,
And he should fall by me, I then expect
No weak upbraidings for a lover's death,
But such returns as shall become thy birth,
A sister's thanks for having saved her country.
[*Exit.*
Horatia. Yet stay—Yet hear me, Publius—But one word——
Hor. Forbear, rash girl! thou'lt tempt thy father
To do an outrage might perhaps distract him!
Horatia. Alas! forgive me, sir, I'm very wretched,
Indeed I am—Yet I will strive to stop
This swelling grief, and bear it like your daughter.
Do but forgive me, sir.
Hor. I do, I do——
Go in, my child, the gods may find a way
To make thee happy yet. But on thy duty,
Whate'er reports may reach, or fears alarm thee,
I charge thee come not to the field!
Horatia. I will not,
If you command it, sir. But will you, then,
As far as cruel honour may permit,
Remember that your poor Horatia's life
Hangs on this dreadful contest?
Hor. Lead her in. [*Exit Horatia*
[*Looking after her.*] Spite of my boasted strength her griefs unman me.——
But let her from my thoughts! The patriot's breast
No hopes, no fears, but for his country knows
And in her danger loses private woes! [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

VALERIUS *and* VALERIA *meeting.*

Val. Now, my Valeria, where's the charming she
That calls me to her? with a lover's haste
I fly to execute the dear command.
Valeria. 'Tis not the lover, but the friend she wants,
If thou darest own that name.
Val. The friend, my sister!
There's more than friendship in a lover's breast,
More warm, more tender, is the flame he feels.—
Valeria. Alas! these raptures suit not her distress:
She seeks the indulgent friend, whose sober sense,
Free from the mists of passion, might direct
Her jarring thoughts, and plead her doubtful cause.
Val. Am I that friend? Oh, did she turn her thought
On me for that kind office?
Valeria. Yes, Valerius.
She chose you out to be her advocate
To Curiatius; 'tis the only hope
She now dares cherish; her relentless brother,
With scorn, rejects her tears; her father flies her;
And only you remain to soothe her cares,
And save her ere she sinks.
Val. Her advocate
To Curiatius!
Valeria. 'Tis to him she sends you,
To urge her suit, and win him from the field.
But come, her sorrows will more strongly plead
Than all my grief can utter.
Val. To my rival!
To Curiatius plead her cause, and teach
My tongue a lesson which my heart abhors!
Impossible! Valeria, prithee say
Thou saw'st me not; the business of the camp
Confined me there. Farewell. [*Going.*
Valeria. What means my brother?
You cannot leave her now; for shame, turn back!
Is this the virtue of a Roman youth?
Oh, by these tears!——
Val. They flow in vain, Valeria:
Nay, and thou knowest they do. Oh, earth and Heaven!
This combat was the means my happier stars
Found out to save me from the brink of ruin!
And can I plead against it, turn assassin
On my own life?
Valeria. Yet thou canst murder her
Thou dost pretend to love: away, deceiver!
I'll seek some worthier messenger to plead
In beauty's cause; but first inform Horatia,
How much Valerius is the friend she thought him! [*Going.*
Val. Oh, Heavens! stay, sister; 'tis an arduous task!
Valeria. I know the task is hard, and thought I knew
Thy virtue too.
Val. I must, I will obey thee.
Lead on.—Yet prithee, for a moment leave me,
'Till I can recollect my scattered thoughts,
And dare to be unhappy.
Valeria. My Valerius!
I fly to tell her you but wait her pleasure.
[*Exit.*
Val. Yes, I will undertake this hateful office;
It never can succeed.—Yet, at this instant,
It may be dangerous, while the people melt
With fond compassion.—No, it cannot be;
His resolution's fixed, and virtuous pride
Forbids an alteration. To attempt it
Makes her my friend, and may afford hereafter
A thousand tender hours to move my suit.
That hope determines all. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another apartment.*

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA; HORATIA *with a scarf in her hand.*

Horatia. Where is thy brother? Wherefore stays he thus?
Did you conjure him? did he say he'd come?
I have no brothers now, and fly to him
As my last refuge. Did he seem averse
To thy entreaties? Are all brothers so?
Alas, thou told'st me he spake kindly to thee!
'Tis me, 'tis me he shuns; I am the wretch
Whom virtue dares not make acquaintance with.
Yet fly to him again, entreat him hither,
Tell him, for thy sake, to have pity on me.
Thou art no enemy to Rome, thou hast
No Alban husband to claim half thy tears,
And make humanity a crime!
Valeria. Dear maid,
Restrain your sorrows; I've already told you
My brother will with transport execute
Whatever you command.
Horatia. Oh! wherefore then
Is he away? Each moment now is precious;
If lost, 'tis lost for ever, and if gained,
Long scenes of lasting peace, and smiling years
Of happiness unhoped-for, wait upon it.
Valeria. I will again go seek him; pray, be calm;
Success is thine if it depends on him. [*Exit.*
Horatia. Success! alas, perhaps, even now too late
I labour to preserve him; the dread arm
Of vengeance is already stretched against him,
And he must fall. Yet let me strive to save him.
Yes, thou dear pledge, designed for happier hours,
[*To the scarf.*
The gift of nuptial love, thou shalt at least
Essay thy power.

Oft as I framed thy web,
He sate beside me, and would say in sport,
'This present, which thy love designs for me,
'Shall be the future bond of peace betwixt us:
'By this we'll swear a lasting love; by this,
'Through the sweet round of all our days to come,
'Ask what thou wilt, and Curiatius grants it.'
O I shall try thee nearly now, dear youth;
Glory and I are rivals for thy heart,
And one must conquer.

Enter VALERIUS *and* VALERIA.

Val. Save you, gracious lady;
On the first message which my sister sent me
I had been here, but was obliged by office,
Ere to their champions each resigned her charge,
To ratify the league 'twixt Rome and Alba.
Horatia. Are they engaged then?
Val. No, not yet engaged;
Soft pity for a while suspends the onset;
The sight of near relations, armed in fight
Against each other, touched the gazers' hearts;
And senators on each side have proposed
To change the combatants.
Horatia. My blessings on them!
Think you they will succeed?
Val. The chiefs themselves
Are resolute to fight.
Horatia. Insatiate virtue!
I must not to the field; I am confined
A prisoner here; or sure these tears would move
Their flinty breasts. Is Curiatius too
Resolved on death? O, sir, forgive a maid,
Who dares, in spite of modesty, confess
Too soft a passion. Will you pardon me,
If I entreat you to the field again,
An humble suitor from the veriest wretch
That ever knew distress.
Val. Dear lady, speak!
What would you I should do!
Horatia. O bear this to him!
Val. To whom?
Horatia. To Curiatius bear this scarf:
And tell him, if he ever truly loved;
If all the vows he breathed were not false lures
To catch the unwary mind—and sure they were not!
O tell him how he may with honour cease
To urge his cruel right; the senators
Of Rome and Alba will approve such mildness.
Tell him his wife, if he will own that name,
Intreats him from the field; his lost Horatia
Begs, on her trembling knees, he would not tempt
A certain fate, and murder her he loves.
Tell him, if he consents, she fondly swears,
By every god the varying world adores,
By this dear pledge of vowed affection, swears,
To know no brothers and no sire but him;
With him, if honour's harsh commands require it,
She'll wander forth, and seek some distant home,
Nor ever think of Rome or Alba more.
Valeria. Well, well, he will. Do not torment thyself.
[*Horatia catches hold of the scarf, which she looked upon attentively while Valeria spoke.*
Horatia. Look here, Valeria, where my needle's art
Has drawn a Sabine virgin, drowned in tears
For her lost country, and forsaken friends;
While by her side the youthful ravisher
Looks ardent love, and charms her griefs away.
I am that maid distressed, divided so
'Twixt love and duty. But why rave I thus?
Haste, haste to Curiatius—and yet stay—
Sure I have something more to say to him—
I know not what it was.
Val. Could I, sweet lady,
But paint your grief with half the force I feel it,
I need but tell it him, and he must yield.
Horatia. It may be so. Stay, stay; be sure you tell him,
If he rejects my suit, no power on earth
Shall force me to his arms. I will devise——
I'll die and be revenged!
Valeria. Away, my brother!
But, oh, for pity, do your office justly!
[*Aside to Valerius.*
Let not your passion blind your reason now;
But urge your cause with ardour.
Val. By my soul,
I will, Valeria. Her distress alarms me;
And I have now no interest but her's. [*Exit.*
Valeria. Come, dearest maid, indulge not thus your sorrows;
Hope smiles again, and the sad prospect clears.
Who knows the effect your message may produce?
The milder senators ere this perhaps
Have moved your lover's mind; and, if he doubts,
He's yours.
Horatia. He's gone—I had a thousand things—
And yet I am glad he's gone. Think you, Valeria,
Your brother will delay? They may engage
Before he reaches them.
Valeria. The field's so near,
That a few minutes brings him to the place.
And 'tis not probable the senators
So soon should yield a cause of so much justice.
Horatia. Alas! they should have thought on that before.
'Tis now too late. The lion, when he's roused,
Must have his prey, whose den we might have passed
In safety while he slept. To draw the sword,
And fire the youthful warrior's breast to arms
With awful visions of immortal fame,
And then to bid him sheath it, and forget
He ever hoped for conquest and renown—
Vain, vain attempt!
Valeria. Yet when that just attempt
Is seconded by love, and beauty's tears

Lend their soft aid to melt the hero down,
What may we not expect?
Horatia. My dear Valeria!
Fain would I hope I had the power to move him.
Valeria. My dear Horatia, success is yours already.
Horatia. And yet, should I succeed, the hard-gained strife
May chance to rob me of my future peace.
He may not always, with the eyes of love,
Look on that fondness which has stabbed his fame.
He may regret too late the sacrifice
He made to love, and a fond woman's weakness;
And think the milder joys of social life
But ill repay him for the mighty loss
Of patriot-reputation!
Valeria. Pray, forbear;
And search not thus into eventful time
For ills to come. This fatal temper, friend,
Alive to feel, and curious to explore
Each distant object of refined distress,
Shuts out all means of happiness, nor leaves it
In Fortune's power to save you from destruction.
Like some distempered wretch, your wayward mind
Rejects all nourishment, or turns to gall
The very balm that should relieve its anguish.
He will admire thy love, which could persuade him
To give up glory for the milder triumph
Of heart-felt ease and soft humanity.
Horatia. I fain would hope so. Yet we hear not of him.
Your brother, much I fear, has sued in vain.
Could we not send to urge this slow express?
This dread uncertainty! I long to know
My life or death at once.
Valeria. The wings of love
Cannot fly faster than my brother's zeal
Will bear him for your service.
Horatia. I believe it,
Yet doubt it too. My sickly mind unites
Strange contradictions.
Valeria. Shall I to the walls?
I may from hence, with ease, survey the field,
And can dispatch a messenger each moment,
To tell thee all goes well.
Horatia. My best Valeria!
Fly, then; I know thy heart is there already.
Thou art a Roman maid; and though thy friendship
Detains thee here with one who scarce deserves
That sacred name, art anxious for thy country.
But yet for charity think kindly of me;
For thou shalt find by the event, Valeria,
I am a Roman too, however wretched.
[*Exit Valeria.*
Am I a Roman, then? Ye powers! I dare not
Resolve the fatal question I propose.
If dying would suffice, I were a Roman:
But to stand up against this storm of passions,
Transcends a woman's weakness. Hark! what noise?
'Tis news from Curiatius! Love, I thank thee!

Enter a Servant.

Well, does he yield? Distract me not with silence!
Say, in one word——
Serv. Your father——
Horatia. What of him?
Would he not let him yield? Oh, cruel father!
Serv. Madam, he's here——
Horatia. Who?——
Serv. Borne by his attendants.
Horatia. What mean'st thou?

Enter HORATIUS, *led in by his Servants.*

Hor. Lead me yet a little onward;
I shall recover straight.
Horatia. My gracious sire!
Hor. Lend me thy arm, Horatia—So—My child,
Be not surprised; an old man must expect
These little shocks of nature; they are hints
To warn us of our end.
Horatia. How are you, sir?
Hor. Better, much better. My frail body could not
Support the swelling tumult of my soul.
Horatia. No accident, I hope, alarmed you, sir!
My brothers——
Hor. Here, go to the field again,
You, Caeus and Vindicius, and observe
Each circumstance. I shall be glad to hear
The manner of the fight.
Horatia. Are they engaged?
Hor. They are, Horatia. But first let me thank thee
For staying from the field. I would have seen
The fight myself; but this unlucky illness
Has forced me to retire. Where is thy friend?

Enter a Servant, who gives a paper to HORATIA, *and retires.*

What paper's that? Why dost thou tremble so?
Here, let me open it. [*Takes the paper, and opens it.*] From Curiatius!
Horatia. Oh, keep me not in this suspense, my father!
Relieve me from the rack.
Hor. He tells thee here,
He dare not do an action that would make him
Unworthy of thy love; and therefore——
Horatia. Dies!——
Well—I am satisfied.
Hor. I see by this
Thou hast endeavoured to persuade thy lover
To quit the combat. Couldst thou think, Horatia,
He'd sacrifice his country to a woman?
Horatia. I know not what I thought. He proves too plainly,

Whate'er it was, I was deceived in him
Whom I applied to.
Hor. Do not think so, daughter;
Could he, with honour, have declined the fight,
I should myself have joined in thy request,
And forced him from the field. But think, my child,
Had he consented, and had Alba's cause,
Supported by another arm, been baffled,
What then couldst thou expect? Would he not curse
His foolish love, and hate thee for thy fondness?
Nay, think, perhaps, 'twas artifice in thee
To aggrandize thy race, and lift their fame
Triumphant o'er his ruin and his country's?
Think well on that, and reason must convince thee.
Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Alas! had reason ever yet the power
To talk down grief, or bid the tortured wretch
Not feel his anguish? 'Tis impossible.
Could reason govern, I should now rejoice
They were engaged, and count the tedious moments
Till conquest smiled, and Rome again were free.
Could reason govern, I should beg of Heaven
To guide my brother's sword, and plunge it deep
Even in the bosom of the man I love:
I should forget he ever won my soul,
Forget 'twas your command that bade me love him,
Nay, fly, perhaps, to yon detested field,
And spurn with scorn his mangled body from me.
Hor. Why wilt thou talk thus? Pry'thee be more calm.
I can forgive thy tears; they flow from nature;
And could have gladly wished the Alban state
Had found us other enemies to vanquish.
But Heaven has willed it, and Heaven's will be done!
The glorious expectation of success
Buoys up my soul, nor lets a thought intrude
To dash my promised joys! What steady valour
Beams from their eyes! Just so, if fancy's power
May form conjecture from his after-age,
Rome's founder must have looked, when, warm in youth,
And flushed with future conquest, forth he marched
Against proud Acron, with whose bleeding spoils
He graced the altar of Feretrian Jove——
Methinks I feel recovered: I might venture
Forth to the field again. What ho! Volscinius!
Attend me to the camp.
Horatia. My dearest father,
Let me entreat your stay; the tumult there
Will discompose you, and a quick relapse
May prove most dangerous. I'll restrain my tears,
If they offend you.
Hor. Well, I'll be advised,
'Twere now too late; ere this they must have conquered;
And here's the happy messenger of glory!

Enter VALERIA.

Valeria. All's lost! All's ruined! Freedom is no more!
Hor. What dost thou say?
Valeria. That Rome's subdued by Alba.
Hor. It cannot be. Where are my sons? All dead?
Valeria. Publius is still alive—the other two
Have paid the fatal debt they owed their country.
Hor. Publius alive! You must mistake, Valeria.
He knows his duty better.
He must be dead, or Rome victorious.
Valeria. Thousands as well as I beheld the combat.
After his brothers' death he stood alone,
And acted wonders against three assailants;
Till forced, at last, to save himself by flight——
Hor. By flight! And did the soldiers let him pass?
Oh, I am ill again! The coward villain!
[*Throwing himself into his chair.*
Horatia. Alas, my brothers!
Hor. Weep not for them, girl.
They've died a death which kings themselves might envy,
And whilst they lived, they saw their country free.
Oh, had I perished with them! But for him,
Whose impious flight dishonours all his race,
Tears a fond father's heart, and tamely barters,
For poor precarious life, his country's glory—
Weep, weep for him, and let me join my tears!
Valeria. What could he do, my lord, when three opposed him?
Hor. Die!
He might have died. Oh, villain! villain! villain!
And he shall die! this arm shall sacrifice
The life he dared preserve with infamy.
[*Endeavouring to rise.*
What means this weakness? 'Tis untimely now,
When I should punish an ungrateful boy.
Was this his boasted virtue, which could charm
His cheated sovereign, and brought tears of joy
To my old eyes? So young a hypocrite!
Oh, shame, shame, shame!
Valeria. Have patience, sir; all Rome
Beheld his valour, and approved his flight,
Against such opposition.
Hor. Tell not me!
What's Rome to me? Rome may excuse her traitor;
But I'm the guardian of my house's honour,
And I will punish, Pray ye, lead me forth;

I would have air. But grant me strength, kind gods,
To do this act of justice, and I'll own
Whate'er 'gainst Rome your awful wills decree,
You still are just and merciful to me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Horatius's house.*

Enter HORATIUS, VALERIA *following.*

Hor. AWAY, away! I feel my strength renewed,
And I will hunt the villain through the world:
No deserts shall conceal, nor darkness hide him.
He is well skilled in flight; but he shall find
'Tis not so easy to elude the vengeance
Of a wronged father's arm, as to escape
His adversary's sword.
Valeria. Restrain your rage
But for a moment, sir. When you shall hear
The whole unravelled, you will find he is innocent.
Hor. It cannot be.
Valeria. And see, my brother comes.
He may perhaps relate——
Hor. I will not hear him;
I will not listen to my shame again.

Enter VALERIUS.

Val. I come with kind condolance from the king
To soothe a father's grief, and to express——
Hor. I've heard it all; I pray you spare my blushes.
I want not consolation; 'tis enough
They perished for their country. But the third—
Val. True, he indeed may well supply your loss,
And calls for all your fondness.
Hor. All my vengeance:
And he shall have it, sir.
Val. What means my lord?
Are you alone displeased for what he has done?
Hor. 'Tis I alone, I find, must punish it.
Val. Vengeance!
Punish, my lord! What fault has he committed?
Hor. Why will you double my confusion thus?
Is flight no fault?
Val. In such a case as his
'Twas glorious.
Hor. Glorious! Oh, rare sophistry!
To find a way through infamy to glory.
Val. I scarce can trust my senses—Infamy!
What, was it infamous to save his country?
Is art a crime? Is it the name of flight
We can't forgive, though its adored effect
Restored us all to freedom, fame, and empire?
Hor. What fame, what freedom? Who has saved his country?
Val. Your son, my lord, has done it.
Hor. How, when, where?
Val. Is it possible? Did not you say you knew!
Hor. I care not what I knew—Oh, tell me all?
Is Rome still free? Has Alba—Has my son—
Tell me——
Val. Your son, my lord, has slain her champions.
Hor. What, Publius?
Val. Ay, Publius.
Hor. Oh, let me clasp thee to me!
Were there not three remaining?
Val. True, there were;
But wounded all.
Hor. Your sister here had told us
That Rome was vanquished, that my son was fled——
Val. And he did fly; but 'twas that flight preserved us.
All Rome as well as she has been deceived.
Hor. Let me again embrace thee—Come, relate it.
Did I not say, Valeria, that my boy
Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?
I long to hear the manner—Well, Valerius—
Val. Your other sons, my lord, had paid the debt
They owed to Rome, and he alone remained
'Gainst three opponents, whose united strength,
Though wounded each, and robbed of half their force,
Was still too great for his. A while he stood
Their fierce assaults, and then pretended flight,
Only to tire his wounded adversaries.
Hor. Pretended flight, and thus succeeded, ha!
Oh, glorious boy!
Val. 'Twas better still, my lord;
For all pursued, but not with equal speed.
Each, eager for the conquest, pressed to reach him;
Nor did the first, till 'twas too late, perceive
His fainter brothers panting far behind.
Hor. He took them singly, then? An easy conquest;
'Twas boy's play only!
Val. Never did I see
Such universal joy, as when the last
Sunk on the ground beneath Horatius' sword;
Who seemed a while to parley as a friend,
And would have given him life, but Caius scorned it.
Valeria. Caius! Oh, poor Horatia!
Hor. Peace, I charge thee.
Go, dress thy face in smiles, and bid thy friend
Wake to new transports. Let ambition fire her.
What is a lover lost? There's not a youth

In Rome but will adore her. Kings will seek
For her alliance now, and mightiest chiefs
Be honoured by her smiles. Will they not, youth? [*Exit Valeria.*
Val. Most sure, my lord, this day has added worth
To her, whose merit was before unequalled.
Hor. How could I doubt his virtue!—Mighty gods!
This is true glory, to preserve his country,
And bid, by one brave act, the Horatian name
In fame's eternal volumes be enrolled.
Methinks already I behold his triumph.
Rome gazes on him like a second founder;
The wondering eye of childhood views with awe
The new divinity; and trembling age
Crowds eager on to bless him ere it dies!
Ere long, perhaps, they will raise altars to him,
And even with hymns and sacrifice adore
The virtue I suspected!—Gracious Heaven!
Where is he? Let me fly, and at his feet
Forget the father, and implore a pardon
For such injustice.
Val. You may soon, my lord,
In his embraces lose the fond remembrance
Of your mistaken rage. The king, ere this,
Has from the field dispatched him; he but staid
Till he could send him home with some slight honours
Of scattered wreaths, and grateful songs of praise;
For till to-morrow he postpones the pomp
Of solemn thanks, and sacrifice to Heaven
For liberty restored. But hark! that shout,
Which sounds from far, and seems the mingled voice
Of thousands, speaks him onward on his way.
Hor. How my heart dances!—Yet I blush to meet him,
But I will on. Come, come, Horatia; leave
[*Calling at the door.*
Thy sorrow far behind, and let us fly
With open arms to greet our common glory.
[*Exit.*

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia. Yes, I will go; this father's hard command
Shall be obeyed; and I will meet the conqueror,
But not in smiles.
Val. Oh, go not, gentle lady!
Might I advise——
Valeria. Your griefs are yet too fresh,
And may offend him. Do not, my Horatia.
Val. Indeed 'twere better to avoid his presence;
It will revive your sorrows, and recall——
Horatia. Sir, when I saw you last I was a woman,
The fool of nature, a fond prey to grief,
Made up of sighs and tears. But now my soul
Disdains the very thought of what I was;
'Tis grown too callous to be moved with toys.
Observe me well; am I not nobly changed?
Stream my sad eyes, or heaves my breast one groan?
No: for I doubt no longer. 'Tis not grief,
'Tis resolution now, and fixed despair.
Valeria. My dear Horatia, you strike terrors through me;
What dreadful purpose hast thou formed? Oh, speak!
Val. Talk gently to her.—Hear me yet, sweet lady!
You must not go; whatever you resolve,
There is a sight will pierce you to the soul.
Horatia. What sight?
Val. Alas, I should be glad to hide it;
But it is——
Horatia. What?
Val. Your brother wears in triumph
The very scarf I bore to Curiatius.
Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Ye gods, I thank ye! 'tis with joy I hear it.
If I should falter now, that sight would rouse
My drooping rage, and swell the tempest louder.
——But soft; they may prevent me; wild passion
Betrays my purpose.——I'll dissemble with them.
[*She sits down.*
Val. She softens now.
Valeria. How do you, my Horatia?
Horatia. Alas, my friend, 'tis madness which I utter——
Since you persuade me then, I will not go.
But leave me to myself; I would sit here;
Alone in silent sadness pour my tears,
And meditate on my unheard of woes.
Val. [*To Valeria.*] 'Twere well to humour this. But may she not,
If left alone, do outrage on herself?
Valeria. I have prevented that; she has not near her
One instrument of death.
Val. Retire we then.
But, Oh, not far, for now I feel my soul
Still more perplexed with love. Who knows, Valeria,
But when this storm of grief has blown its fill,
She may grow calm, and listen to my vows?
[*Exeunt Valerius and Valeria.*

After a short silence, HORATIA *rises and comes forward.*

Horatia. Yes, they are gone; and now be firm, my soul!
This way I can elude their search. The heart
Which doats like mine, must break to be at ease.
Just now I thought, had Curiatius lived,
I could have driven him from my breast for ever.
But death has cancelled all my wrongs at once.
——They were not wrongs; 'twas virtue which undid us;
And virtue shall unite us in the grave.

I heard them say, as they departed hence,
That they had robbed me of all means of death.
Vain thought! they knew not half Horatia's purpose.
Be resolute, my brother; let no weak
Unmanly fondness mingle with thy virtue,
And I will touch thee nearly. Oh, come on,
'Tis thou alone canst give Horatia peace. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A street of Rome.*

Chorus of Youths and Virgins singing, and scattering branches of oak, flowers, &c. Then enters HORATIUS, *leaning on the arm of* PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

Chorus. *Thus, for freedom nobly won,*
Rome her lasty tribute pours;
And on one victorious son
Half exhausts her blooming stores.

A Youth. *Scatter here the laurel crown,*
Emblem of immortal praise!
Wondrous youth! to thy renown
Future times shall altars raise.

A Virgin. *Scatter here the myrtle wreath,*
Though the bloodless victor's due;
Grateful thousands saved from death
Shall devote that wreath to you.

A Youth. *Scatter here the oaken bough;*
Even for one averted fate,
We that civic meed bestow——
He saved all who saved the state.

Chorus. *Thus, for freedom, &c.*

Hor. Thou dost forgive me then, my dearest boy?
I cannot tell thee half my ecstasy.
The day which gave thee first to my glad hopes
Was misery to this——I'm mad with transport!
Why are ye silent there? Again renew
Your songs of praise, and in a louder strain
Pour forth your joy, and tell the listening spheres
That Rome is freed by my Horatius' hand.
Pub. No more, my friends.——You must permit me, sir,
To contradict you here. Not but my soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise:
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him, who hears it, can with honest pride
Confess it just, and listen to its music.
But now the toils I have sustained require
Their interval of rest, and every sense
Is deaf to pleasure——Let me leave you, friends;
We're near our home, and would be private now:
To-morrow we'll expect your kind attendance,
To share our joys, and waft our thanks to heaven.

As they are going off, HORATIA *rushes in.*

Horatia. Where is this mighty chief?
Hor. My daughter's voice!
I bade her come; she has forgot her sorrows,
And is again my child.
Horatia. Is this the hero
That trample's nature's ties, and nobly soars
Above the dictates of humanity?
Let me observe him well.
Pub. What means my sister?
Horatia. Thy sister! I disclaim the impious title;
Base and inhuman! Give me back my husband,
My life, my soul, my murdered Curiatius!
Pub. He perished for his country.
Horatia. Gracious gods!
Was't not enough that thou hadst murdered him,
But thou must triumph in thy guilt, and wear
His bleeding spoils?—Oh, let me tear them from thee,
Drink the dear drops that issued from his wounds,
More dear to me than the whole tide that swells
With impious pride a hostile brother's heart!
Hor. Am I awake, or is it all illusion!
Was it for this thou cam'st!
Pub. Horatia, hear me;
Yet I am calm, and can forgive thy folly;
Would I could call it by no harsher name!
But do not tempt me farther. Go, my sister,
Go hide thee from the world, nor let a Roman
Know with what insolence thou darest avow
Thy infamy, or what is more, my shame,
How tamely I forgave it. Go, Horatia.
Horatia. I will not go. What, have I touched thee, then?
And canst thou feel?—Oh, think not thou shalt lose
Thy share of anguish. I'll pursue thee still,
Urge thee all day with thy unnatural crimes,
Tear, harrow up thy breast; and then at night
I'll be the fury that shall haunt thy dreams,
Wake thee with shrieks, and place before thy sight
Thy mangled friends in all their pomp of horror.
Pub. Away with her! 'tis womanish complaining.
Think'st thou such trifles can alarm the man,
Whose noblest passion is his country's love?
—Let it be thine, and learn to bear affliction.
Horatia. Curse on my country's love! the trick ye teach us
To make us slaves beneath the mask of virtue;
To rob us of each soft endearing sense,
And violate the first great law within us,
I scorn the impious passion.
Pub. Have a care;

Thou'st touched a string which may awake my vengeance.
Horatia. [*Aside.*] Then it shall do it.
Pub. Oh, if thou dar'st prophane
That sacred tie which winds about my heart,
By Heaven I swear, by the great gods who rule
The fate of empires, 'tis not this fond weakness
Which hangs upon me, and retards my justice,
Nor even thy sex, which shall protect thee from me. [*Clapping his hand on his sword.*
Hor. Drag her away—thou'lt make me curse thee, girl——
Indeed she's mad. [*To Publius.*
Horatia. Stand off, I am not mad——
Nay, draw thy sword; I do defy thee, murderer,
Barbarian, Roman!—Mad! The name of Rome
Makes madmen of you all; my curses on it!
I do detest its impious policy.
Rise, rise, ye states! (oh, that my voice could fire
Your tardy wrath!) confound its selfish greatness,
Raze its proud walls, and lay its towers in ashes!
Pub. I'll bear no more——
[*Drawing his sword.*
Hor. Distraction!—Force her off——
Horatia. [*Struggling.*] Could I but prove the Helen to destroy
This cursed unsocial state, I'd die with transport:
Gaze on the spreading fires—till the last pile
Sunk in the blaze—then mingle with its ruins.
Pub. Thou shalt not live to that.
[*Exit after her.*
Thus perish all the enemies of Rome! [*Without.*

Re-enter VALERIUS.

Val. Oh, horror! horror! execrable act!
If there be law in Rome; if there be justice,
By Rome, and all its gods, thou shalt not 'scape.
[*Exit.*

Re-enter PUBLIUS, *followed by* HORATIA *wounded.*

Horatia. Now thou'st indeed been kind, and I forgive you
The death of Curiatius; this last blow
Has cancelled all, and thou'rt again my brother.
Hor. Heavens! what a sight!
A daughter bleeding by a brother's hand!
My child! my child!
Horatia. What means this tenderness? I thought to see you
Inflamed with rage against a worthless wretch,
Who has dishonoured your illustrious race,
And stained its brightest fame: in pity look not
Thus kindly on me, for I have injured you.
Hor. Thou hast not, girl;
I said 'twas madness, but he would not hear me.
Horatia. Oh, wrong him not; his act was noble justice;
I forced him to the deed; for know, my father,
It was not madness, but the firm result
Of settled reason, and deliberate thought.
I was resolved on death, and witness, Heaven,
I'd not have died by any hand but his,
For the whole round of fame his worth shall boast
Through future ages.
Hor. What hast thou said? Wert thou so bent on death?
Was all thy rage dissembled?
Horatia. Alas! my father!
All but my love was false; what that inspired
I uttered freely.
But for the rest, the curses which I poured
On heaven-defended Rome, were merely lures
To tempt his rage, and perfect my destruction.
Heaven! with what transport I beheld him moved!
How my heart leaped to meet the welcome point,
Stained with the life-blood of my Curiatius!
Cementing thus our union even in death.
Pub. My sister, live! I charge thee live, Horatia!
Oh, thou hast planted daggers here.
Horatia. My brother!
Can you forgive me too? then I am happy.
I dared not hope for that. Ye gentle ghosts,
That rove Elysium, hear the sacred sound!
My father and my brother both forgive me!
I have again their sanction on my love.
Oh, let me hasten to those happier climes,
Where, unmolested, we shall share our joys,
Nor Rome, nor Alba, shall disturb us more.
[*Dies.*
Hor. 'Tis gone, the prop, the comfort of my age.
Let me reflect; this morn I had four children,
No happier father hailed the sun's uprising:
Now, I have none, for, Publius, thou must die:
Blood calls for blood—to expiate one parricide,
Justice demands another—Art thou ready?
Pub. Strike! 'tis the consummation of my wishes
To die, and by your hand.
Hor. Oh, blind old man!
Wouldst thou lift up thy sacrilegious hand
Against the chief, the god, that saved thy country?
There's something in that face that awes my soul,
Like a divinity. Hence, thou vile weapon,
Disgrace my hand no more.
[*A cry without.* Justice! Justice!]
What noise is that?

Enter VOLSCINIUS.

Vols. All Rome, my lord, has taken the alarm, and crowds
Of citizens, enraged, are posting hither,
To call for justice on the head of Publius.
Hor. Ungrateful men! how dare they? Let them come.

Enter TULLUS, VALERIUS, *and Citizens.*

Val. See, fellow-citizens, see where she lies,
The bleeding victim.
Tul. Stop, unmannered youth!

Think'st thou we know not wherefore we are here?
Seest thou yon drooping sire?
Hor. Permit them, sir.
Tul. What would you, Romans?
Val. We are come, dread sir,
In the behalf of murdered innocence;
Murdered by him, the man——
Hor. Whose conquering arm
Has saved you all from ruin. Oh, shame! shame!
Has Rome no gratitude? Do ye not blush
To think whom your insatiate rage pursues?
Down, down, and worship him.
1st Citizen. Does he plead for him?
2d Citizen. Does he forgive his daughter's death?
Hor. He does,
And glories in it, glories in the thought
That there's one Roman left who dares be grateful;
If you are wronged, then what am I? Must I
Be taught my duty by the affected tears
Of strangers to my blood? Had I been wronged,
I know a father's right, and had not asked
This ready-talking sir to bellow for me,
And mouth my wrongs in Rome.
Val. Friends, countrymen, regard not what he says;
Stop, stop your ears, nor hear a frantic father
Thus plead against his child.
Hor. He does belie me.
What child have I? Alas, I have but one!
And him you would tear from me.
All Citizens. Hear him! hear him!
Pub. No; let me speak. Think'st thou, ungrateful youth,
To hurt my quiet? I am hurt beyond
Thy power to harm me. Death's extremest tortures
Were happiness to what I feel. Yet know,
My injured honour bids me live; nay, more,
It bids me even descend to plead for life.
But wherefore waste I words? 'Tis not to him,
But you, my countrymen, to you, I speak;
He loved the maid.
1st Citizen. How! loved her!
Pub. Fondly loved her;
And, under shew of public justice, screens
A private passion, and a mean revenge.
Think you, I loved her not? High Heaven's my witness
How tenderly I loved her; and the pangs
I feel this moment, could you see my heart,
Would prove too plainly I am still her brother.
1st Citizen. He shall be saved.
Valerius has misled us.
All Citizens. Save him! save him!
Tul. If yet a doubt remains,
Behold that virtuous father, who could boast,
This very morn, a numerous progeny,
The dear supports of his declining age;
Then read the sad reverse with pitying eyes,
And tell your conscious hearts they fell for you.
Hor. I am overpaid by that, nor claim I aught
On their accounts; by high Heaven, I swear,
I'd rather see him added to the heap,
Than Rome enslaved.
1st Citizen. Oh, excellent Horatius!
All Citizens. Save him! save him!
Tul. Then I pronounce him free. And now, Horatius,
The evening of thy stormy day at last
Shall close in peace. Here, take him to thy breast!
Hor. My son, my conqueror! 'twas a fatal stroke,
But shall not wound our peace. This kind embrace
Shall spread a sweet oblivion o'er our sorrows;
Or, if in after times, though 'tis not long
That I shall trouble you, some sad remembrance
Should steal a sigh, and peevish age forget
Its resolution, only boldly say,
Thou sav'dst the state, and I'll intreat forgiveness.
Learn hence, ye Romans, on how sure a base
The patriot builds his happiness;
Grief may to grief in endless round succeed,
And nature suffer when our children bleed;
But still superior must that hero prove,
Whose first, best passion, is his country's love.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE
BROTHERS.

BY

YOUNG.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

PHILIP, *king of Macedon.*
PERSEUS, *his elder son.*
DEMETRIUS, *his younger son,*
PERICLES, *the friend of Perseus.*
ANTIGONUS, *a minister of state.*
DYMAS, *the king's favourite.*

POSTHUMIUS, CURTIUS, } *Roman ambassadors.*

WOMEN.

ERIXENE, *the Thracian princess.*
Her attendant.

Scene,—Macedon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter CURTIUS *and* POSTHUMIUS.

Cur. THERE'S something of magnificence about us,
I have not seen at Rome. But you can tell me.
[*Gazes round.*
Post. True: hither sent on former embassies,
I know this splendid court of Macedon,
And haughty Philip, well.
Cur. His pride presumes
To treat us here like subjects more than Romans,
More than ambassadors, who in our bosoms
Bear peace and war, and throw him which we please,
As Jove his storm, or sunshine, on his creatures.
Post. This Philip only, since Rome's glory rose,
Preserves its grandeur to the name of king;
Like a bold star, that shews its fires by day.
The Greek, who won the world, was sent before him,
As the grey dawn before the blaze of noon:
Philip had ne'er been conquered, but by Rome;
And what can fame say more of mortal man?
Cur. I know his public character.
Post. It pains me
To turn my thought on his domestic state.
There Philip is no god; but pours his heart,
In ceaseless groans, o'er his contending sons;
And pays the secret tax of mighty men
To their mortality.
Cur. But whence this strife,
Which thus afflicts him?
Post. From this Philip's bed
Two Alexanders spring.
Cur. And but one world?
'Twill never do.
Post. They both are bright; but one,
Benignly bright, as stars to mariners;
And one a comet, with malignant blaze,
Denouncing ruin.
Cur. You mean Perseus.
Post. True.
The younger son, Demetrius, you well know,

Was bred at Rome, our hostage from his father.
Soon after, he was sent ambassador,
When Philip feared the thunder of our arms.
Rome's manners won him, and his manners Rome;
Who granted peace, declaring she forgave
To his high worth the conduct of his father.
This gave him all the hearts of Macedon;
Which, joined to his high patronage from Rome,
Inflames his jealous brother.
Cur. Glows there not
A second brand of enmity?
Post. O yes;
The fair Erixene.
Cur. I've partly heard
Her smothered story.
Post. Smothered by the king;
And wisely too: but thou shalt hear it all.
Not seas of adamant, not mountains whelmed
On guilty secrets, can exclude the day.
Long burnt a fixed hereditary hate
Between the crowns of Macedon and Thrace;
The sword by both too much indulged in blood.
Philip, at length, prevailed; he took, by night,
The town and palace of his deadly foe;
Rushed through the flames, which he had kindled round,
And slew him, bold in vain; nor rested there;
But, with unkingly cruelty, destroyed
Two little sons within their mother's arms;
Thus meaning to tread out those sparks of war,
Which might one day flame up to strong revenge.
The queen, through grief, on her dead sons expired.
One child alone survived; a female infant,
Amidst these horrors, in the cradle smiled.
Cur. What of that infant?
Post. Stung with sharp remorse,
The victor took, and gave her to his queen.
The child was bred, and honoured as her own;
She grew, she bloomed; and now her eyes repay
Her brothers' wounds, on Philip's rival sons.
Cur. Is, then, Erixene that Thracian child?
How just the gods! from out that ruined house
He took a brand, to set his own on fire.
Post. To give thee, friend, the whole in miniature,
This is the picture of great Philip's court:
The proud, but melancholy king, on high,
Majestic sits, like Jove, enthroned in darkness;
His sons are as the thunder in his hand;
And the fair Thracian princess is a star,
That sparkles by, and gilds the solemn scene.
[*Shouts heard.*
Tis their great day, supreme of all their year,
The famed lustration of their martial powers;
Thence, for our audience, chosen by the king.
If he provokes a war, his empire shakes,
And all her lofty glories nod to ruin.
Cur. Who comes?
Post. O, that's the jealous elder brother!
Irregular in manners, as in form.
Observe the fire, high birth and empire kindle!
Cur. He holds his conference with much emotion.
Post. The brothers both can talk, and, in their turn,
Have borne away the prize of eloquence
At Athens. Shun his walk: our own debate
Is now at hand. We'll seek his lion sire,
Who dares to frown on us, his conquerors;
And carries so much monarch on his brow,
As if he'd fright us with the wounds, we gave him. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PERSEUS *and* PERICLES.

Per. 'Tis empire! empire! empire! let that word
Make sacred all I do, or can attempt!
Had I been born a slave, I should affect it;
My nature's fiery, and, of course, aspires.
Who gives an empire, by the gift defeats
All end of giving; and procures contempt
Instead of gratitude. An empire lost,
Destroyed, would less confound me, than resigned.
Peri. But are you sure Demetrius will attempt?
Per. Why does Rome court him? For his virtues? No.
To fire him to dominion; to blow up
A civil war; then to support him in it:
He gains the name of king, and Rome the power.
Peri. This is, indeed, the common art of Rome.
Per. That source of justice through the wondring world!
His youth and valour second Rome's designs:
The first impels him to presumptuous hope;
The last supports him in it. Then his person!
Thy hand, O Nature, has made bold with mine.
Yet more! what words distill from his red lip,
To gull the multitude! and they make kings.
Ten thousand fools, knaves, cowards, lumped together,
Become all wise, all righteous, and almighty!
Nor is this all: the foolish Thracian maid
Prefers the boy to me!
Peri. And does that pain you?
Per. O Pericles, to death! It is most true,
Through hate to him, and not through love for her,
I paid my first addresses; but became
The fool I feigned: my sighs are now sincere.
It smarts; it burns: O that 'twere fiction still!
By Heaven, she seems more beauteous than dominion!
Peri. Dominion and the princess both are lost,
Unless you gain the king.
Per. But how to gain him?
Old men love novelties; the last arrived
Still pleases best; the youngest steals their smiles.
Peri. Dymas alone can work him to his pleasure;
First in esteem, and keeper of his heart.
Per. To Dymas thou; and win him to thy will.
In the mean time, I'll seek my double rival;

Curb his presumption, and erect myself
In all the dignity of birth before him.
Whate'er can stir the blood, or sway the mind,
Is now at stake; and double is the loss,
When an inferior bears away the prize.
Peri. Your brother, dressed for the solemnity!
Per. To Dymas fly! gain him, and think on this:
A prince, indebted, is a fortune made.
[*Exit Pericles.*

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. How, brother! unattired? Have you forgot
What pomps are due to this illustrious day?
Per. I am no gew-gaw for the throng to gaze at:
Some are designed by nature but for shew;
The tinsel and the feather of mankind.
Dem. Brother, of that no more: for shame, gird on
Your glittering arms, and look like any Roman.
Per. No, brother, let the Romans look like me,
If they're ambitious. But, I prithee, stand;
Let me gaze on thee:—No inglorious figure!
More Romano, as it ought to be.
But what is this, that dazzles my weak sight?
There's sunshine in thy beaver.
Dem. 'Tis that helmet,
Which Alexander wore at Granicus.
Per. When he subdued the world? Ha! is't not so?
What world hast thou subdued? O yes, the fair!
Think'st thou there could, in Macedon, be found
No brow might suit that golden blaze but thine?
Dem. I wore it but to grace this sacred day:
Jar not for trifles.
Per. Nothing is a trifle,
That argues the presumption of the soul.
Dem. 'Tis they presume, who know not to deserve.
Per. Or who, deserving, scorn superior merit.
Dem. Who combats with a brother, wounds himself:
Wave private wrath, and rush upon the foes
Of Macedon.
Per. No; I would not wound
Demetrius' friends.
Dem. Demetrius' friends!
Per. The Romans!
You copy Hannibal, our great ally:
Say, at what altar was you sworn their foe?
Peace-making brother! Wherefore bring you peace,
But to prevent my glory from the field?
The peace, you bring, was meant as war to me.
Dem. Perseus, be bold when danger's all your own:
War now, were war with Philip more than Rome.
Per. Come, you love peace; that fair cheek hates a scar!
You, that admire the Romans, break the bridge
With Cocles, or with Curtius leap the gulph;
And league not with the vices of our foes.
Dem. What vices?
Per. With their women and their wits.
Your idol Lælius, Lælius the polite.
I hear, sir, you take wing, and mount in metre.
Terence has owned your aid, your comrade Terence.
God-like ambition! Terence there, the slave!
Dem. At Athens bred, and to the arts a foe?
Per. At Athens bred, and borrow arts from Rome?
Dem. Brother, I've done: let our contention cease:
Our mother shudders at it in her grave!
And how has Philip mourned? a dreadful foe,
And awful king; but, oh! the tenderest parent,
That ever wept, in fondness, o'er a child!
Per. Why, ay, go tell your father; fondly throw
Your arms around him; stroke him to your purpose,
As you are wont: I boast not so much worth;
I am no picture, by the doating eye
To be surveyed, and hung about his neck!
I fight his battles; that's all I can do.
But, if you boast a piety sincere,
One way you may secure your father's peace;
And one alone—resign Erixene.
Dem. You flatter me, to think her in my power.
We run our fates together: you deserve,
And she can judge: proceed we, then, like friends;
And he, who gains her heart, and gains it fairly,
Let him enjoy his generous rival's too.
Per. Smooth-speaking, insincere, insulting boy!
Is, then, my crown usurped but half thy crime?
Desist; or by the gods, that smile on blood,
Not thy fine form, nor yet thy boasted peace,
Nor patronizing Rome, nor Philip's tears,
Nor Alexander's helmet; no, nor more,
His radiant form, should it alight in thunder,
And spread its new divinity between us,
Should save a brother from a brother's fury! [*Exit.*
Dem. How's this? the waves ne'er ran thus high before;
Resign thee! yes, Erixene, with life!
Thou, in whose eyes, so modest, and so bright,
Love ever wakes, and keeps a vestal fire;
Ne'er shall I wean my fond, fond heart from thee!
But Perseus warns me to rouse all my powers.
As yet I float in dark uncertainty;
For though she smiles, I sound not her designs:
I'll fly, fall, tremble, weep upon her feet;
And learn (O all ye gods!) my final doom!
My father! ha! and on his brow deep thought
And pale concern! Kind Heaven assuage his sorrows,
Which strike a damp through all my flames of love! [*Exit.*

Enter KING *and* ANTIGONUS.

King. Kings of their envy cheat a foolish world:
Fate gives us all in spite, that we alone
Might have the pain of knowing all is nothing!
The seeming means of bliss but heighten woe,
When impotent to make their promise good:
Hence, kings, at least, bid fairest to be wretched.
Ant. True, sir; 'tis empty, or tormenting, all;
The days of life are sisters; all alike:
None just the same; which serves to fool us on
Through blasted hopes with change of fallacy:
While joy is like to-morrow, still to come;
Nor ends the fruitless chace but in the grave!
King. Ay, there, Antigonus, this pain will cease,
Which meets me at my banquet; haunts my pillow;
Nor, by the din of arms, is frighted from me!
Conscience, what art thou? though tremendous power!
Who dost inhabit us without our leave;
And art, within ourselves, another self,
A master self, that loves to domineer,
And treat the monarch frankly as the slave.
How dost thou light a torch to distant deeds!
Make the past present, and the future frown!
How, ever and anon, awake the soul,
As with a peal of thunder, to strange horrors,
In this long restless dream, which idiots hug,
Nay, wise men flatter with the name of life?
Ant. You think too much.
King. I do not think at all:
The gods impose, the gods inflict, my thoughts,
And paint my dreams with images of dread!
Last night, in sleep, I saw the Thracian queen
And her two murdered sons. She frowned upon me,
And pointed at their wounds! How throbbed my heart!
How shook my couch! and when the morning came,
The formidable picture still subsisted,
And slowly vanished from my waking eye!
I fear some heavy vengeance hangs in air,
And conscious deities infuse these thoughts,
To warn my soul of her approaching doom!
The gods are rigid, when they weigh such deeds
As speak a ruthless heart; they measure blood
By drops; and bate not one in the repay!
Could infants hurt me? 'Twas not like a king!
Ant. My lord, I do confess the gods are with us;
Stand at our side in every act of life,
And on our pillow watch each secret thought;
Nay, see it in its embryo, yet unborn.
But their wrath ceases on remorse for guilt:
And well I know your sorrows touch your sons;
Nor is it possible but time must quench
Their flaming spirits in a father's tears.
King. Vain comfort! I this moment overheard
My jarring sons, with fury, shake my walls.
Ah! why my curse from those, who ought to bless me!
The queen of Thrace can answer that sad question.
She had two sons; but two: and so have I.
Misfortune stands with her bow ever bent
Over the world; and he, who wounds another,
Directs the goddess, by that part he wounds,
Where to strike deep her arrows in himself,
Ant. I own, I think it time your sons receive
A father's awful counsel; or, while here,
Now weary nature calls for kind repose,
Your curtains will be shaken with their broils:
And, when you die, sons' blood may stain your tomb!
But other cares demand you now:—the Romans!
King. O change of pain! the Romans? Perish Rome!
Thrice happy they, who sleep in humble life,
Beneath the storm ambition blows. 'Tis meet
The great should have the fame of happiness,
The consolation of a little envy;
'Tis all their pay for those superior cares,
Those pangs of heart, their vassals ne'er can feel.
Where are these strangers? First I'll hear their tale;
Then talk in private with my sons.
Ant. But how
Intends my lord to make his peace with Rome?
King. Rome calls me fiery: let them find me so.
Ant. O, sir, forbear! Too late you felt Rome's power.
King. Yes, and that reason stings me more than ever,
To curse, and hate, and hazard all against her.
Ant. Hate her too much to give her battle now;
Nor to your god-like valour owe your ruin.
Greece, Thessaly, Illyrium, Rome has seized;
Your treasures wasted, and your phalanx thinned;
Should she proceed, and strike at Macedon,
What would be left of empire?
King. Philip: all.
I'll take my throne.—Send in these foreigners.

[*The Scene draws, and discovers a magnificent Throne,* PERSEUS, DEMETRIUS, *Courtiers, &c. attending.* POSTHUMIUS *and* CURTIUS, *the Roman ambassadors, enter. Trumpets sound. The king ascends the throne.*]

Post. Philip of Macedon, to those complaints
Our friends groan out, and you have heard at large,
Rome now expects an answer. She sits judge,
And will have right on earth.
King. Expects an answer!
I so shall answer as becomes a king.
Post. Or more, sir; as becomes a friend of Rome.
King. Or Alexander's heir, to rise still higher,
But to the purpose. Thus a king to those,

That would make kings, and puff them out at pleasure:
Has Philip done amiss? 'Twas you provoked him.
My cities, which deserted in my wars,
I though it meet to punish: you denied me.
When I had shook the walls of Marena,
You plucked me thence, and took the taken town.
Then you sent word I should retire from Greece,
A conquest at my door, by nature mine—
And said, 'here end thy realm;' as ye were Gods!
And Gods ye shall be, ere Rome humbles me.
All this is done; yet Philip is your friend!
If this buys friendship, where can ye find foes?
In what regard will stern Rome look upon me?
If as a friend, too precious let her hold
Her own esteem, to cast a stain on mine:
If as an enemy, let her proceed,
And do as she has done; she needs no more.
Post. The Romans do no wrong; yet still are men;
And if to-day an error thwarts their purpose,
To-morrow sets it right. If Philip loves
Dominion, and the pride, that waits on kings,
(Of which, perhaps, his words too strongly savour)
Humility to Rome will lead him to it.
She can give more than common kings can govern.
King. Than common kings? Ambassador! remember
Cannæ—where first my sword was flushed with blood.
Dem. My lord, forbear. [*Aside to the king.*
King. And Hannibal still lives.
Post. Because he fled at Capua.
King. There, indeed,
I was not with him.
Post. Therefore he fled alone.—
Since thus you treat us, hear another charge.
Why here detain you, prisoner of your power,
His daughter, who was once Rome's good ally,
The king of Thrace! Why is she not restored?
For our next meeting you'll provide an answer.
What now has past, for his sake, we forgive.
[*Pointing to Demetrius.*
But mark this well: there lies some little distance,
Philip, between a Roman and a king.
[*Exeunt Romans.*
King. How say'st, unsceptered boaster? This to me!
With Hannibal I cleft yon Alpine rocks;
With Hannibal choaked Thrasymene with slaughter:
But, O the night of Cannæ's raging field!
When half the Roman senate lay in blood
Without our tent, and groaned as we caroused!
Immortal Gods! for such another hour!
Then throw my carcase to the dogs of Rome.
Ant. Sir, you forget your sons.
King. Let all withdraw.
[*Exeunt all but the king and his sons.*
Two passions only take up all my soul;
Hatred to Rome, and tenderness for them.
Draw near, my sons, and listen to my age.
By what has past, you see the state of things.
Foreign alliance must a king secure,
And insolence sustain to serve his power.
And if alliances with Rome are needful,
Much more among ourselves. If I must bear,
Unmoved, an insult from a stranger's brow,
Shall not a brother bear a brother's look
Without impatience? Whither all this tends,
I'm sorry that your conscious hearts can tell you:
Is it not most severe? Two sons alone
Have crowned my bed; and they two are not brothers.
Look here, and, from my kind regards to you,
Copy such looks as you should bear each other.
Why do I sigh? Do you not know, my sons?
And if you do—O let me sigh no more!
Let these white hairs put in a claim to peace!
Per. Henceforth, my sole contention with my brother
Is this; which best obeys our father's will.
Dem. Father, if simple nature ever speaks
In her own language, scorning useless words,
You see her now; she swells into my eyes.
I take thee to my heart: I fold thee in it.
[*Embracing Perseus.*
Our father bids; and that we drink one milk,
Is now the smallest motive of my love.
King. Antigonus, the joy their mother felt,
When they were born, was faint to what I feel.
Dem. See, brother, if he does not weep! His love
Runs o'er in venerable tears. I'm rude:
But nature will prevail—My king! My father!
Per. Now cannot I let fall a single tear.
[*Aside.*
King. See! the good man has caught it too.
Ant. Such tears,
And such alone, be shed in Macedonia!
King. Be not thou, Perseus, jealous of thy brother;
Nor thou, Demetrius, prone to give him cause;
Nor either think of empire, till I'm dead.
You need not; you reign now; my heart is your's;
Sheath your resentments in your father's peace;
Come to my bosom both, and swear it there.
[*Embracing his sons.*
Ant. Look down, ye gods, and change me, if you can,
This sight for one more lovely! What so sweet,
So beautiful, on earth, and, ah! so rare,
As kindred love, and family repose?
This, this alliance, Rome, will quite undo thee.
See this, proud Eastern monarchs, and look pale!
Armies are routed, realms o'er-run by this.
King. Or if leagued worlds superior force bring,
I'd rather die a father than a king.
Fathers alone a father's heart can know;

What secret tides of still enjoyment flow,
When brothers love; but if their hate succeeds,
They wage the war; but 'tis the father bleeds.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.

Enter PERSEUS.

Per. WHY loiters my ambasador to Dymas?
His greatness will not, sure, presume to scorn
A friendship, offered from an heir of empire!
But Pericles returns.

Enter PERICLES.

Is Dymas our's?
Peri. He's cautious, sir; he's subtle; he's a courtier.
Dymas is now for you, now for your brother;
For both, and neither: he's a summer-insect,
And loves the sunshine: on his gilded wings,
While the scales waver, he'll fly doubtful round you,
And sing his flatteries to both alike:
The scales once fixed, he'll settle on the winner,
And swear his prayers drew down the victory—
But what success had you, sir, with your brother?
Per. All, all my hopes are at the point of death!
The boy triumphant keeps his hold in love:
He's ever warbling nonsense in her ear
With all the intoxication of success.
Darkness incloses me; nor see I light
From any quarter dawn, but from his death.
Peri. Why start at his death, who resolves on your's?
Per. Resolves on mine!
Peri. Have you not marked the princess?
You have: with what a beam of majesty
Her eye strikes sacred awe! It speaks her mind
Exalted, as it is. Whom loves she then?
Demetrius? No; Rome's darling; who, no doubt,
Dares court her with your empire. And shall Perseus
Survive that loss?—Thus he resolves your death.
Per. Most true. What crime then to strike first? But how?
Or when? or where? O Pericles! assist me.
Peri. 'Tis dangerous.
Per. The fitter for me.
Peri. Wait an occasion, that befriends your wishes.
Per. Go, fool, and teach a cataract to creep!
Can thirst of empire, vengeance, beauty, wait?
Peri. In the mean time, accept a stratagem,
That must secure your empire, or your love.
Your brother's Roman friendships gall no less
The king, than you: he dreads their consequence.
Dymas hates Rome; and Dymas has a daughter.
How can the king so powerfully fix
Demetrius' faith, as by his marriage there?
For Dymas thus, Rome's sworn, eternal foe,
Becomes a spy upon his private life,
And surety for his conduct.
Per. True—but thus
Our art defeats itself. My brother gains
The favourite, and so strengthens in his treason.
Peri. Think you he will wed her? No, the princess' eye
Makes no such short-lived conquest. He'll refuse,
And thus effect what I have strove in vain:
Yes, he'll refuse; and Dymas, in his wrath,
Will list for us, and vengeance. Then the king
Will, doubtless, much resent his son's refusal;
And thus we kindle the whole court against him.
Per. My precious friend, I thank thee. I take wing
On ardent hope: I think it cannot fail.
Go, make thy court to Dymas with this scheme:
Begone—Erixene! I'll feed her pride.
[*Looking out.*
Once more, but not expend my breath in vain.
This meeting stamps unalterable fate;
I will wed her, or vengeance——

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA.

O, Erixene!
O, Princess! colder than your Thracian snows!
See Perseus, who ne'er stooped but to the gods,
Prostrate before you. Fame and empire sue.
Why have I conquered? Because you are fair.
What's empire? but a title to adore you.
Why do I number in my lineage high
Heroes and gods? That you, scarce less divine,
Without a blush may listen to my vows.
My ancestor subdued the world. I dare
Beyond his pride, and grasp at more, in you.
Obdurate maid! or turn, or I expire.
Erix. If love, my lord, is choice, who loves in vain
Should blame himself alone; and if 'tis fate,
'Tis fate in all: why then your blame on me?
My crown's precarious, through the chance of war;
But sure my heart's my own. Each villager
Is queen of her affections, and can vent
Her arbitrary sighs, where'er she pleases.
Shall then the daughter of a race of kings——
Per. Madam, you justly blame the chance of war;
The gods have been unkind: I am not so.
No! Perseus comes to counterbalance fate.
Thrace ne'er was conquered——if you smile on me.
Silent! obdurate still! as cold as death!
But 'tis Demetrius——

Erix. Prince, I take your meaning.
But, if you truly think his worth prevails,
How strange is your request!
Per. No, madam, no:
Though love has hurt my mind, I still can judge
What springs controul the passions of the great.
Ambition is first minister of state;
Love's but a second in the cabinet:
Nor can he feather there his unfledged shaft
But from ambition's wing: but you conceive
More sanguine hopes from him, whom Rome supports,
Than me. You view Demetrius on my throne;
And thence he shines indeed! his charms from thence
Transpierce your soul, enamoured of dominion.
Erix. Why now you shew me your profound esteem!
Demetrius' guilt alone has charms for me;
'Tis not the prince, but traitor wins my love.
Such insults are not brooked by royal minds,
Howe'er their fortunes ebb; and though I mourn,
An orphan, and a captive, gods there are——
Fear then an orphan's, and a captive's wrong.
Per. Your cruel treatment of my passion——
But I'll not talk. This, madam; only this——
Think not the cause, the cursed cause of all,
Shall laugh secure, and triumph in my pangs.
No; by the torments of an heart on fire,
He gluts my vengeance, who defrauds my love!
[*Exit.*
Erix. What have I done! In what a whirlwind rage
Has snatched him hence on ill! I frown on Perseus,
And kill Demetrius.
Delia. Madam, see the prince.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Erix. Ah, prince! the tempest, which so long has lowered,
Is now full ripe, and bursting o'er your head.
This moment Perseus' malice flamed before me;
Victorious rage broke through his wonted guard,
And menaced loud your ruin. Fly, O fly
This instant!
Dem. To what refuge?
Erix. Rome extends
Her longing arms to clasp you for her own.
Dem. Madam, 'tis prudent; I confess it is:
But is it loving as true lovers ought,
To be so very prudent in our love?
I boast not so much wisdom: I prefer
Death at your feet before the world without you.
Erix. In danger thus extreme——
Dem. Oh! most beloved!
Loved you like me, like me you would discern
That I but execute my brother's purpose
By such a flight. At that his clamour, rage,
And menace aim: to chase a rival hence,
And keep the field alone. Oh! shall I leave him
To gaze whole days; to learn to read your eye;
To study your delights, to chide the wind's
Too rude approach; to bid the ground be smooth;
To follow, like your shadow, where you go;
Tread in your steps; perhaps——to touch your hand!
O death! to minister in little things;
From half a glance to prophecy your will,
And do it, ere well formed in your own mind!
Gods! Gods! While worlds divide me from my princess,
That, should she call, Demetrius might grow old
Ere he could reach her feet!
Erix. If Perseus' love
Pains you, it pains me more. Is your heart grieved?
Mine is tormented: but since Philip's self
Is love's great advocate, a flat refusal
But blows their rage, and hastens your destruction.
Had I not that to fear! were you secure!
I would ease my bosom of its full disdain,
And dash this bold presumer on his birth.
But, see! the grand procession.
Dem. We must join it.

Enter the KING, PERSEUS, Romans, ANTIGONUS, *&c.*

King. Let the procession halt! and here be paid,
Before yon flaming altar, thanks to Heaven,
That brings us safe to this auspicious day!
The great lustration of our martial powers,
Which from its distant birth to present time
Unfolds the glories of this antient empire,
And throngs the pride of ages in an hour.
Post. What figure's that? O Philip! which precedes? [*Pointing.*
King. The founder of our empire, furious son
Of great Alcides. We are allied to Heaven;
And you, I think, call Romulus a god.
That, Philip, second of our name; and here——
O bend with awe to him, whose red right hand
Hurled proud Darius like a star from Heaven,
With lesser lights around him, flaming down,
And bid the laurelled sons of Macedonia
Drink their own Ganges!
Per. Give him his helmet, brother. [*Aside to Demetrius.*
King. You lead the troops that join in mock encounter:
And in no other way you ever meet! [*To his Sons.*
But march one way, and drive the world before you:
The victor, as our antient rites decree,
Must hold a feast, and triumph in the bowl.
Dem. I long, my lord, to see the charge begin;
The brandished faulchion, and the clashing helm:
Though but in sport, it is a sport for men.
Raw Alexander thus began his fame,
And overthrew Darius, first, at home.
We'll practise o'er the plans of future conquests,

While neighbouring nations tremble at our play,
And own the fault in fortune, not in us,
That we but want a foe to be immortal.
Per. You have supplied my wants: I thank you, brother.
King. [*Rising, and coming forward. Music.*] How vain all outward efforts to supply
The soul with joy! The noon-tide sun is dark,
And music discord, when the heart is low!
Avert its omen! what a damp hangs on me!
These sprightly, tuneful airs, but skim along
The surface of my soul, not enter there:
She does not dance to this enchanting sound.
How, like a broken instrument, beneath
The skilful touch, my joyless heart lies dead,
Nor answers to the master's hand divine!
Antig. When men once reach their autumn, sickly joys
Fall off apace, as yellow leaves from trees,
At every little breath misfortune blows;
Till, left quite naked of their happiness,
In the chill blasts of winter they expire.
This is the common lot. Have comfort, then:
Your grief will damp the triumph.
King. It is over.
Hear too; the trumpet calls us to the field,
And now this phantom of a fight begins.
Fair princess, you and I will go together,
As Priam and bright Helen did of old,
To view the war. Your eyes will make them bolder,
And raise the prize of victory itself.
[*All go out but Perseus, who has observed Demetrius and Erixene all this time conversing, and stays behind, thoughtful and disturbed.*
Per. Before my face she feeds him with her smiles:
The king looks on, nor disapproves the crime;
And the boy takes them as not due to me,
Without remorse, as happy as she'll make him.
Perish all three! I'll seek allies elsewhere;
Father and brother, nay, a mistress too.
Destruction, rise! Though thou art black as Night,
Thy mother, and as hideous as Despair,
I'll clasp thee thus, nor think of woman more.
How the boy doats, and drinks in at his eyes
Her poison! O to stab him in her arms!
And yet do less than they have done to me.

Enter PERICLES.

Peri. Where is my prince? The nation's on the wing;
No bosom but exults; no hand but bears
A garland or a trophy: and shall Perseus——
Per. Vengeance!
Peri. Hear how with shouts they rend the skies! [*Shouts within.*
Per. Give me my vengeance!
Peri. Forty thousand men,
In polished armour, shine against the sun.
Per. Dare but another word, and not of vengeance,
And I will use thee, as I would—my brother.
Peri. Vengeance! on whom?
Per. On him.
Peri. What vengeance?
Per. Blood.
Peri. 'Tis your's.
Per. What god will give it me?
Peri. Your own right hand.
Per. I dare not—for my father.
Peri. You shall dare.
Per. Shalt thou dare give encouragement to Perseus?
Unfold thy purpose; I'll outshoot the mark.
Peri. Where are you going?
Per. To the mock encounter.
Peri. What more like mock encounter than the true?
Per. Enough—He's dead! 'Twas accident; 'twas error.
No matter what. Ten thousand share the blame.
Peri. Hold, sir! I had forgot: on this occasion,
The troops are searched; and foils alone are worn,
Instead of swords.
Per. An osier were enough.
Who pains my heart, plants thunder in my hand.
Peri. But should this fail——
Per. Impossible!
Peri. But, should it,
The banquet follows.
Per. Poison in his wine!
I thank the gods! my spirits are revived!
I draw immortal vigour from that bowl!
Peri. Nay, should both fail, the field and banquet too,
All fails not; fairer hopes to fair succeed:
For know, my lord, the king received, with joy,
The marriage-scheme, and sent for Dymas' daughter.
Per. Then there's a second bowl of poison for him.
Peri. Yet more: this evening those ambassadors,
Which Philip sent to Rome, beneath the name
Of public business, but, in truth, to learn
Your brother's conduct, are expected home.
Per. Those whom I swore, before they parted hence,
In dreadful sacraments of wine and blood,
To bring back such reports as should destroy him:
And what if, to complete our secret plan,
We feign a letter to his friend the consul,
To strengthen our ambassadors' report?
Peri. That care, my lord, be mine: I know a knave,
Grown fat on forgery; he'll counterfeit
Old Quintius' hand and seal, by former letters
Sent to the king; which you can gain with ease.

Per. Observe—This morning, at their interview,
The Romans, in effect, informed the king,
That Thrace was theirs, and ordered him restore
The princess. This will give much air of truth,
If our forged letters say the Romans crown
Demetrius king of Thrace, and promise more.
Peri. My lord, it shall be done.
Per. All cannot fail. [*Trumpets.*
Peri. The trumpets sound: the troops are mounted.
Per. Vengeance!
Sweet vengeance calls: nor ever called a God
Such swift obedience: like the rapid wheel
I kindle in the course; I am there already;
Snatch the bright weapon; bound into my seat;
Strike; triumph; see him gasping on the ground,
And life, love, empire, springing from his wound.
When god-like ends, by means unjust, succeed,
The great result adorns the daring deed.
Virtue's a shackle, under fair disguise,
To fetter fools, while we bear off the prize.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter PERSEUS.

Per. Cowards in ill, like cowards in the field,
Are sure to be defeated. To strike home,
In both, is prudence: guilt, begun, must fly
To guilt consummate, to be safe.

Enter PERICLES.

Peri. My lord——
Per. Disturb not my devotions; they decline
The beaten track, the common track of prayer.
Ye powers of darkness! that rejoice in ill;
All sworn by Styx, with pestilential blasts
To wither every virtue in the bud;
To keep the door of dark conspiracy,
And snuff the grateful fumes of human blood!
From sulphur blue, or your red beds of fire,
On your black ebon thrones, auspicious rise;
And bursting through the barriers of this world,
Stand in dread contrast to the golden sun;
Fright day-light hence with your infernal smile;
And howl aloud your formidable joy,
While I transport you with the fair record
Of what your faithful minister has done,
Beyond your inspiration, self-impelled,
To spread your empire, and secure his own!
Hear, and applaud. Now, Pericles, proceed;
Speak, is the letter forged?
Peri. This moment; and might cheat
The cunning eye of jealousy itself.
Peri. 'Tis well: Art thou apprised of what hath passed
Since we last parted?
Per. No, my lord.
Per. Then rouse
Thy whole attention: here we are in private:
Know, then, my Pericles, the mock encounter
I turned, as taught by thee, to real rage.
But, blasted be the cowards, whom I led!
They trembled at a boy.
Peri. Ha!
Per. Mark me well:
The villains fled; but soon my prudence turned
To good account that momentary shame.
Thus——I pretend 'twas voluntary flight
To save a brother's blood; accusing him
As author of that conflict I declined,
And he pursued with ardour and success.
Peri. That's artful. What ensued?
Per. The banquet followed,
Held by the victor, as our rites require:
To which his easy nature, soon appeased,
Invited me. I went not; but sent spies
To learn what passed; which spies, by chance detected,
(Observe me) were ill used.
Peri. By whom? your brother?
Per. No; by his sons of riot. He soon after,
Not knowing that my servants were abused,
Kind, and gay-hearted, came to visit me.
They, who misused my spies, for self-defence,
Concealed their arms beneath the robes of peace.
Of this informed, again my genius served me.
Peri. You took occasion, from these few in arms,
To charge a murderous assault on all?
Per. True, Pericles; but mark my whole address:
Against my brother swift I bar my gates;
Fly to my father; and with artful tears
Accuse Demetrius; first, of turning sports,
And guiltless exercise, to mortal rage;
Then of inviting me (still blacker guilt!)
To smiling death in an envenomed bowl;
And last, that, both these failing, mad with rage,
He threw his schemes of baffled art aside,
And with armed men avowedly sought my life.
Peri. Three startling articles, and well-concerted,
Following each other in an easy train,
With fair similitude of truth! But, sir,
How bore your father?
Per. O! he shook! he fell!
Nor was his fleeting soul recalled with ease.
Peri. What said he when recovered?
Per. His resolve
I know not yet; but see, his minion comes;
And comes, perhaps, to tell me. But I'll go;
Sustain my part, and echo loud my wrongs.
Nought so like innocence as perfect guilt.

If he brings aught of moment, you'll inform me.
[*As Perseus goes off, he is seized by officers.*

Enter DYMAS.

Peri. How fares the king?
Dym. Even as an aged oak
Pushed to and fro, the labour of the storm;
Whose largest branches are struck off by thunder:
Yet still he loves, and on the mountain groans;
Strong in affliction, awful from his wounds,
And more revered in ruin than in glory.
Peri. I hear prince Perseus has accused his brother.
Dym. True; and the king's commands are now gone forth
To throw them both in chains; for farther thought
Makes Philip doubt the truth of Perseus' charge.
Peri. What then is his design?
Dym. They both this hour
Must plead their cause before him. Nay, already
His nobles, judges, counsellors, are met,
And public justice wears her sternest form:
A more momentous trial ne'er was known;
Whether the pleaders you survey as brothers,
Or princes known in arts, or famed for arms;
Whether you ponder, in their awful judge,
The tender parent, or the mighty king.
Greece, Athens, hears the cause: the great result
Is life, or death; is infamy, or fame. [*Trumpets.*
Peri. What trumpets these?
Dym. They summon to the court. [*Exeunt.*

The SCENE *draws, and discovers the Court,* KING, *&c.*

Enter DYMAS, *and takes his place by the* KING.

King. Bring forth the prisoners.
Strange trial this! Here sit I to debate,
Which vital limb to lop, nor that to save,
But render wretched life more wretched still.
What see I, but heaven's vengeance, in my sons?
Their guilt a scourge for mine? 'tis thus Heaven writes
Its awful meaning, plain in human deeds,
And language leaves to man.

Enter PERSEUS *and* DEMETRIUS, *in chains, from different sides of the stage;* PERSEUS *followed by* PERICLES, *and* DEMETRIUS *by* ANTIGONUS.

Dym. Dread, sir, your sons.
King. I have no sons; and that I ever had,
Is now my heaviest curse: and yet what care,
What pains, I took to curb their rising rage!
How often have I ranged through history,
To find examples for their private use?
The Theban brothers did I set before them——
What blood! what desolation! but in vain!
For thee, Demetrius, did I go to Rome,
And bring thee patterns thence of brothers' love,
The Quintii, and the Scipios; but in vain:
If I'm a monarch, where is your obedience?
If I'm a father, where's your duty to me?
If old, your veneration due to years?
But I have wept, and you have sworn, in vain!
I had your ear, and enmity your heart.
How was this morning's counsel thrown away!
How happy is your mother in the grave!
She, when she bore you, suffered less: her pangs,
Her pungent pangs, throb through the father's heart.
Dem. You can't condemn me, sir, to worse than this.
King. Than what, thou young deceiver? While I live,
You both, with impious wishes, grasp my sceptre:
Nothing is sacred, nothing dear, but empire.
Brother, nor father, can you bear; fierce lust
Of empire burns, extinguished all beside.
Why pant you for it? to give others awe?
Be therefore awed yourselves, and tremble at it,
While in a father's hand.
Dym. My lord, your warmth
Defers the business.
King. Am I then too warm?
They that should shelter me from every blast,
To be themselves the storm! O! how Rome triumphs!
Oh! how they bring this hoary head to shame!
Conquest and fame, the labour of my life,
Now turn against me, and call in the world
To gaze at what was Philip, but who now
Wants even the wretch's privilege—a wish.
What can I wish? Demetrius may be guiltless.
What then is Perseus? Judgment hangs as yet
Doubtful o'er them; but I'm condemned already;
For both are mine; and one—is foul as hell.
Should these two hands wage war, (these hands less dear!)
What boots it which prevails? In both I bleed.
But I have done. Speak, Perseus, and at large;
You'll have no second hearing. Thou forbear.
[*To Demetrius.*
Per. Speak!—'Twas with utmost struggle I forbore:
These chains were scarce designed to reach my tongue.
Their trespass is sufficient, stopping here.
[*Shewing his arms.*
These chains! for what? Are chains for innocence?
Not so; for, see, Demetrius wears them too.
Fool that I was to tremble at vain laws,
Nor learn from him defiance of their frown;
Since innocence and guilt are used alike,
Blood-thirsty stabbers, and their destined prey;
Perseus, and he——I will not call him brother:
[*Pointing at Demetrius.*
He wants not that enhancement of his guilt.
King. But closer to the point; and lay before us
Your whole deportment this ill-fated day.

Per. Scarce was he cool from that embrace this morning,
Which you enjoined, and I sincerely gave;
Nor thought he planned my death within my arms;
When, holding vile, oaths, honour, duty, love,
He fired our friendly sports to martial rage.
If war, why not fair war? But that has danger.
From hostile conflict, as from brothers' play,
He blushed not to invite me to his banquet.
I went not; and in that was I to blame?
Think you, there nothing had been found but peace,
From whence, soon after, sallied armed men?
Think you I nothing had to fear from swords,
When from their foils I scarce escaped with life?
Or poison might his valour suit as well:—
This passed, as suits his wisdom, Macedonians,
Who vaults o'er elder brothers to a throne.
With an armed rout he came to visit me.
Did I refuse to go, a bidden guest?
And should I welcome him, a threatening foe?
Resenting my refusal, boiling for revenge?
Dem. 'Tis false.
Ant. Forbear——The king!
Per. Had I received them,
You now had mourned my death, nor heard my cause.
Dares he deny he brought an armed throng?
Call those I name; who dare this deed, dare all;
Yet will not dare deny, that this is true.
My death alone can yield a stronger proof;
Will no less proof than that content a father?
Peri. Perseus, you see, has art, as well as fire;
Nor have the wars worn Athens from his tongue.
Per. Let him, who seeks to bathe in brother's blood,
Not find well pleased the fountain whence it flowed!
Let him, who shudders at a brother's knife,
Find refuge in the bosom of a father:
For where else can I fly? Whom else implore?
I have no Romans, with their eagle's wings,
To shelter me; Demetrius borrows those,
To mount full rebel-high: I have their hatred;
And, thanks to Heaven! deserve it: good Demetrius
Can see your towns and kingdoms torn away
By these protectors, and ne'er lose his temper.
My weakness I confess; it makes me rave;
It makes me weep—and my tears rarely flow.
Peri. Was ever stronger proof of filial love?
Per. Vain are Rome's hopes, while you and I survive:
But should the sword take me, and age my father,
(Heaven grant they leave him to the stroke of age!)
The kingdom, and the king, are both their own;
A duteous loyal king, a sceptred slave,
A willing Macedonian slave to Rome.
King. First let an earthquake swallow Macedonia!
Per. How, at such news, would Hannibal rejoice!
How the great shade of Alexander smile!
The thought quite chokes me up; I can no more.
King. Proceed.
Per. No, sir,——Why have I spoke at all?
'Twas needless: Philip justifies my charge;
Philip's the single witness, which I call,
To prove Demetrius guilty.
King. What dost mean?
Per. What mean I, sir! what mean I!—To run mad:
For who, unshaken both in heart and brain,
Can recollect it?
King. What?
Per. This morning's insult.
This morning they proclaimed him Philip's king.
This morning they forgave you for his sake.
O, pardon, pardon! I could strike him dead.
King. More temper.
Per. Not more truth; that cannot be!
And that it cannot, one proof can't escape you;
For what but truth could make me, sir, so bold?
Rome puts forth all her strength to crown her minion.
Demetrius' vices, thriving of themselves,
Her fulsome flatteries dung to ranker growth.
Demetrius is the burden of her song;
Each river, hill, and dale, has learnt his name;
While elder Perseus in a whisper dies.
Demetrius treats; Demetrius gives us peace;
Demetrius is our god, and would be so.
My sight is short: look on him you that can:
What sage experience sits upon his brow,
What awful marks of wisdom, who vouchsafes
To patronize a father, and a king?
Such patronage is treason.
King. Treason! Death.
Per. Nor let the ties of blood bind up the hands
Of justice; Nature's ties are broke already:
For, who contend before you?——Your two sons?—
No; read aright, 'tis Macedon and Rome.
A well-masked foreigner, and your——only son,
Guard of your life, and—exile of your love.
Now, bear me to my dungeon: what so fit
As darkness, chains, and death, for such a traitor?
King. Speak, Demetrius.
Ant. My lord, he cannot speak; accept his tears—
Instead of words.
Per. His tears are false as they——
Now, with fine phrase, and foppery of tongue,
More graceful action, and a smoother tone,
That orator of fable, and fair face,
Will steal on your bribed hearts, and, as you listen,
Plain truth, and I, plain Perseus, are forgot.

Dem. My father! king! and judge! thrice awful power!
Your son, your subject, and your prisoner, hear;
Thrice humble state! If I have grace of speech,
(Which gives, it seems, offence) be that no crime,
Which oft has served my country, and my king:
Nor in my brother let it pass for virtue,
That, as he is, ungracious he would seem:
For, oh! he wants not art, though grace may fail him.
The wonted aids of those that are accused,
Has my accuser seized. He shed false tears,
That my true sorrows might suspected flow:
He seeks my life, and calls me murderer;
And vows no refuge can he find on earth,
That I may want it in a father's arms;
Those arms, to which even strangers fly for safety.
King. Speak to your charge.
Dem. He charges me with treason.
If I'm a traitor, if I league with Rome,
Why did his zeal forbear me till this hour?
Was treason then no crime, till (as he feigns)
I sought his life? Dares Perseus hold so much
His father's welfare cheaper than his own?
Less cause have I, a brother, to complain.
He says, I wade for empire through his blood:
He says, I place my confidence in Rome:
Why murder him, if Rome will crown my brows?
Will then a sceptre, dipped in brother's blood,
Conciliate love, and make my reign secure?
False are both charges; and he proves them false,
By placing them together.
Ant. That's well urged.
Dem. Mark, sir, how Perseus, unawares, absolves me
From guilt in all, by loading all with guilt.
Did I design him poison at my feast?
Why then did I provoke him in the field,
That, as he did, he might refuse to come?
When angry he refused, I should have soothed
His roused resentment, and deferred the blow;
Not destined him that moment to my sword,
Which I before instructed him to shun.
Through fear of death, did he decline my banquet?
Could I expect admittance then at his?
These numerous pleas, at variance, overthrow
Each other, and are advocates for me.
Per. No, sir, Posthumius is his advocate.
King. Art thou afraid, that I should hear him out?
Dem. Quit then, this picture, this well-painted fear,
And come to that, which touches him indeed.
Why is Demetrius not despised of all,
His second in endowments, as in birth?
How dare I draw the thoughts of Macedon?
How dare I gain esteem with foreign powers?
Esteem, when gained, how dare I to preserve?
These are his secret thoughts; these burn within;
These sting up accusations in his soul;
Turn friendly visits to foul fraud, and murder;
And pour in poison to the bowl of love.
Merit is treason in a younger brother.
King. But clear your conduct with regard to Rome.
Dem. Alas! dread sir, I grieve to find set down
Among my crimes, what ought to be my praise.
That I went hostage, or ambassador,
Was Philip's high command, not my request:
Indeed, when there, in both those characters,
I bore in mind to whom I owed my birth:
Rome's favour followed. If it is a crime
To be regarded, spare a crime you caused;
Caused by your orders, and example too.
True, I'm Rome's friend, while Rome is your ally:
When not, this hostage, this ambassador,
So dear, stands forth the fiercest of her foes;
At your command, flies swift on wings of fire,
The native thunder of a father's arm.
Ant. There spoke at once the hero and the son.
Dem. To close—To thee, I grant, some thanks are due; [*Speaking to Perseus.*
Not for thy kindness, but malignity:
Thy character's my friend, though thou my foe:
For, say, whose temper promises most guilt?
Perseus, importunate, demands my death:
I do not ask for his: Ah! No! I feel
Too powerful nature pleading for him here:
But, were there no fraternal tie to bind me,
A son of Philip must be dear to me.
If you, my father, had been angry with me,
An elder brother, a less awful parent,
He should assuage you, he should intercede,
Soften my failings, and indulge my youth;
But my asylum drops its character;
I find not there my rescue, but my ruin.
Per. His bold assurance——
King. Do not interrupt him;
But let thy brother finish his defence.
Dem. O Perseus! how I tremble as I speak!
Where is a brother's voice, a brother's eye?
Where is the melting of a brother's heart?
Where is our awful father's dread command?
Where a dear dying mother's last request?
Forgot, scorned, hated, trodden under foot!
Thy heart, how dead to every call of nature!
Unson'd! unbrothered! nay, unhumanized!
Far from affection, as thou art near in blood!
Oh! Perseus! Perseus!—But my heart's too full. [*Falls on Antigonus.*
King. Support him!
Per. Vengeance overtake his crimes!
King. No more!
Ant. See from his hoary brow he wipes the dew,
Which agony wrings from him.
King. Oh, my friend,
These boys at strife, like Ætna's struggling flames,

Convulsions cause, and make a mountain shake;
Shake Philip's firmness, and convulse his heart,
And, with a fiery flood of civil war,
Threaten to deluge my divided land.
I've heard them both; by neither am convinced;
And yet Demetrius' words went through my heart.—
A double crime, Demetrius, is your charge;
Fondness for Rome, and hatred to your brother.
If you can clear your innocence in one,
'Twill give us cause to think you wronged in both.

Dem. How shall I clear it, sir?

King. This honest man
Detests the Romans: if you wed his daughter,
Rome's foe becomes the guardian of your faith.

Dem. I told you, sir, when I returned from Rome—

King. How! Dost thou want an absolute command?
Your brother, father, country, all exact it.

Ant. See yonder guards at hand, if you refuse.
Nay, more; a father, so distressed, demands
A son's compassion, to becalm his heart.
Oh! sir, comply. [*Aside to Demetrius.*

Dem. There! there indeed you touch me!
Besides, if I'm confined, and Perseus free,
I never, never shall behold her more.—
Pardon, ye gods! an artifice forced on me.
[*Aside to Antigonus.*
Dread sir, your son complies. [*To the king.*

Dym. Astonishment!

King. Strike off his chains. Nay, Perseus too is free:
They wear no bonds, but those of duty, now.
Dymas, go thank the prince: he weds your daughter;
And highest honours pay your high desert.
[*Exeunt all but Dym. and Dem.*

Dym. O, sir, without presumption, may I dare
To lift my ravished thought?——

Dem. In what I've done,
I paid a duty to my father's will:
And set you an example, where 'tis due,
Of not with-holding yours.

Dym. My duty, sir,
To you, can never fail.

Dem. Then, Dymas, I request thee,
Go seek the king, and save me from a marriage
My brother has contrived, in artful malice,
To make me lose my father, or my love.
Go, charge the just refusal on thyself.

Dym. What Philip authorizes me to wish,
You, sir, may disappoint. But, to take on me
The load of the refusal——

Dem. Is no more
Than Dymas owes his honour, if he'd shun
The natural surmise, that he concurred
In brewing this foul treason.

Dym. Sir, the king
Knows what he does: and, if he seeks my glory—

Dem. In a degree, destructive of his own,
'Tis yours to disappoint him, or renounce
Your duty to your king.

Dym. You'll better tell——

Dem. Yes, better tell the king he wounds his honour,
By lifting up a minion from the dust,
And mating him with princes! Use your power
Against yourself. Yes, use it like a man,
In serving him, who gave it. Thus you'll make
Indulgence, justice; and absolve your master.
Though kings delight in raising what they love,
Less owe they to themselves than to the throne;
Nor must they prostitute its majesty,
To swell a subject's pride, howe'er deserving.

Dym. What the king grants me——

Dem. Talk not of a grant;
What a king ought not, that he cannot give;
And what is more than meet from prince's bounty,
Is plunder, not a grant. Think you, his honour
A perquisite belonging to your place,
As favourite paramount? Preserve the king
From doing wrong, though wrong is done for you,
And shew, 'tis not in favour to corrupt thee.

Dym. I sought not, sir, this honour.

Dem. But would take it.
True majesty's the very soul of kings;
And rectitude's the soul of majesty:
If mining minions sap that rectitude,
The king may live, but majesty expires:
And he, that lessens majesty, impairs
That just obedience public good requires;
Doubly a traitor, to the crown and state.

Dym. Must I refuse what Philip's pleased to give?

Dem. Can a king give thee more than is his own?
Know, a king's dignity is public wealth;
On that subsists the nation's fame and power.
Shall fawning sycophants, to plump themselves,
Eat up their master, and dethrone his glory?
What are such wretches? What, but vapours foul,
From fens and bogs, from royal beams exhaled,
That radiance intercepting, which should cheer
The land at large? Hence subjects' hearts grow cold,
And frozen loyalty forgets to flow:
But, then 'tis slippery standing for the minion:
Stains on his ermine, to their royal master
Such miscreants are; not jewels in his crown.
If you persist, sir—But, of words no more!
To me, to threat, is harder than to do.

Dym. Let me embrace this genuine son of empire!
When warm debates divide the doubtful land,
Should I not know the prince most fit to reign?
I've tried you as an eagle tries her young,
And find, your dauntless eye is fixed on glory.
I'll to the king, and your commands obey.——
We must give young men opiates in a fever.
[*Aside.*

Yes, boy, I will obey thee, to thy ruin!
Erixene shall strike thee dead for this!
[*Exit Dymas.*
Dem. These statesmen nothing woo but gold and power;
I'm a bold advocate for other love,
Though, at their bar, indicted for a fool.
When reason, like the skilful charioteer,
Can break the fiery passions to the bit,
And, spite of their licentious sallies, keep
The radiant track of glory—passions, then,
Are aids and ornaments. Triumphant reason,
Firm in her seat, and swift in her career,
Enjoys their violence, and, smiling, thanks
Their formidable flame, for high renown.
Take, then, my soul, fair maid! 'tis wholly thine;
And thence I feel an energy divine.
When objects worthy praise our hearts approve,
Each virtue grows on consecrated love:
And, sure, soft passion claims to be forgiven,
When love of beauty is the love of Heaven.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA.

Erix. 'Tis plain! 'tis plain! this marriage gains her father:
He, joined to Rome, the crown. Thy words were true;
He woos the diadem; that diadem, which I
Despised for him. Oh, how unlike our loves!
But it is well; he gives me my revenge.
Wed Dymas' daughter! What a fall is there!
Not the world's empire could repair his glory.
Del. Madam, you can't be moved too much! But why
More now than at the first?
Erix. At first I doubted:
For who, that loved like me, could have believed?
I disbelieved what Pericles reported;
And thought it Perseus' art to wound our loves.
But when the good Antigonus, sworn friend
To false Demetrius, when his word confirmed it,
Then passion took me, as the northern blast
An autumn leaf. O Gods! the dreadful whirl!
But, while I speak, he's with her: laughs and plays;
Mingles his dalliance with insulting mirth;
To this new goddess offers up my tears;
Yes, with my shame and torture, wooes her love.
I see, hear, feel it! O these raging fires!
Can then the thing we scorn give so much pain?
Del. Madam, these transports give him cause to triumph!
Erix. I vent my grief to thee; he ne'er shall know it;
If I can't conquer, I'll conceal my passion,
And stifle all its pangs beneath disdain.
Del. The greatest minds are most relenting too;
If then Demetrius should repent his crime——
Erix. If still my passion burns, it shall burn inward:
On the fierce rack in silence I'll expire,
Before one sigh escape me.—He repent!
What wild extravagance of thought is thine!
But did he? Who repents, has once been false:
In love, repentance but declares our guilt;
And injured honour shall exact its due.
In vain his love, nay mine, should groan in vain:
Both are devoted. Vengeance, vengeance reigns!
Our first love, murdered, is the sharpest pang
A human heart can feel.
Del. The king approaches.

Enter the KING, *&c.*

King. Madam, at length we see the down of peace,
And hope an end of our domestic jars.
The jealous Perseus can no longer fear
Demetrius is a Roman, since this day
Makes him the son of Dymas, Rome's worst foe.
Erix. Already, sir, I've heard, and heard with joy,
The important news.
King. To make our bliss run o'er,
You, Madam, will complete what Heaven begins,
And save the love-sick Perseus from despair.
That marriage would leave Rome without pretence
To touch our conquest; and for ever join
To these dominions long disputed Thrace.

Enter DYMAS.

Erix. Though Thrace by conquest stoops to Macedon,
I know my rank, and would preserve its due.
With meditated coldness have I heard
Prince Perseus' vows; unwilling to consent
Before restored to my forefathers' throne,
Lest that consent should merit little thanks,
As flowing less from choice than your command:
But since the Roman pride will find account
In my persisting still, and Philip suffer,
I quit the lofty thought on which I stood,
And yield to your request.
King. Indulgent Gods!
Blest moment! How will this with transport fill
The doubtful Perseus, after years of pain!
Dym. My lord, I've heard what passed, and give you joy
Of Perseus' nuptials, which your state requires:
But for Demetrius'— think of those no more.
Far from accepting such a load of glory,

I bring, I bring, my lord, this forfeit head,
Due to my bold refusal.
King. Dares the boy
Fall from his promise, and impose on thee
Forced disobedience to my royal pleasure?
Dym. No, my most honoured lord, there, there's my crime:
Fond of the maid, with ardour he pressed on;
But should I dare pollute his blood with mine?
But you, sir, authorize it—still more base,
To wrong a master so profusely kind.
King. That man is noble, on whom Philip smiles;
Come, come, there's something more in this—explain.
Dym. Why am I forced on this ungrateful office?
Yet can't I tell you more than fame has told,
Which says, Demetrius is in league with Rome.
Why weds ambition then an humble maid,
But to gain me to treason? What then follows?
They'll say, the subtle statesman planned this marriage,
To raise his blood into his master's throne.
No, sir, preserve my fame, let life suffice.

Enter PERICLES.

Peri. Sir, your ambassadors arrived from Rome— [*Presents a letter.*
King. Ha! I must read it; this will tell me more, [*After reading it.*
Oh, princess! Now our only comfort flows
From your indulgence to my better son.
This dreadful news precipitates my wish.
To keep rapacious Rome from seizing Thrace,
You cannot wed too soon: my fair ally!
What if you bless me and my son to-morrow?
Erix. Since you request, and your affairs demand it,
Without a blush, I think I may comply.
King. Oh, daughter!—but no more; the gods will thank you.
I go to bless my Perseus with the news.
Dym. Thus the boy's dead in empire and in love. [*Exeunt King, Dymas, &c.*
Erix. I triumph! I'm revenged! I reign! I reign!
Nor thank Demetrius' treason for a crown.
Love is our own cause, honour is the gods'.
I can be glorious without happiness;
But without glory never can be blest.
Del. 'Tis well: but can you wed the man, you scorn?
Erix. Wed any thing, for vengeance on the perjured.
I'll now insult him from an higher sphere:
This unexpected turn may gall his pride.
Whate'er has pangs for him, has charms for me.
Del. A rooted love is scarce so soon removed.
Erix. If not, the greater virtue to controul it;
And strike at his heart, though 'tis through my own.
Del. I cannot but praise this triumph, but I dread
The combat still. And see, the foe draws near.

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Erixene!
Erix. My lord?
Dem. My pale cheek speaks;
My trembling limbs prevent my faultering tongue,
And ask you——
Erix. What, my lord?
Dem. My lord? Her eyes
Confirm it true, and yet, without a crime,
I can't believe it. Oh, Erixene——
Erix. I guess your meaning, sir; but am surprised
That Dymas' son should think of aught I do.
Dem. False are my senses! False both ear and eye!
All, all be rather false than her I love!
Erix. She passed not, sir, this way.
Dem. Is then my pain
Your sport? And can Erixene pretend
Herself deceived by what deceived the king?
An artifice made use of for your sake;
A proof, not violation, of my love?
Erix. I thought not of your love, nor artifice;
Both were forgot; or rather, never known.
But, without artifice, I tell you this;
Your brother lays his sceptre at my feet—
And whose example bids my heart resist
The charms of empire?
Dem. This is woman's skill;
You cease to love, and from my conduct strive
To labour an excuse. For if, indeed,
You thought me false, had you been thus serene,
Calm and unruffled! No; my heart says, no.
Passions, if great, though turned to their reverse,
Keep their degree, and are great passions still.
And she, who, when she thinks her lover false,
Retains her temper, never lost her heart.
Erix. That I'm serene, says not I never loved:
Indeed, the vulgar float as passion drives;
But noble minds have reason for their queen.
While you deserved, my passion was sincere:
You change, my passion dies. But, pardon, sir,
If my vain mind thinks anger is too much;
Take my neglect, I can afford no more.
Dem. No? rage! flame! thunder! give a thousand deaths!
Oh, rescue me from this more dreadful calm!
This cursed indifference! which, like a frost
In northern seas, outdoes the fiercest storm.
Commanded by my father to comply,
I feigned obedience: had I then refused——
Erix. I grant the consequence had been most dreadful!
I grant, that Dymas' daughter had been angry
Dem. Ask Dymas with what rage——
Erix. You well might rage,
To be refused.
Dem. Refused!

Erix. He told your secret;
The king, and I, and all the court can witness.
Dem. Refused! False villain! Oh, the perjured slave!
Hell-born impostor! Madam, 'tis most false!
Warm from my heart is every word I speak!
The villain lies! Believe the pangs, that rend me;
Believe the witness streaming from my eyes,
And let me speak no more.
Erix. I do believe
Your grief sincere. I've heard the maid is fair.
Dem. Proceed; and thus, indeed, commit that crime,
You falsely charge on me. The crown has charmed you.
How warm this morning did you press my flight!
The cause is plain: an outraged lover's groan,
And dying agony, molest your ear,
And hurt the music of a nuptial song.
Erix. Since your inconstancy persists to charge
Its crime on my ambition, I'll be kind;
And leave you in possession of an error,
Of which you seem so fond.
Dem. Ah! stay one moment!

Enter PERSEUS *and* PERIOLES.

Per. Erixene!
Dem. Distraction! [*Starting.*
Erix. 'Tis well timed.
My lord, your brother doubts, if I am sincere,
And thinks (an error natural to him)
I will break my vow to you. You will clear my fame,
And labour to convince him, that to-morrow
Erixene's at once a bride and queen. [*Exit.*
Per. When I have worked him up to violence,
Bring thou the king, and pity my distress.
[*To Pericles, who goes out.*
Dem. On what extremes extreme distress compels me!
In things impossible I put my trust:
I, in my only brother, find a foe;
Yet, in my rival, hope the greatest friend.
When all our hopes are lodged in such expedients,
'Tis as if poison were our only food,
And death was called on as the guard of life.
Per. Why dost thou droop?
Dem. Because I am dead; quite dead
To hope; and yet rebellious to despair;
Like ghosts unblessed, that burst the bars of death.
Strange is my conduct! Stranger my distress:
Beyond example both! Whoe'er before me
Pressed his worst foe to prove his truest friend?
But though thou art not my brother, thou art a man;
And, if a man, compassionate the worst
That man can feel; though found that worst in me.
Per. What would'st?
Dem. Unclinch thy talons from thy prey;
Let the dove fly to this her nest again.
[*Striking his breast.*
For, Oh! the maid's unalienably mine,
Though now through rage run mad, and turned to thee.
How often have I languished at her feet,
Basked in her eye, and revelled in her smile!
How often, as she listened to my vows,
Trembling and pale with agonies of joy,
Have I left earth, and mounted to the stars!
Per. There Dymas' daughter shone above the rest,
Illustrious in thy sight.
Dem. Thy taunt, how false!
I no less press your interest, than my own.
Think you 'tis possible her heart, so long
Inclined to me, the price of all my vows,
Purchased by tears and groans, and paid me down
In tenderest returns of love divine,
Can in one day be yours? Impossible!
Per. If I am deceived, I am pleased with the deceit.
How my heart dances in the golden dream!
In pity do not wake me, till to-morrow.
Dem. Then thou wilt wake distracted. Trust me, brother,
She gives her hand alone.
Per. Nor need I more;
That hand's enough, that brings a sceptre in it.
I scorn a prince, who weds with meaner views.
Her duty's mine, and I conceive small pain
From your sweet error, that her love is your's.
I am pleased such cordial thoughts of your own merit
Support you in distress.
Dem. Inhuman Perseus!
If pity dwells within the heart of man,
If due that pity to the last distress,
Pity a lover exquisitely pained,
A lover exquisitely pained by you.
Oh! in the name of all the gods, relent!
Give me my princess, give her to my throes!
Amidst a thousand you may chuse a love;
The spacious earth contains but one for me.
But Oh! I rave. Art thou not he, the man,
Who drinks my groans like music to his ear?
And would, as wine, as nectar, drink my blood?
Are all my hopes of mercy lodged in thee?
Oh, rigid gods! and shall I then fall down,
Embrace thy feet, and bathe them with my tears?
Yes, I will drown thee with my tears, my blood,
So thou afford a human ear to pangs,
A brother's pangs, a brother's broken heart!
Per. Pardon, Demetrius; but the princess calls,
And I am bound to go.
Dem. Oh, stay! [*Laying hold of him.*
Per. You tremble.
Dem. The princess calls, and you are bound to go!

Per. E'en so.
Dem. What princess?
Per. Mine.
Dem. 'Tis false!
Per. Unhand me.
Dem. What, see, talk, touch, nay, taste her like a bee,
Draw honey from her wounded lip, while I
Am stung to death!
Per. The triumph once was your's.
Dem. Rip up my breast, or you shall never stir.
My heart may visit her! Oh, take it with you!
Have I not seen her, where she has not been?
Have I not clasped her shadow? Trod her steps?
Transported trod! as if they led to Heaven?
Each morn my life I lighted at her eye,
And every evening, at its close, expired.
[*Bursts into tears.*
Per. Fie! thou art a Roman; can a Roman weep?
Sure Alexander's helmet can sustain
Far heavier strokes than these. For shame, Demetrius;
E'en snatch up the next Sabine in thy way,
'Twill do as well. [*Going.*
Dem. By Heaven you shall not stir.
Long as I live, I stand a world between you,
And keep you distant as the poles asunder.
Who takes my love, in mercy take my life;
Thy bloody pass cleave through thy brother's breast.
I beg, I challenge, I provoke my death.
[*His hand upon his sword.*

Enter KING *and* DYMAS.

Per. You will not murder me?
Dem. Yes, you and all.
King. How like a tyger foaming o'er his prey!
Per. Now, sir, believe your eyes, believe your ears,
And still believe me perjured as this morning.
King. Heaven's wrath's exhausted, there's no more to fear.
My darling son found criminal in all!
Dem. That villain there to blast me! Yes, I'll speak;
For what have I to fear, who feel the worst?
'Tis time the truth were known. That villain, sir,
Has cleft my heart, and laughs to see it bleed:
But his confession shall redeem my fame,
And re-enthrone me in my princess' smile;
Or I'll return that false embrace he gave me,
And stab him in your sight.
King. Hold, insolent!
Where's your respect to me?
Dem. Oh, royal sir!
That has undone me. Through respect I gave
A feigned consent, which his black artifice
Has turned to my destruction. I refused
That slave's, that cursed slave's, that statesman's daughter,
And he pretends she was refused to me.
Hence, hence this desolation. Nought I fear,
Though nature groan her last. And shall he then
Escape and triumph?
King. Guards there! Seize the prince!
[*He is seized.*
The man you menace you shall learn to fear.
Dym. Hold, sir! not this for me! It is your son:
What is my life, though poured upon your feet?
King. Is this a son?
Dem. No, sir; my crime's too great,
Which dares to vindicate a father's honour,
To catch the glories of a falling crown,
And save it from pollution. But I've done.
I die, unless my princess is restored;
[*Pointing to Dymas.*
And if I die, by heaven, and earth, and hell!
His sordid blood shall mingle with the dust,
And see if thence 'twill mount into the throne.
Oh, sir! think of it! I'll expect my fate. [*Exit.*
King. And thou shalt have it.
Dym. How, my lord; in tears!
King. As if the gods came down in evidence,
How many sudden rays of proof concur
To my conviction? Was ever equal boldness?
But 'tis no wonder from a brother king;
[*Produces the forged letter.*
This king of Thrace—To-morrow he'll be king
Of Macedon——He therefore dies to-night.
Per. And yet I doubt it, for I know his fondness.
Thou practise well the lesson I have taught thee,
While I put on a solemn face of woe,
Afflicted for a brother's early fall!
[*Aside to Dymas.*
Heaven knows with what regard—But, sir, your safety—
[*Presenting the mandate for Demetrius's death.*
King. What giv'st thou here?
Dym. Your passport to renown.
You sign your apotheosis in that.
What scales the skies, but zeal for public good?
Per. How god-like mercy!
Dym. Mercy to mankind,
By treason awed.
King. Must then thy brother bleed?
[*To Perseus.*
[*Dymas seeming at a loss, Perseus whispers him, and gives a letter.*
Dym. No, sir, the king of Thrace,
[*Looking on the letter.*
King. Why that is true——
Yet, who, if not a father, should forgive?
Dym. Who, sir, if not a Philip, should be just?
King. Is't not my son? [*To Dymas.*
Dym. If not, far less his guilt.
King. Is't not my other Perseus! [*To Perseus.*
Per. Sir, I thank you;

That seeks your crown and life.
King. And life?
Dym. No, sir;
He'll only take your crown; you still may live.
King. Heaven blast thee for that thought!
Per. Why shakes my father?
King. It stabs, it gnaws, it harrows up my soul.
Is he not young? Was he not much indulged?
Galled by his brother? Doubted by his father?
Tempted by Rome? A nation to a boy?
Dym. Oh, a mere infant—that deposes kings.
King. No; once he saved my crown.
Dym. And now would wear it.
King. How my head swims!
Per. Nor strange; the task is hard.
Dym. Yet scarce for him. Brutus was but a Roman:
[*Speaking, as if he would not have the king hear.*
Yet, like a Philip dared, and is immortal.
King. I hear thee, Dymas; give me then the mandate. [*Going to sign, he stops short.*
Dym. No wonder if his mother thus had paused.
Per. Rank cankers on thy tongue! Why mention her? [*Aside.*
King. Oh, gods! I see her now: what am I doing! [*Throws away the style.*
I see her dying eye let fall a tear
In favour of Demetrius. Shall I stab
Her lovely image, stampt on every feature?
Dym. His soul escaped it, sir.
King. Thou liest; begone.
[*Perseus and Dymas in great confusion—Perseus whispers Dymas.*
Dym. True; that, or nought, will touch him.
[*Aside to Perseus.*
If, sir, your mercy——— [*To the king.*
Per. O speak on of mercy!
Mercy, the darling attribute of Heaven!
Dym. If you should spare him——
King. What if I should spare him?
Dym. I dare not say——Your wrath again might rise.
King. Yes, if thou'rt silent—What if I should spare him?
Dym. Why, if you would, proud Rome would thank you for it.
King. Rome! Her applause more shocks me than his death.
O, thou, Death's orator! Dread advocate
For bowelless severity! assist
My trembling hand, as thou hast steeled my heart;
And, if it is guilt in me, share the guilt.
He's dead. [*Signs.*] And if I blot it with one tear,
Perseus, though less affected, will forgive me.
Per. Forgive! Sir, I applaud, and wish my sorrow
Were mild enough to weep.

[*The King, going out, meets Demetrius in mourning, introduced by Antigonus. He starts back, and drops on Dymas. Recovering, speaks.*]
King. This, Fate, is thy tenth wave, and quite o'erwhelms me:
It less had shocked me, had I met his ghost.
This is a plot to sentence me to death.
What hast thou done, my mortal foe! thrown bars [*To Antigonus.*
Athwart my glory? But thy scheme shall fail.
As rushing torrents sweep the obstructed mound,
So Philip meets this mountain in his way,
Yet keeps his purpose still.
[*Perseus and Pericles whisper aside.*
Peri. I can't but fear it.
Per. I grant the danger great, yet don't despair.
Jove is against thee, Perseus on thy side.
Ant. The prince, dread sir, low on his bended knee——
King. This way, Antigonus. Dost mark his bloom?
Grace in his aspect, grandeur in his mien?
Ant. I do.
King. 'Tis false; take a king's word. He's dead.
That darling of my soul would stab me sleeping.
How dar'st thou start? Art thou the traitor's father?
If thou art pale, what is enough for me?
How his grave yawns! Oh, that it were my own!
Ant. Mourn not the guilty.
King. No, he's innocent:
Death pays his debt to justice, and that done,
I grant him still my son; as such I love him:
Yes, and will clasp him to my breast, while yet
His clay is warm, nor moulders at my touch.
Per. A curse on that embrace! [*Aside.*
Dym. Nay, worse; he weeps.
King. Poor boy, be not deceived by my compassion;
My tears are cruel, and I groan thy death.
Dem. And am I then to die? If death's decreed,
Stab me yourself, nor give me to the knife
Of midnight ruffians, that have forged my crimes.
For you I beg, for you I pour my tears;
You are deceived, dishonoured; I am only slain.
Oh, father!——
King. Father! there's no father here.
Forbear to wound me with that tender name,
Nor raise all nature up in arms against me!
Dem. My father! guardian! friend! nay, deity!
What less than gods give being, life, and death!
My dying mother——
King. Hold thy peace, I charge thee.
Dem. Pressing your hand, and bathing it with tears,
Bequeathed your tenderness for her to me;
And low on earth my legacy I claim,

Clasping your knees, though banished from your breast.
King. My knees! Would that were all! he grasps my heart!
Perseus, canst thou stand by, and see me ruined?
[*Reaching his hand to Perseus.*
Per. Loose, loose thy hold. It is my father too.
King. Yes, Macedon, and thine, and I'll preserve thee.
Dem. Who once before preserved it from the Thracian?
And who, at Thrasymene, turned the lifted bolt
From Philip's hoary brow?
King. I'll hear no more.
O Perseus! Dymas! Pericles! assist me,
Unbind me, disenchant me, break this charm
Of nature, that accomplice with my foes;
Rend me, O rend me, from the friend of Rome!
Per. Nay, then, howe'er reluctant, aid I must.
The friend of Rome! That severs you for ever,
Though most incorporate and strongly knit,
As lightning rends the knotted oak asunder.
Dem. In spite of lightning I renew the tie;
And stubborn is the grasp of dying men.
Who's he that shall divide me from myself?
[*Demetrius is forced from the king's knees, on which, starting up, he flings his arms round his father.*]
Still of a piece with him, from whom I grew,
I'll bleed on my asylum, dart my soul
In this embrace, and thus my treason crown.
King. Who love yourselves, or Macedon, or me,
From the cursed eagle's talons wrench my crown,
And this barbed arrow from my breast.—'Tis done; [*Forced asunder.*
And the blood gushes after it. I faint!
Dym. Support the king!
Per. While treason licks the dust.
[*Pointing at Demetrius, fallen in the struggle.*
Dym. A field well fought.
Per. And justice has prevailed.
King. O, that the traitor could conceal the son!
Farewell, once best beloved! still more deplored!
He, he, who dooms thee, bleeds upon thy tomb.
[*Exit.*
Dem. Prostrate on thee, my mother earth, be thou
Kinder than brother, or than father; open
And save me, in thy bosom, from my—friends.
Friends, sworn to wash their hands in guiltless tears,
And quench infernal thirst in kindred blood;
As if relation severed human hearts,
Or that destruction were the child of love!
Per. Farewell, young traitor: if they ask below,
Who sent thee beardless down, say, honest Perseus;
Whom reason sways, not instinct; who can strike
At horrid parricide, and flagrant treason,
Though through a bosom dearer than his own.
Think'st thou my tender heart can hate a brother?
The Gods and Perseus war with nought but guilt.
But I must go. What, sir, your last commands
To your Erixene? She chides my stay. [*Exit.*
Dem. Without that token of a brother's love
He could not part; my death was not enough.
I came for mercy, and I find it here.
And death is mercy, since my love is lost.
Alas! my father too! my heart aches for him.
And Perseus—fain would I forgive even thee:
But Philip's sufferings cry too loud against it.
Blind author, and sure mourner of my death!
Father most dear!—What pangs hast thou to come?
Like that poor wretch is thy unhappy doom,
Who, while in sleep his fevered fancy glows,
Draws his keen sword, and sheaths it in his foes:
But, waking, starts upright, in wild surprise,
To feel warm blood glide round him as he lies;
To see his reeking hands in crimson dyed,
And a pale corse extended by his side:
He views with horror what mad dreams have done,
And sinks, heart-broken, on a murdered son.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

KING, POSTHUMIUS, *&c. meeting.*

Post. WE, in behalf of our allies, O King!
Called on thee yesterday, to clear thy glory.
No wonder now, that Philip is unjust
To strangers, who has murdered his own son.
King. 'Tis false.
Post. No thanks to Philip, that he fled.
King. A traitor is no son.
Post. Heaven's vengeance on me,
If he refused not yesterday thy crown,
Though life and love both bribed him to comply.
King. See there! [*Gives the letter.*
Post. 'Tis not the consul's hand or seal.
King. You're his accomplices.
Post. We're his avengers.
'Tis war.
King. Eternal war.
Post. Next time we meet——
King. Is in the capitol. Haste, fly my kingdoms!
Post. No longer thine.
King. Yes, and proud Rome a province.
[*Exeunt Posthumius, &c.*

They brave, they make, they tyrannize o'er kings.
The name of king the prostrate world adored,
Ere Romulus had called his thieves together.
But let me pause—Not Quintius' hand or seal?
Doubt and impatience, like thick smoke and fire,
Cloud and torment my reason.
Ant. Sir, recall,
And re-examine those you sent to Rome:
You took their evidence in haste and anger.
Torture, if they refuse, will tell the truth.
King. Go, stop the nuptials, till you hear from me.
[*Exeunt King and Antigonus.*

SCENE II.

Enter ERIXENE *and* DELIA, *meeting.*

Del. Madam, the prince, who fled from threatened death,
Attempting his escape to foreign realms,
Was lately taken at the city gates,
So strongly guarded by his father's powers;
And now, confined, expects his final doom.
Erix. Imprisoned, and to die!—And let him die.
Bid Dymas' daughter weep. I half forgot
His perjured insolence; I'll go and glut
My vengeance. Oh, how just a traitor's death!
And blacker still, a traitor to my love,
[*Exeunt Erixene and Delia.*

Scene draws, and shews DEMETRIUS *in prison.*

Dem. Thou subterranean sepulchre of peace!
Thou home of horror! hideous nest of crimes!
Guilt's first sad stage in her dark road to hell!
Ye thick-barred sunless passages for air,
To keep alive the wretch, that longs to die!
Ye low-browed arches, through whose sullen gloom
Resound the ceaseless groans of pale despair!
Ye dreadful shambles, caked with human blood!
Receive a guest from far, far other scenes,
From pompous courts, from shouting victories,
Carousing festivals, harmonious bowers,
And the soft chains of heart-dissolving love.
Oh, how unlike to these! Heart-breaking load
Of shame eternal, ne'er to be knocked off!
Oh welcome death!—no, never but by thee!—
Nor has a foe done this. A friend! a father!—
Oh, that I could have died without their guilt!—

Enter ERIXENE, DEMETRIUS *gazing at her.*

So looked in chaos the first beam of light:
How drives the strong enchantment of her eye
All horror hence!—How die the thoughts of death!
Erix. I knew not my own heart. I cannot bear it.
Shame chides me back; for, to insult his woes
Is too severe; and to condole, too kind. [*Going.*
Dem. Thus, I arrest you in the name of mercy,
And dare compel your stay. Is then one look,
One word, one moment, a last moment too,
When I stand tottering on the brink of death,
A cruel ignominious death, too much
For one, that loves like me? A length of years
You may devote to my blest rival's arms;
I ask but one short moment. O permit,
Permit the dying to lay claim to thee!
To thee, thou dear equivalent for life,
Cruel, relentless, marble-hearted maid!
Erix. Demetrius, you persist to do me wrong;
For, know, though I behold thee as thou art,
Doubly a traitor, to the state and me,
Thy sorrow, thy distress, have touched my bosom:
I own it is a fault—I pity thee.

Enter OFFICER.

Offi. My lord, your time is short, and death waits for you.
Erix. Death!—I forgive thee from my inmost soul.
Dem. Forgive me? Oh! thou need'st not to forgive,
If imposition had not struck thee blind.
Truth lies in ambush yet, but will start up,
And seize thy trembling soul, when mine is fled.
O, I've a thousand, thousand things to say!
Erix. And I am come a secret to disclose,
That might awake thee, wert thou dead already!
Offi. My lord, your final moment is expired.
Dem. and Erix. One, one short moment more!
Dem. No; death lets fall
The curtain, and divides our love for ever!
[*Demetrius is forced out.*
Erix. Oh, I've a darker dungeon in my soul,
Nor want an executioner to kill me.
What revolutions in the human heart
Will pity cause! What horrid deeds revenge!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter ANTIGONUS, *with attendants.*

Ant. How distant virtue dwells from mortal man!
Was't not that each man calls for others' virtue,
Her very name on earth would be forgot,
And leave the tongue, as it has left the heart!
Was ever such a laboured plan of guilt?
Take the king's mandate, to the prison fly,
Throw wide the gates, and let Demetrius know
The full detail!

Enter ERIXENE.

The princess! ha! be gone! [*To the attendants.*
While I stir up an equal transport here.
Princess, I see your griefs, and judge the cause;
But I bring news might raise you from your grave,
Or call you down from Heaven to hear with joy!
Just gods! the virtuous will at last prevail.
On motives, here too tedious to relate,
I begged the king to re-examine those,

Who came from Rome. The king approved my
counsel.
Surprised, and conscious, in their charge they
faultered,
And threatened tortures soon discovered all:
That Perseus bribed them to their perjuries;
That Quintius' letter was a forgery;
That prince Demetrius' intercourse with Rome
Was innocent of treason to the state.
Erix. Oh, my swoln heart! What will the gods
do with me?
Ant. And to confirm this most surprising news,
Dymas, who, striving to suppress a tumult,
The rumour of Demetrius' flight had raised,
Was wounded sore, with his last breath confessed,
The prince refused his daughter; which affront
Inflamed the statesman to his prince's ruin.
Erix. Did he refuse her? [*Swoons.*
Ant. Quite o'ercome with joy!
Transported out of life!—The gods restore her!
Erix. Ah! why recall me? This is a new kind
Of murder; most severe! that dooms to life.
Ant. Fair princess, you confound me!
Erix. Am I fair?
Am I a princess? Love and empire mine?
Gay, gorgeous visions dancing in my sight!——
No, here I stand a naked, shipwrecked wretch,
Cold, trembling, pale, spent, helpless, hopeless,
maid;
Cast on a shore as cruel as the waves,
O'erhung with rugged rocks, too steep to climb;
The mountain billows loud, come foaming in
Tremendous, and confound, ere they devour!
Ant. Madam, the king absolves you from your
vow.
Erix. For me it matters not; but, oh! the
prince——
When he had shot the gulph of his despair,
Emerging into all the light of Heaven;
His heart high-beating with well-grounded hope;
Then to make shipwreck of his happiness,
Like a poor wretch, that has escaped the storm,
And swam to what he deems an happy isle,
When, lo! the savage natives drink his blood!
Ah! why is vengeance sweet to woman's pride,
As rapture to her lover? It has undone me!
Del. Madam, he comes.
Erix. Leave us, Antigonus.
Ant. What dreadful secret this?—But I'll obey,
Invoke the gods, and leave the rest to fate.
[*Exit.*
Erix. How terribly triumphant comes the
wretch!
He comes, like flowers ambrosial, early born,
To meet the blast, and perish in the storm!

Enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. After an age of absence in one hour,
Have I then found thee, thou celestial maid!
Like a fair Venus in a stormy sea,
Or a bright goddess, through the shades of night,
Dropt from the stars to these blest arms again?
How exquisite is pleasure after pain!
Why throbs my heart so turbulently strong,
Pained at thy presence, through redundant joy,
Like a poor miser, beggared by his store?
Erix. Demetrius, joy and sorrow dwell too
near.
Dem. Talk not of sorrow, lest the gods resent,
As underprized, so loud a call to joy.
I live, I love, am loved, I have her here!
Rapture, in present, and, in prospect, more!
No rival, no destroyer, no despair!
For jealousies, for partings, groans, and death,
A train of joys, the gods alone can name!
When Heaven descends in blessings so profuse,
So sudden, so surpassing hope's extreme,
Like the sun bursting from the midnight gloom,
'Tis impious to be niggards in delight;
Joy becomes duty; Heaven calls for some excess,
And transport flames as incense to the skies!
Erix. Transport how dreadful!
Dem. Turns Erixene?
Can she not bear the sunshine of our fate?
Meridian happiness is poured around us;
The laughing loves descend in swarms upon us;
And where we tread is an eternal spring!
By Heaven! I almost pity guilty Perseus
For such a loss.
Erix. That stabs me through and through!
Dem. What stabs thee?—Speak! Have I then
lost thy love?
Erix. To my confusion, be it spoke—'Tis thine.
Dem. To thy confusion! Is it then a crime?
You heard how dying Dymas cleared my fame.
Erix. I heard, and trembled! heard, and ran
distracted!
Dem. Astonishment!
Erix. I've nothing else to give thee.
[*He steps back in astonishment; she in
agony; and both are silent for some
time.*
He is struck dumb;—nor can I speak—Yet must I.
I tremble on the brink; yet must plunge in!
Know, my Demetrius, joys are for the gods;
Man's common course of nature is distress:
His joys are prodigies; and, like them too,
Portend approaching ill. The wise man starts,
And trembles at the perils of a bliss.
To hope, how bold! how daring to be fond,
When, what our fondness grasps, is not immortal!
I will presume on thy known, steady virtue,
And treat thee like a man; I will, Demetrius!
Nor longer in my bosom hide a brand,
That burns unseen, and drinks my vital blood.
Dem. What mystery?
Erix. The blackest!
Dem. How every terror doubles in the dark!
Why muffled up in silence stands my fate?
This horrid spectre let me see at once,
And shew if I'm a man.
Erix. It calls for more.
Dem. It calls for me then; love has made me
more.
Erix. Oh, fortify thy soul with more than
love!

To hear, what heard, thou'lt curse the tongue that tells thee!
Dem. Curse whom? Curse thee!
Erix. Yes, from thy inmost soul.
Why dost thou lift thy eyes and hands to heaven?
The powers, most conscious of this deed, reside
In darkness, howl below in raging fires,
Where pangs, like mine, corrode them. Thence arise,
Black gods of execration and despair!
Through dreadful earthquakes cleave your upward way,
While nature shakes, and vapours blot the sun;
Then, through these horrors, in loud groans, proclaim,
That I am——
Dem. What?—I'll have it, though it blast me!
Erix. Thus, then, in thunder—I am Perseus' wife!
[*Demetrius staggers and falls.—After a pause——*
Dem. In thunder!—No; that had not struck so deep!
What tempest e'er discharged so fierce a fire?
Calm and deliberate anguish feeds upon me;
Each thought sent out for help brings in new woe!
Where shall I turn? Where fly? To whom but thee, [*Kneeling.*
Tremendous Jove! whom mortals will not know
From blessings, but compel to be severe!
I feel thy vengeance, and adore thy power!
I see my failings, and absolve thy rage.
But, oh! I must perceive the load that's on me;
I can't but tremble underneath the stroke.
Aid me to bear!—But since it can't be borne,
Oh, let thy mercy burst in flames upon me!
Thy triple bolt is healing balm to this;
This pain unfelt, unfancied by the wretch,
The groaning wretch, that on the wheel expires!
Erix. Why did I tell thee?
Dem. Why commit a deed
Too shocking to be told? What fumes of hell
Flew to thy brain? What fiend the crime inspired?
Erix. Perseus, last night, as soon as thou wast fled,
At that dead hour, when good men are at rest,
When every crime and horror is abroad,
Graves yawn, fiends yell, wolves howl, and ravens scream;
Than ravens, wolves, or fiends, more fatal far,
To me he came, and threw him at my feet,
And wept, and swore, unless I gave consent
To call a priest that moment, all was ruined:
That the next day Demetrius and his powers
Might conquer, he lose me, and I my crown,
Conferred by Philip but on Perseus' wife.
Startled, trembled, fainted; he invades
My half-recovered strength, bribed priests conspire,
Urge my vow, all seize my ravished hand,
Invoke the gods, run o'er the hasty rite;
While each ill omen of the sky flew o'er us,
And furies howled our nuptial song below.——
Canst thou forgive?
Dem. By all the flames of love,
And torments of despair, I never can!
The furies toss their torches from thy hand,
And all their adders hiss around thy head!
I'll see thy face no more. [*Going.*
Erix. Thy rage is just.
Yet stay and hear me! [*She kneels, and holds him.*
Dem. I have heard too much.
Erix. Till thou hast heard the whole, O do not curse me!
Dem. Where can I find a curse to reach thy crime?
Erix. Mercy! [*Weeping.*
Dem. [*Aside.*] Her tears, like drops of molten lead,
With torment burn their passage to my heart!
And yet such violation of her vows——
Erix. Mercy!
Dem. Perseus!—— [*Stamping.*
Erix. Stamp till the centre shakes,
So black a dæmon shalt thou never raise!
Perseus! Canst thou abhor him more than I?
Hell has its furies, Perseus has his love,
And, oh! Demetrius his eternal hate!
Dem. Eternal! Yes, eternal and eternal;
As deep and everlasting as my pain!
Erix. Some god descend, and soothe his soul to peace!
Dem. Talkest thou of peace? what peace hast thou bestowed?
A brain distracted, and a broken heart.
Talk'st thou of peace? Hark, hark, thy husband calls,
His father's rebel! Brother's murderer!
Nature's abhorrence, and—thy lawful lord!
Fly, my kind patroness, and in his bosom
Consult my peace.
Erix. I never shall be there.
My lord! my life!
Dem. How say'st? Is Perseus here?——
Fly, fly! away! 'tis death! 'tis incest!
[*Starting wide, and looking round him.*
Dar'st thou to touch Demetrius? Dar'st thou touch him,
Ev'n with thine eye?
[*As he is going, she lays hold of his robe.*
Erix. I dare—and more, dare seize,
And fix him here: no doubt, to thy surprise——
I'm blemished, not abandoned; honour still
Is sacred in my sight. Thou call'st it incest;
'Tis innocence, 'tis virtue; if there's virtue
In fixed, inviolable strength of love.
For know, the moment the dark deed was done,
The moment madness made me Perseus' wife,
I seized this friend, and lodged him in my bosom,
[*Shewing a dagger.*
Firmly resolved I never would be more:
And now I fling me at thy feet, imploring

Thy steadier hand to guide him to my heart.
Who wed in vengeance, wed not but to die.
Dem. Has Perseus, then, an hymeneal claim?
And no divorce, but death?—And death from me,
Who should defend thee from the world in arms?
O thou still excellent! still most beloved!
Erix. Life is the foe, that parts us; death, a friend,
All knots dissolving, joins us; and for ever.
Why so disordered? Wherefore shakes thy frame?
Look on me; do I tremble? Am I pale?
When I let loose a sigh, I'll pardon thine.
Take my example, and be bravely wretched.
True grandeur rises from surmounted ills;
The wretched only can be truly great.
If not in kindness, yet, in vengeance, strike!
'Tis not Erixene, 'tis Perseus' wife.
Thou'lt not resign me?
Dem. Not to Jove.
Erix. Then strike!
Dem. How can I strike?
[*Gazing on her with astonishment.*
Stab at the face of Heaven?
How can I strike? Yet how can I forbear?
I feel a thousand deaths debating one.
A deity stands guard on every charm,
And strikes at me.
Erix. As will thy brother soon:
He's now in arms, and may be here this hour.
Nothing so cruel as too soft a soul;
This is strange tenderness, that breaks my heart;
Strange tenderness, that dooms to double death—
To Perseus.
Dem. True—but how to shun that horror?
By wounding thee, whom savage pards would spare?
My heart's inhabitant! my soul's ambition!
By wounding thee, and bathing in thy blood;
That blood illustrious, through a radiant race
Of kings and heroes, rolling down from Gods!
Erix. Heroes, and kings, and gods themselves, must yield
To dire necessity.
Dem. Since that absolves me,
Stand firm and fair!
Erix. My bosom meets the point,
Than Perseus far more welcome to my breast.
Dem. Necessity, for gods themselves too strong,
Is weaker than thy charms. [*Drops the dagger.*
Erix. Oh, my Demetrius!
[*Turns, and goes to a farther part of the stage.*
Dem. Oh, my Erixene!
[*Both silent, weep, and tremble.*
Erix. Farewell! [*Going.*
Dem. Where goest? [*Passionately seizing her.*
Erix. To seek a friend.
Dem. He's here.
Erix. Yes, Perseus' friend———
Earth, open and receive me.
Dem. Heaven strike us dead,
And save me from a double suicide,
And one of tenfold death.—O Jove! O Jove!
[*Falling on his knee.*
But I'm distracted. [*Suddenly starting up.*
What can Jove? Why pray?
What can I pray for?
Erix. For a heart.
Dem. Yes, one,
That cannot feel. Mine bleeds at every vein.
Who never loved, ne'er suffered; he feels nothing,
Who nothing feels but for himself alone;
And, when we feel for others, reason reels,
O'erloaded, from her path, and man runs mad.
As love alone can exquisitely bless,
Love only feels the marvellous of pain;
Opens new veins of torture in the soul,
And wakes the nerve, where agonies are born.
E'en Dymas, Perseus, (hearts of adamant!)
Might weep these torments of their mortal foe.
Erix. Shall I be less compassionate than they?
[*Takes up the dagger.*
What love denied, thine agonies have done;
[*Stabs herself.*
Demetrius' sigh outstings the dart of death.

Enter the KING, *&c.*

King. Give my Demetrius to my arms; I call him
To life from death, to transport from despair.
Dem. See Perseus' wife! [*Pointing at Erix.*] let Delia tell the rest.
King. My grief-accustomed heart can guess too well.
Dem. That sight turns all to guilt, but tears and death.
King. Death! Who shall quell false Perseus, now in arms?
Who pour my tempest on the capitol?
How shall I sweeten life to thy sad spirit?——
I'll quit my throne this hour, and thou shalt reign.
Dem. You recommend that death, you would dissuade;
Ennobled thus by fame and empire lost,
As well as life! Small sacrifice to love.
[*Going to stab himself, the king runs to prevent him; but too late.*
King. Ah, hold! nor strike thy dagger through my heart!
Dem. 'Tis my first disobedience, and my last.
[*Falls.*
King. There Philip fell! There Macedon expired!
I see the Roman eagle hovering o'er us,
And the shaft broke, should bring her to the ground. [*Pointing to Demetrius.*
Dem. Hear, good Antigonus, my last request.
Tell Perseus, if he'll sheath his impious sword
Drawn on his father, I'll forgive him all;
Though poor Erixene lies bleeding by:

Her blood cries vengeance; but my father's——
peace—— [*Dies.*

King. As much his goodness wounds me, as his death.
What then are both? O Philip, once renowned!
Where is the pride of Greece, the dread of Rome,
The theme of Athens, the wide world's example,
And the god Alexander's rival, now?
Even at the foot of fortune's precipice,
Where the slave's sigh wafts pity to the prince,
And his omnipotence cries out for more!

Ant. As the swoln column of ascending smoke,
So solid swells thy grandeur, pigmy man!

King. My life's deep tragedy was planned with art,
From scene to scene, advancing in distress,
Through a sad series, to this dire result;
As if the Thracian queen conducted all,
And wrote the moral in her children's blood;
Which seas might labour to wash out in vain.
Hear it, ye nations! distant ages, hear!
And learn the dread decrees of Jove to fear:
His dread decrees the strictest balance keep;
The father groans, who made a mother weep;
But if no terror for yourselves can move,
Tremble, ye parents, for the child ye love;
For your Demetrius: mine is doomed to bleed,
A guiltless victim, for his father's deed.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE GAMESTER.

BY

MOORE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

BEVERLEY, *the gamester.*
LEWSON, *his friend.*
STUKELY, *a sharper.*
JARVIS, *Beverley's steward.*
BATES, DAWSON, } *accomplices of Stukely.*
Waiter.

WOMEN.

MRS BEVERLEY, *wife to Beverley.*
CHARLOTTE, *his sister.*
LUCY, *maid to Mrs Beverley.*

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter MRS BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs Bev. BE comforted, my dear; all may be well yet. And now, methinks, the lodging begins to look with another face. Oh, sister! sister! if these were all my hardships; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage, and shew, your pity would be weakness.

Char. Is poverty nothing, then?

Mrs Bev. Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich: and now it is gone, give me but a bare subsistence, and my husband's smiles, and I'll be the happiest of the poor. To me, now, these lodgings want nothing but their master. Why do you look at me?

Char. That I may hate my brother.

Mrs Bev. Do not talk so, Charlotte.

Char. Has he not undone you?——Oh, this pernicious vice of gaming! But, methinks his usual hours of four or five in the morning might have contented him; it was misery enough to wake for him till then. Need he have staid out all night?——I shall learn to detest him.

Mrs Bev. Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

Char. Slept from you! No, no, his nights have nothing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue!——Nay, from his affections, too!——The time was, sister——

Mrs Bev. And is. I have no fear of his affections. Would I knew, that he were safe!

Char. From ruin and his companions. But that is impossible. His poor little boy, too! What must become of him?

Mrs Bev. Why, want shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and, from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There is no condition of life, sickness

and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for it. His bread is sweeter to him, his home happier, his family dearer, his enjoyments surer. The sun, that rouses him in the morning, sets in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor Beverley has none. The thought of having ruined those, he loves, is misery for ever to him. Would I could ease his mind of that!

Char. If he alone were ruined, it were just he should be punished. He is my brother, it is true; but when I think of what he has done, of the fortune you brought him, of his own large estate too, squandered away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches! Oh, I have no patience! My own little fortune is untouched, he says. Would I were sure of it!

Mrs Bev. And so you may——it would be a sin to doubt it.

Char. I will be sure of it——it was madness in me to give it to his management. But I will demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for it.

Mrs Bev. What occasion?

Char. To support a sister.

Mrs Bev. No; I have no need of it. Take it, and reward a lover with it. The generous Lewson deserves much more. Why won't you make him happy?

Char. Because my sister is miserable.

Mrs Bev. You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. I will sell them to supply our wants; and, when all is gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious—Why those tears, Charlotte?

Char. They flow in pity for you.

Mrs Bev. All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then what is it to be poor?

Char. Cure him but of this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

Mrs Bev. Ay, Charlotte, could we cure him! But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but increase his shame and affliction. Will Mr Lewson call this morning?

Char. He said so last night. He gave me hints too, that he had suspicions of our friend Stukely.

Mrs Bev. Not of treachery to my husband? That he loves play I know, but surely he is honest.

Char. He would fain be thought so; therefore doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

Enter LUCY.

Mrs Bev. What now, Lucy?

Lucy. Your old steward, madam. I had not the heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begged so hard for it. [*Exit Lucy.*

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs Bev. Is this well, Jarvis? I desired you to avoid me.

Jar. Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbad my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

Mrs Bev. The faithful creature! how he moves me. [*To Charlotte.*

Char. Not to have seen him had been cruelty.

Jar. I have forgot these apartments too. I remember none such in my young master's house; and yet I have lived in it these five and twenty years. His good father would not have dismissed me.

Mrs Bev. He had no reason, Jarvis.

Jar. I was faithful to him, while he lived; and when he died, he bequeathed me to his son. I have been faithful to him, too.

Mrs Bev. I know it, I know it, Jarvis.

Char. We both know it.

Jar. I am an old man, madam, and have not a long time to live. I asked but to have died with him, and he dismissed me.

Mrs Bev. Prithee, no more of this! It was his poverty that dismissed you.

Jar. Is he indeed so poor, then?—Oh! he was the joy of my old heart——But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house too? His father built it, when he was but a prating boy. The times, that I have carried him in these arms! And, "Jarvis," says he, when a beggar has asked charity of me, "why should people be poor? You shan't be poor, Jarvis; if I were a king, nobody should be poor." Yet he is poor. And then he was so brave!——Oh, he was a brave little boy! And yet so merciful, he'd not have killed the gnat, that stung him.

Mrs Bev. Speak to him, Charlotte; for I cannot.

Char. When I have wiped my eyes.

Jar. I have a little money, madam; it might have been more, but I have loved the poor. All that I have is yours.

Mrs Bev. No, Jarvis; we have enough yet. I thank you, though, and will deserve your goodness.

Jar. But shall I see my master? And will he let me attend him in his distresses? I'll be no expence to him; and it will kill me to be refused. Where is he, madam?

Mrs Bev. Not at home, Jarvis. You shall see him another time.

Char. To-morrow, or the next day—Oh, Jarvis! what a change is here!

Jar. A change indeed, madam! my old heart aches at it. And yet, methinks——But here's somebody coming.

Enter LUCY *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Good morning to you, ladies. Mr Jarvis, your servant. Where's my friend, madam? [*To Mrs Bev.*

Mrs Bev. I should have asked that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

Stuke. No, Madam.

Char. Nor last night?

Stuke. Last night! Did he not come home, then?

Mrs Bev. No. Were you not together?

Stuke. At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

Char. You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

Stuke. You have asked me that question before, madam; and I told you my concern was, that I could not save him. Mr Beverley is a man, madam; and if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encouragement, I deserve censure; but I meant it to retrieve him.

Mrs Bev. I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you.—But where did you leave him last night?

Stuke. At Wilson's, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly he may be there still. Mr Jarvis knows the house, I believe.

Jar. Shall I go, madam?

Mrs. Bev. No, he may take it ill.

Char. He may go as from himself.

Stuke. And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me. I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend. But I can refuse nothing here. [*Bowing to the ladies.*

Jar. I would fain see him, methinks.

Mrs Bev. Do so, then; but take care how you upbraid him—I never upbraided him.

Jar. Would I could bring him comfort! [*Exit.*

Stuke. Don't be too much alarmed, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing them. Perhaps, my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You should look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first. [*Knocking at the door.*

Mrs. Bev. Hark!——No—that knocking was too rude for Mr Beverley. Pray Heaven he be well!

Stuke. Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well, too—Every thing shall be well. [*Knocking again.*

Mrs. Bev. The knocking is a little loud, though—Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say? Alas, what was I thinking of! I had forgot myself.

Char. I'll go, sister—But don't be alarmed so. [*Exit.*

Stuke. What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?

Mrs. Bev. I beg your pardon; but 'tis ever thus with me in Mr Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

Stuke. You are too fearful, madam; 'twas but one night of absence; and if ill thoughts intrude (as love is always doubtful), think of your worth and beauty, and drive them from your breast.

Mrs Bev. What thoughts? I have no thoughts, that wrong my husband.

Stuke. Such thoughts, indeed, would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch, that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions; and by the general frailty hides his own———If you are wise, and would be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. It is ruin to believe them.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, worse than ruin. It would be to sin against conviction. Why was it mentioned?

Stuke. To guard you against rumour. The sport of half mankind is mischief; and for a single error they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve them.

Mrs Bev. What tales? By whom? Why told? I have heard nothing—or if I had, with all his errors, my Beverley's firm faith admits no doubt—It is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [*Stukely sighs and looks down.*] Why turn you, sir, away? and, why that sigh?

Stuke. I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come we know not why. Perhaps, I have been too busy—If it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your Beverley is wronged, slandered most vilely—My life upon his truth.

Mrs Bev. And mine too. Who is it that doubts it? But no matter——I am prepared, sir——Yet why this caution?——You are my husband's friend; I think you mine too; the common friend of both. [*Pauses.*] I had been unconcerned else.

Stuke. For Heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I mean to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

Mrs Bev. Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

Stuke. Then I am happy—I would say more; but am prevented.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Mrs Bev. Who was it, Charlotte?

Char. What a heart has that Jarvis! A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away—'Don't distress his wife; don't distress his sister,' I could hear him say. 'It is cruel to distress the afflicted'——And when he saw me at the door, he begged pardon, that his friend had knocked so loud.

Stuke. I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

Char. I heard not that; but visits, such as these, we must expect often—Why so distressed, sister? This is no new affliction.

Mrs Bev. No, Charlotte; but I am faint with watching—quite sunk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Good thoughts go with you, madam. My bait is taken, then. [*Aside.*] Poor Mrs Beverley! How my heart grieves to see her thus!

Char. Cure her, and be a friend, then.

Stuke. How cure her, madam?

Char. Reclaim my brother.

Stuke. Ay, give him a new creation, or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on it, madam. Advice, I see, is thankless.

Char. Useless I am sure it is, if through mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and soothe it by example. Physicians, to cure fevers, keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup, that would inflame him. You give it to his hands. [*A knocking.*] Hark, sir!—These are my brother's desperate symptoms——Another creditor.

Stuke. One not so easily got rid of—What, Lewson!

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Madam, your servant——Yours, sir. I was enquiring for you at your lodgings.

Stuke. This morning! You had business, then?

Lew. You'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where's Mr Beverley, madam?

Char. We have sent to enquire for him.

Lew. Is he abroad, then? He did not use to go out so early.

Char. No, nor stay out so late.

Lew. Is that the case? I am sorry for it.—But Mr Stukely, perhaps, may direct you to him.

Stuke. I have already, sir. But what was your business with me?

Lew. To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor Beverley!—But you are his friend; and there's a comfort in having successful friends.

Stuke. And what am I to understand by this?

Lew. That Beverley's a poor man, with a rich friend; that's all.

Stuke. Your words would mean something, I suppose. Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

Lew. And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

Stuke. But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's presence engages my attention. Another morning I may be found at home.

Lew. Another morning, then, I'll wait upon you.

Stuke. I shall expect you, sir. Madam, your servant. [*Exit Stukely.*

Char. What mean you by this?

Lew. To hint to him, that I know him.

Char. How know him? Mere doubt and supposition!

Lew. I shall have proof soon.

Char. And what then? Would you risque your life to be his punisher?

Lew. My life, madam! Don't be afraid. And yet I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you, that I know this Stukely——It will be as easy to make him honest as brave.

Char. And what do you intend to do?

Lew. Nothing, till I have proof. Yet my suspicions are well-grounded—But, methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Could I have leave to call Mr Beverley brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

Char. You know my reasons, and should not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute——My heart bleeds for her; and, till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me.

Lew. Can I be less a friend by being a brother? I would not say an unkind thing—But the pillar of your house is shaken; prop it with another, and it shall stand firm again. You must comply.

Char. And will, when I have peace within myself. But let us change this subject—Your business here this morning is with my sister. Misfortunes press too hard upon her; yet, till today, she has borne them nobly.

Lew. Where is she?

Char. Gone to her chamber. Her spirits failed her.

Lew. I hear her coming. Let what has passed with Stukely be a secret—She has already too much to trouble her.

Enter Mrs BEVERLEY.

Mrs Bev. Good morning, sir; I heard your voice, and, as I thought, enquiring for me.—Where's Mr Stukely, Charlotte?

Char. This moment gone——You have been in tears, sister; but here's a friend shall comfort you.

Lew. Or, if I add to your distresses, I will beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finished yesterday.

Mrs Bev. I know it, sir; I know too your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have obliged me too much already.

Lew. There are trifles, madam, which I know you have set a value on; those I have purchased, and will deliver. I have a friend too, that esteems you——He has bought largely, and will call nothing his, till he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begged it may be this morning.

Mrs Bev. Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be obliged beyond the power of return?

Lew. You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door—Shall we have your company, madam? [*To Charlotte.*

Char. No; my brother may return soon; I'll stay and receive him.

Mrs Bev. He may want a comforter, perhaps. But dont upbraid him, Charlotte. We shall not be absent long. Come, sir, since I must be so obliged.

Lew. 'Tis I, that am obliged. An hour, or less, will be sufficient for us. We shall find you at home, madam?

[*To Charlotte, and exit with Mrs Beverley.*

Char. Certainly. I have but little inclination to appear abroad. Oh, this brother, this brother! to what wretchedness has he reduced us! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to Stukely's Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY.

Stuke. That Lewson suspects me 'tis too plain. Yet why should he suspect me? I appear the friend of Beverley as much as he. But I am rich, it seems; and so I am, thanks to another's folly, and my own wisdom. To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This Beverley's my fool; I cheat him, and he calls me friend. But more business must be done yet——His wife's jewels are unsold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate: I must have these too. And then there's a treasure above all——I love his wife—Before she knew this Beverley I loved her; but, like a cringing fool, bowed at a distance, while he stepped in and won her——Never, never will I forgive him for it. My pride, as well as love, is wounded by this conquest. I must have vengeance. Those hints this morning were well thrown in——Already they have fastened on her. If jealousy should weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue——My heart rejoices in the hope——These jewels may do much——He shall demand them of her; which, when mine, shall be converted to special purposes——What now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. Is it a wonder, then, to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's Beverley?

Stuke. At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is Dawson with you?

Bates. Dressed like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice, that shall deceive the devil.

Stuke. That fellow has a head to undo a nation; but for the rest, they are such low-mannered, ill-looking dogs, I wonder Beverley has not suspected them.

Bates. No matter for manners and looks. Do you supply them with money, and they are gentlemen by profession——The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best company.

Stuke. There's that Williams too! It was he, I suppose, that called at Beverley's with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

Bates. To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

Stuke. No; the fool sneaked off with Jarvis. Had he appeared within doors, as directed, the note had been discharged. I waited there on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for Lewson's grown suspicious; he told me so himself.

Bates. What answer did you make him?

Stuke. A short one——That I would see him soon, for farther explanation.

Bates. We must take care of him. But what have we to do with Beverley? Dawson and the rest are wondering at you.

Stuke. Why, let them wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money, and they stare at me. But they are fools. I want him to believe me beggared by him.

Bates. And what then?

Stuke. Ay, there's the question; but no matter; at night you may know more. He waits for me at Wilson's. I told the women where to find him.

Bates. To what purpose?

Stuke. To save suspicion. It looked friendly, and they thanked me. Old Jarvis was dispatched to him.

Bates. And may intreat him home——

Stuke. No; he expects money from me; but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go——Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing where they love. Follow to Wilson's; but be sure he sees you not. You are a man of character, you know; of prudence and discretion.—Wait for me in an outer room; I shall have business for you presently. Come, sir,

Let drudging fools by honesty grow great;
The shorter road to riches is deceit. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Gaming House, with a Table, Bar, Dice, &c.* BEVERLEY *discovered sitting.*

Bev. Why, what a world is this! The slave, that digs for gold, receives his daily pittance, and sleeps contented; while those, for whom he labours, convert their good to mischief, making abundance the means of want. Oh, shame, shame! Had fortune given me but a little, that little had been still my own. But plenty leads to waste; and shallow streams maintain their currents, while swelling rivers beat down their banks, and leave their channels empty. What had I to do with play? I wanted nothing. My wishes and my means were equal. The poor followed me with blessings, love scattered roses on my pillow, and morning waked me to delight—Oh, bitter thought, that leads to what I was by what I am! I would forget both—Who's there?

Enter a Waiter.

Wait. A gentleman, sir, enquires for you.

Bev. He might have used less ceremony.——Stukely, I suppose?

Wait. No, sir, a stranger.

Bev. Well, shew him in. [*Exit Waiter.* A messenger from Stukely, then; from him, that has undone me! Yet all in friendship——And now he lends me his little, to bring back fortune to me.

Enter JARVIS.

Jarvis! Why this intrusion? Your absence had been kinder.

Jar. I came in duty, sir. If it be troublesome——

Bev. It is——I would be private——hid even from myself. Who sent you hither?

Jar. One, that would persuade you home again. My mistress is not well; her tears told me so.

Bev. Go with thy duty there, then——But does she weep? I am to blame to let her weep. Pr'ythee be gone: I have no business for thee.

Jar. Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am your servant still. Your prosperous fortune blessed my old age. If that has left you, I must not leave you.

Bev. Not leave me! Recall past time, then; or, through this sea of storms and darkness, shew me a star to guide me——But what canst thou?

Jar. The little that I can I will. You have been generous to me—I would not offend you, sir—but—

Bev. No. Thinkest thou I would ruin thee too! I have enough of shame already——My wife, my wife! Wouldst thou believe it, Jarvis? I have not seen her all this long night——I, who have loved her so, that every hour of absence seemed as a gap in life. But other bonds have held me——Oh, I have played the boy! dropping my counters in the stream, and, reaching to redeem them, lost myself. Why wilt thou follow misery? Or if thou wilt, go to thy mistress: she has no guilt to sting her; and therefore may be comforted.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!——I have no heart to see this change.

Bev. Nor I to bear it——How speaks the world of me, Jarvis?

Jar. As of a good man dead. Of one, who, walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

Bev. Ay, and pities me. Says it not so? But I was born to infamy——I'll tell thee what it says; it calls me villain! a treacherous husband, a cruel father, a false brother; one, lost to nature and her charities; or, to say all in one short word, it calls me—Gamester!——Go to thy mistress; I'll see her presently.

Jar. And why not now? Rude people press upon her; loud, bawling creditors; wretches, who know no pity—I met one at the door; he would have seen my mistress: I wanted means of present payment, so promised it to-morrow. But others may be pressing, and she has grief enough already. Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

Bev. Tell her I'll come then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my distresses? Thy honesty has left thee poor; and age wants comfort——Keep what thou hast for cordials, lest between thee and the grave misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me ——This is that friend.

Enter STUKELY.

Stuke. How fares it, Beverley? Honest Mr Jarvis, well met; I hoped to find you here. That viper, Williams! Was it not he that troubled you this morning?

Jar. My mistress heard him then?——I am sorry, that she heard him.

Bev. And Jarvis promised payment.

Stuke. That must not be. Tell him I'll satisfy him.

Jar. Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for it.

Bev. Generous Stukely! Friendship like yours, had it ability like will, would more than balance the wrongs of fortune.

Stuke. You think too kindly of me——Make haste to Williams; his clamours may be rude else. [*To Jarvis.*

Jar. And my master will go home again—Alas! sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence. [*Exit.*

Bev. Would I were dead!

Stuke. Or turned hermit, counting a string of beads in a dark cave; or under a weeping willow, praying for mercy on the wicked. Ha, ha, ha!—Prithee, be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age. Fortune may be ours again; at least we'll try for it.

Bev. No; it has fooled us on too far.

Stuke. Ay, ruined us; and therefore we will sit down contented! These are the despondings of men without money; but let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are fortune's children——True, she is a fickle mother; but shall we droop because she is peevish?——No; she has smiles in store; and these her frowns are meant to brighten them.

Bev. Is this a time for levity? But you are single in the ruin, and therefore may talk lightly of it. With me it is complicated misery.

Stuke. You censure me unjustly——I but assumed these spirits to cheer my friend. Heaven knows he wants a comforter.

Bev. What new misfortune?

Stuke. I would have brought you money, but lenders want securities. What is to be done? All that was mine is yours already.

Bev. And there is the double weight, that sinks me. I have undone my friend too; one who, to save a drowning wretch, reached out his hand, and perished with him.

Stuke. Have better thoughts!

Bev. Whence are they to proceed? I have nothing left.

Stuke. [*Sighing.*] Then we are indeed undone. What, nothing? No moveables, nor useless trinkets? Baubles locked up in caskets to starve their owners? I have ventured deeply for you.

Bev. Therefore this heart-ache; for I am lost beyond all hope.

Stuke. No; means may be found to save us. Jarvis is rich. Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

Bev. And is it for dishonesty? The good old man! Shall I rob him too? My friend would grieve for it. No; let the little, that he has, buy food and clothing for him.

Stuke. Good morning, then. [*Going.*

Bev. So hasty! Why then, good morning.

Stuke. And when we meet again, upbraid me. Say it was I, that tempted you. Tell Lewson so; and tell him I have wronged you——He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

Bev. No; we have been companions in a rash voyage, and the same storm has wrecked us both. Mine shall be self-upbraidings.

Stuke. And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold and borrowed for you, while land or credit lasted; and now, when fortune should be tried, and my heart whispers me success, I am deserted; turned loose to beggary, while you have hoards.

Bev. What hoards? Name them, and take them.

Stuke. Jewels.

Bev. And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! Must she lose all? I would not wound her so.

Stuke. Nor I, but from necessity. One effort more, and fortune may grow kind. I have unusual hopes.

Bev. Think of some other means then.

Stuke. I have; and you rejected them.

Bev. Prithee, let me be a man.

Stuke. Ay, and your friend a poor one. But I have done. And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep them to deck out pride with, and shew a laughing world, that she has finery to starve in.

Bev. No; she shall yield up all. My friend demands it. But need we have talked lightly of her? The jewels, that she values, are truth and innocence—Those will adorn her ever; and for the rest, she wore them for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give them. Alas! you know her not. Where shall we meet?

Stuke. No matter. I have changed my mind. Leave me to a prison; it is the reward of friendship.

Bev. Perish mankind first——Leave you to a prison! No; fallen as you see me, I am not that wretch. Nor would I change this heart, overcharged as it is with folly and misfortune, for one most prudent and most happy, if callous to a friend's distress.

Stuke. You are too warm.

Bev. In such a cause not to be warm is to be frozen. Farewell. I will meet you at your lodgings.

Stuke. Reflect a little. The jewels may be lost. Better not hazard them—I was too pressing.

Bev. And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time. I have no leisure for it. Within an hour expect me. [*Exit.*

Stuke. The thoughtless shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night, then—But hold—The jewels are not ours yet—The lady may refuse them—The husband may relent too—It is more than probable—I will write a note to Beverley, and the contents shall spur him to demand them——But am I grown this rogue through avarice? No; I have warmer motives, love and revenge—Ruin the husband, and the wife's virtue may be bid for. It is of uncertain value, and sinks or rises in the purchase, as want, or wealth, or passion governs. The poor part cheaply with it: rich dames, though pleased with selling, will have high prices for it. Your love-sick girls give it for oaths and lying. But tender wives, who boast of honour and affections, keep it against famine—Why, let famine come, then! I am in haste to purchase.

Enter BATES.

Look to your men, Bates; there's money stirring. We meet to-night upon this spot. Hasten, and

tell them so. Beverley calls upon me at my lodgings, and we return together. Hasten, I say; the rogues will scatter else.

Bates. Not till their leader bids them.

Stuke. Come on then. Give them the word, and follow me; I must advise with you——This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Your looks are changed too; there is wildness in them. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

Bev. No, no—a little rest will ease me. And for your Lewson's kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

Char. Yes; a sister and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too——

Bev. That I have lost your fortune——He dares not think so.

Char. Nor does he—You are too quick at guessing. He cares not, if you had. That care is mine—I lent it you to husband, and now I claim it.

Bev. You have suspicions, then?

Char. Cure them, and give it me.

Bev. To stop a sister's chiding?

Char. To vindicate her brother.

Bev. How if he needs no vindication?

Char. I would fain hope so.

Bev. Ay, would and cannot. Leave it to time, then; 'twill satisfy all doubts:

Char. Mine are already satisfied.

Bev. 'Tis well. And when the subject is renewed, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

Char. To tell me I am a beggar. Why, tell it now. I that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me, the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

Bev. No more of this——you wring my heart.

Char. Would that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer——Unthinking rioter! whose home was heaven to him; an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crowned his days with blessings.—How he has lost this heaven to league with devils!

Bev. Forbear, I say; reproaches come too late; they search, but cure not. And for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on it; our tempers may be milder.

Char. Or, if 'tis gone, why farewell all. I claimed it for a sister. She holds my heart in hers; and every pang she feels tears it in pieces——But I'll upbraid no more. What Heaven permits, perhaps, it may ordain; and sorrow then is sinful. Yet that the husband! father! brother! should be its instruments of vengeance! ——'Tis grievous to know that.

Bev. If you are my sister, spare the remembrance—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence I'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us.

Char. See, where she comes!——Look chearfully upon her——Affections such as hers are prying, and lend those eyes, that read the soul.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* LEWSON.

Mrs. Bev. My life!

Bev. My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

Mrs. Bev. But we meet now, and that heals all—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget them. My friend here [*pointing to* Lewson] has been indeed a friend. Charlotte, it is you must thank him: your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

Bev. Yet what we have we'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am obliged. I would say no more, but that your goodness to the wife upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespassed on your bounty.

Lew. Nor has she trespassed. The little I have done, acceptance overpays.

Char. So friendship thinks——

Mrs. Bev. And doubles obligations by striving to conceal them——We'll talk another time on it——You are too thoughtful, love.

Bev. No, I have reason for these thoughts.

Char. And hatred for the cause—Would you had that too!

Bev. I have——The cause was avarice.

Char. And who the tempter?

Bev. A ruined friend—ruined by too much kindness.

Lew. Ay, worse than ruined; stabbed in his fame, mortally stabbed—riches cannot cure him.

Bev. Or if they could, those I have drained him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning—that Lewson had suspicions of him—— Why these suspicions? [*Angrily.*

Lew. At school we knew this Stukely. A cunning, plodding, boy he was, sordid and cruel, slow at his task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schemed out mischief, that others might be punished; and would tell his tale with so much art, that for the lash he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Shew me a boy with such a mind, and time, that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too——I will prove him, and lay him open to you——Till then be warned——I know him, and therefore shun him.

Bev. As I would those, that wrong him.—You are too busy, sir.

Mrs. Bev. No, not too busy——Mistaken, perhaps——That had been milder.

Lew. No matter, madam. I can bear this,

and praise the heart that prompts it—Pity such friendship should be so placed!

Bev. Again, sir! But I'll hear too—You wrong him, Lewson, and will be sorry for it.

Char. Ay, when 'tis proved he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

Bev. And Stukely one—so you would infer, I think.——I will hear no more of this—my heart aches for him——I have undone him.

Lew. The world says otherwise.

Bev. The world is false then——I have busines with you, love. [*To Mrs. Bev.*] We'll leave them to their rancour. [*Going.*

Char. No; we shall find room within for it.—Come this way, sir. [*To Lew.*

Lew. Another time my friend will thank me; that time is hastening too.

[*Exeunt Lew. and Char.*

Bev. They hurt me beyond bearing——Is Stukely false? Then honesty has left us! 'Twere sinning against Heaven to think so.

Mrs. Bev. I never doubted him.

Bev. No; you are charity. Meekness and ever-during patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change.——Why did I ruin you?

Mrs. Bev. You have not ruined me. I have no wants, when you are present, nor wishes in your absence but to be blest with your return. Be but resigned to what has happened, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Bev. My generous girl!——But memory will be busy; still crowding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

Mrs. Bev. Tell it, and let me cure it.

Bev. That friend——that generous friend, whose fame they have traduced——I have undone him too. While he had means he lent me largely; and now a prison must be his portion.

Mrs. Bev. No; I hope otherwise.

Bev. To hope must be to act. The charitable wish feeds not the hungry——Something must be done.

Mrs. Bev. What?

Bev. In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Could I hear that, and think of happiness? No! I have disclaimed it, while he is miserable.

Mrs. Bev. The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There's comfort in that hope.

Bev. Ay; it is the sick man's cordial, his promised cure; while in preparing it the patient dies.——What now?

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. A letter, sir. [*Delivers it, and exit.*

Bev. The hand is Stukely's.

[*Opens it, and reads it to himself.*

Mrs Bev. And brings good news—at least I will hope so——What says he, love?

Bev. Why this—too much for patience. Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. [*Reads.*] 'Let your haste to see me be the only proof of 'your esteem for me. I have determined, since 'we parted, to bid adieu to England; chusing ra-'ther to forsake my country, than owe my free-'dom in it to the means we talked of. Keep this 'a secret at home, and hasten to the ruined

R. STUKELY.'

Ruined by friendship!——I must relieve or follow him.

Mrs Bev. Follow him, did you say? Then I am lost indeed!

Bev. O this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! A vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursued it! turned all my comforts to bitterest pangs, and all my smiles to tears. Damned, damned infatuation!

Mrs Bev. Be cool, my life! What are the means the letter talks of? Have you—have I those means? Tell me, and ease me. I have no life while you are wretched.

Bev. No, no: it must not be. 'Tis I alone have sinned; 'tis I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means to keep my child, and his wronged mother, from want and wretchedness.

Mrs Bev. What means?

Bev. I came to rob you of them—but cannot, dare not—Those jewels are your sole support—I should be more than monster to request them.

Mrs Bev. My jewels! Trifles, not worth the speaking of, if weighed against a husband's peace; let them but purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

Bev. Amazing goodness! How little do I seem before such virtues!

Mrs Bev. No more, my love. I kept them till occasion called to use them; now is the occasion, and I will resign them cheerfully.

Bev. Why, we will be rich in love then. But this excess of kindness melts me. Yet for a friend one would do much—He has denied me nothing.

Mrs Bev. Come to my closet—But let him manage wisely. We have no more to give him.

Bev. Where learnt my love this excellence? 'Tis Heaven's own teaching: that Heaven, which to an angel's form has given a mind more lovely. I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,
And all to come be penitence and peace;
Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY *and* BATES.

Stuke. So runs the world, Bates. Fools are the natural prey of knaves; nature designed them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws, that fear and policy have framed, nature disclaims: she knows but two, and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there's danger in it: while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Bates. And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews; cunning wants neither. The dwarf that has it shall trip the giant's heels up.

Stuke. And bind him to the ground. Why, we will erect a shrine for nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this; her laws are freedom.

Bates. Sound doctrine, and well delivered!

Stuke. We are sincere, too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much. But now to business—the jewels are disposed of, and Beverley again worth money. He waits to count his gold out, and then comes hither. If my design succeeds, this night we finish with him—go to your lodgings, and be busy—You understand conveyances, and make ruin sure.

Bates. Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talked of—there's danger in it.

Stuke. No; 'tis the mark I aim at. We will thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there's the payment. [*Giving a pocket book.*]—He thinks you rich; and so you shall be. Enquire for titles, and deal hardly; 'twill look like honesty.

Bates. How if he suspects us?

Stuke. Leave it to me. I study hearts, and when to work upon them. Go to your lodgings; and if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming and extravagance; you have a face for it.

Bates. A feeling, too, that would avoid it. We push too far; but I have cautioned you. If it ends ill, you will think of me; and so, adieu.

[*Exit.*

Stuke. This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him. I will turn these fears to use. Rogues, that dread shame, will still be greater rogues to hide their guilt—this shall be thought of. Lewson grows troublesome—we must get rid of him—he knows too much. I have a tale for Beverley; part of it truth, too—he shall call Lewson to account—if it succeeds, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means—but here he comes—I must dissemble.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Look to the door there! [*In a seeming fright.*]—My friend! I thought of other visitors.

Bev. No; these shall guard you from them—[*Offering notes.*] Take them, and use them cautiously—The world deals hardly by us.

Stuke. And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are the greatest. Another climate may treat me kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

Bev. Let these be your support, then—yet is there need of parting? I may have means again; we will share them, and live wisely.

Stuke. No: I should tempt you on. Habit is nature in me: ruin cannot cure it. Even now I would be gaming. Taught by experience as I am, and knowing this poor sum is all that is left us, I am for venturing still—and say I am to blame—yet will this little supply our wants? No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 'tis madness in me, or some restless impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but——

Bev. Take it, and succeed then. I will try no more.

Stuke. 'Tis surely impulse; it pleads so strongly—but you are cold—we will even part here, then. And for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I will have none of it. I thank you, though, and will seek fortune singly: one thing I had forgot——

Bev. What is it?

Stuke. Perhaps, 'twere best forgotten. But I am open in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend——Lewson speaks freely of you.

Bev. Of you, I know, he does.

Stuke. I can forgive him for it; but, for my friend I am angry.

Bev. What says he of me?

Stuke. That Charlotte's fortune is embezzled—he talks of it loudly.

Bev. He shall be silenced, then—how heard you of it?

Stuke. From many. He questioned Bates about it. You must account with him, he says.

Bev. Or he with me—and soon, too.

Stuke. Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

Bev. I will think on it—but whither go you?

Stuke. From poverty and prisons—no matter whither. If fortune changes, you may hear from me.

Bev. May these be prosperous, then. [*Offering the notes, which he refuses.*] Nay, they are yours—I have sworn it, and will have nothing—take them and use them.

Stuke. Singly, I will not—my cares are for my

friend; for his lost fortune and ruined family.—All separate interests I disclaim. Together we have fallen; together we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affections, all will have it so.

Bev. I am weary of being fooled.

Stuke. And so am I—here let us part, then—these bodings of good fortune shall all be stifled; call them folly, and forget them—this one embrace, and then farewell. [*Offering to embrace.*

Bev. No; stay a moment—how my poor heart's distracted! I have these bodings too; but whether caught from you, or prompted by my good or evil genius, I know not—the trial shall determine—and yet, my wife.

Stuke. Ay, ay, she will chide.

Bev. No; my chidings are all here.

[*Pointing to his heart.*

Stuke. I will not persuade you.

Bev. I am persuaded; by reason too; the strongest reason—necessity. Oh, could I but regain the height I have fallen from! Heaven should forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mixed in these scenes, or sacrificed the husband's peace, his joy and best affections, to avarice and infamy.

Stuke. I have resolved like you; and since our motives are so honest, why should we fear success?

Bev. Come on, then—where shall we meet?

Stuke. At Wilson's—yet if it hurts you, leave me: I have misled you often.

Bev. We have misled each other—but come! Fortune is fickle, and may be tired with plaguing us—there let us rest our hopes.

Stuke. Yet think a little——

Bev. I cannot—thinking but distracts me.
When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain;
Reason would lose what rashness may obtain.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* Beverley's *Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs Beverley *and* Charlotte.

Char. 'Twas all a scheme, a mean one; unworthy of my brother.

Mrs Bev. No; I am sure it was not—Stukely is honest too; I know he is—this madness has undone them both.

Char. My brother's irrecoverable—you are too spiritless a wife—a mournful tale, mixed with a few kind words, will steal away your soul. The world's too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he should have asked your life sooner than those jewels.

Mrs Bev. He should have had it then. [*Warmly.*] I live but to oblige him. She, who can love, and is beloved like me, will do as much.—Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder: and shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

Char. And come too late; they might have saved you else. How could he use you so?

Mrs Bev. 'Twas friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

Char. The friend that has betrayed him.

Mrs Bev. Pr'ythee do not think so.

Char. To-morrow he accounts with me.

Mrs Bev. And fairly—I will not doubt it.

Char. Unless a friend has wanted—I have no patience—Sister! sister! we are bound to curse this friend!

Mrs. Bev. My Beverley speaks nobly of him.

Char. And Lewson truly—But I displease you with this talk.——To-morrow will instruct us.

Mrs. Bev. Stay till it comes then—I would not think so hardly.

Char. Nor I, but from conviction—Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly—Or, if he lives, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, and am cheerful. We have no more to lose; and for what's gone, if it brings prudence home, the purchase was well made.

Char. My Lewson will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us—And see, he's here.

Enter Lewson.

We were just speaking of you.

Lew. 'Tis best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and where the bad outweighs the good, he is safest that is least talked of. What say you, madam?

[*To Charlotte.*

Char. That I hate scandal, though a woman—therefore talk seldom of you.

Mrs. Bev. Or, with more truth, that though a woman, she loves to praise——therefore talks always of you. I'll leave you to decide it. [*Exit.*

Lew. How good and amiable! I came to talk in private with you; of matters that concern you.

Char. What matters?

Lew. First answer me sincerely to what I ask.

Char. I will——But you alarm me.

Lew. I am too grave, perhaps; but be assured of this, I have no news that troubles me, and therefore should not you.

Char. I am easy, then—propose your question.

Lew. It is now a tedious twelvemonth, since, with an open and kind heart, you said you loved me.

Char. So tedious, did you say?

Lew. And when, in consequence of such sweet words, I pressed for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise, that you would live for me.

Char. You think me changed, then? [*Angrily.*

Lew. I did not say so. A thousand times I have pressed for the performance of this promise: but private cares, a brother's and a sister's ruin, were reasons for delaying it.

Char. I had no other reasons.—Where will this end?

Lew. It shall end presently.

Char. Go on, sir.

Lew. A promise, such as this, given freely, not extorted, the world thinks binding; but I think otherwise.

Char. And would release me from it?

Lew. You are too impatient, madam.

Char. Cool, sir—quite cool—Pray go on.

Lew. Time, and a near acquaintance with my faults, may have brought change—if it be so, or for a moment, if you have wished this promise were unmade, here I acquit you of it——This is my question, then; and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer. Have you repented of this promise?

Char. Stay, sir. The man, that can suspect me, shall find me changed——Why am I doubted?

Lew. My doubts are of myself. I have my faults, and you have observation. If from my temper, my words, or actions, you have conceived a thought against me, or even a wish for separation, all that has passed is nothing.

Char. You startle me—But tell me—I must be answered first. Is it from honour you speak this? Or do you wish me changed?

Lew. Heaven knows I do not. Life and my Charlotte are so connected, that to lose one, were loss of both. Yet for a promise, though given in love, and meant for binding; if time or accident, or reason should change opinion—with me that promise has no force.

Char. Why, now I'll answer you. Your doubts are prophecies——I am really changed.

Lew. Indeed!

Char. I could torment you now, as you have me; but it is not in my nature. That I am changed, I own: for what at first was inclination is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world—nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me to——I would be yours, and happy.

Lew. My kindest Charlotte! [*Taking her hand.*] Thanks are too poor for this—and words too weak! But if we love so, why should our union be delayed?

Char. For happier times. The present are too wretched.

Lew. I may have reasons, that press it now.

Char. What reasons?

Lew. The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

Char. Be quick and name them.

Lew. No, madam; I am bound in honour to make conditions first——I am bound by inclination too. This sweet profusion of kind words pains, while it pleases. I dread the losing you.

Char. Astonishment! what mean you?

Lew. First promise, that to-morrow, or the next day, you will be mine for ever.

Char. I do—though misery should succeed.

Lew. Thus, then, I seize you! And with you every joy on this side Heaven!

Char. And thus I seal my promise. [*Embracing him.*] Now, sir, your secret.

Lew. Your fortune's lost.

Char. My fortune's lost! I'll study to be humble, then. But was my promise claimed for this? How nobly generous! Where learned you this sad news?

Lew. From Bates, Stukely's prime agent. I have obliged him, and he's grateful—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my Charlotte.

Char. 'Twas honest in him, and I'll esteem him for it.

Lew. He knows much more than he has told.

Char. For me it is enough. And for your generous love, I thank you from my soul. If you would oblige me more, give me a little time.

Lew. Why time? It robs us of our happiness.

Char. I have a task to learn first. The little pride this fortune gave me must be subdued.—Once we were equal; and might have met obliging and obliged. But now it is otherwise; and for a life of obligations, I have not learned to bear it.

Lew. Mine is that life. You are too noble.

Char. Leave me to think on it.

Lew. To-morrow, then, you will fix my happiness?

Char. All that I can, I will.

Lew. It must be so; we live but for each other. Keep what you know a secret; and when we meet to-morrow, more may be known. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Char. My poor, poor sister! how would this wound her! But I will conceal it, and speak comfort to her. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a room in a gaming house.*

Enter BEVERLEY *and* STUKELY.

Bev. Whither would you lead me? [*Distractedly.*

Stuke. Where we may vent our curses.

Bev. Ay, on yourself, and those damned counsels, that have destroyed me. A thousand fiends were in that bosom, and let all loose to tempt me—I had resisted else.

Stuke. Go on, sir—I have deserved this from you.

Bev. And curses everlasting—Time is too scanty for them—

Stuke. What have I done?

Bev. What the arch-devil of old did—sobbed with false hopes for certain ruin.

Stuke. Myself unhurt; nay, pleased at your destruction—So your words mean. Why, tell it to the world. I am too poor to find a friend in it.

Bev. A friend! What's he? I had a friend.

Stuke. And have one still.

Bev. Ay; I'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy. Fortune and honour crowned me; and love and peace lived in my heart. One spark of folly lurked there;—that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew into flames, that have consumed me. This friend were you to me.

Stuke. A little more, perhaps—The friend, who gave his all to save you; and, not succeeding, chose ruin with you. But no matter, I have undone you, and am a villain.

Bev. No; I think not——The villains are within.

Stuke. What villains?

Bev. Dawson and the rest—We have been dupes to sharpers.

Stuke. How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still as fortune changed I blushed at my own thoughts. But you have proof, perhaps.

Bev. Ay, damned ones. Repeated losses—Night after night, and no reverse—Chance has no hand in this.

Stuke. I think more charitably; yet I am peevish in my nature, and apt to doubt—The world speaks fairly of this Dawson, so it does of the rest. We have watched them closely too. But 'tis a right usurped by losers, to think the winners knaves—We will have more manhood in us.

Bev. I know not what to think. This night has stung me to the quick—Blasted my reputation too—I have bound my honour to these vipers; played meanly upon credit, 'till I tired them; and now they shun me to rifle one another. What is to be done?

Stuke. Nothing. My counsels have been fatal.

Bev. By Heaven I'll not survive this shame—Traitor! 'tis you have brought it on me. [*Taking hold of him.*] Shew me the means to save me, or I'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself!

Stuke. Why do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

Bev. Prithee forgive this language—I speak I know not what—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I'll not return to it. Speak quickly; tell me, if, in this wreck of fortune, one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

Stuke. To vent your curses on—You have bestowed them liberally. Take your own counsel; and should a desperate hope present itself, it will suit your desperate fortune. I'll not advise you.

Bev. What hope? By heaven I'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

Stuke. You have an uncle.

Bev. Ay, what of him?

Stuke. Old men live long by temperance;—while their heirs starve on expectation.

Bev. What mean you?

Stuke. That the reversion of his estate is yours, and will bring money to pay debts with; Nay more, it may retrieve what's past.

Bev. Or leave my child a beggar.

Stuke. And what is his father! a dishonourable one; engaged for sums he cannot pay—That should be thought of.

Bev. It is my shame—the poison, that inflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I am impatient till all is lost.

Stuke. All may be yours again—Your man is Bates—He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

Bev. I am resolved—Tell them within we will meet them presently; and with full purses, too——Come, follow me.

Stuke. No. I have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it—Use your discretion, and act from that. You will find me at my lodgings.

Bev. Succeed what will, this night I'll dare the worst;
'Tis loss of fear to be completely cursed.
[*Exit.*

Stuke. Why, lose it then for ever.——Fear is the mind's worst evil; and 'tis a friendly office to drive it from the bosom. Thus far has fortune crowned me—Yet Beverley is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure—her honour and affections. I would supplant him there too. But it is the curse of thinking minds to raise up difficulties. Fools only conquer women. Fearless of dangers, which they see not, they press on boldly, and, by persisting, prosper. Yet may a tale of art do much—Charlotte is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen them, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wronged in love, or thinking that she's wronged, becomes a tygress in revenge.—I'll instantly to Beverley's—No matter for danger.—When beauty leads us on, it is indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs BEVERLEY *and* LUCY.

Mrs Bev. Did Charlotte tell you any thing?

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs Bev. She looked confused, methought; said she had business with her Lewson; which, when I pressed to know, tears only were her answer.

Lucy. She seemed in haste, too—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

Mrs Bev. No, my kind girl; I was not born for it. But why do I distress thee? Thy sympathizing heart bleeds for the ills of others.—What pity, that thy mistress cannot reward thee! But there is a Power above, that sees, and will remember, all. [*Knocking.*] Prithee soothe me with the song thou sung'st last night. It suits

this change of fortune; and there is a melancholy in it that pleases me.

Lucy. I fear it hurts you, madam. Your goodness, too, draws tears from me. But I will dry them, and obey you.

SONG.

When Damon languished at my feet,
And I believed him true,
The moments of delight how sweet!
But, ah! how swift they flew!
The sunny hill, the flowery vale,
The garden and the grove,
Have echoed to his ardent tale,
And vows of endless love.

The conquest gained, he left his prize,
He left her to complain,
To talk of joy with weeping eyes,
And measure time by pain.
But Heaven will take the mourner's part,
In pity to despair;
And the last sigh, that rends the heart,
Shall waft the spirit there.

Mrs Bev. I thank thee, Lucy; I thank Heaven too, my griefs are none of these. Yet Stukely deals in hints; he talks of rumours; I will urge him to speak plainly.——Hark! there is some one entering.

Lucy. Perhaps it is my master, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs Bev. Let him be well too, and I am satisfied. [*Goes to the door and listens.*] No, it is another's voice; his had been music to me. Who is it, Lucy?

Re-enter LUCY *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wished. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants them, need no excuse; therefore I make none.

Mrs Bev. What mean you, sir? And where is your friend?

Stuke. Men may have secrets, madam, which their best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

Mrs Bev. You mean to leave us then; to leave your country too? I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

Stuke. Your pity has undone you. Could Beverley do this? That letter was a false one; a mean contrivance to rob you of your jewels.—I wrote it not.

Mrs Bev. Impossible! Whence came it then?

Stuke. Wronged as I am, madam, I must speak plainly.

Mrs Bev. Do so, and ease me. Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring—Reports of whom? You wished me not to credit them. What, sir, are these reports?

Stuke. I thought them slander, madam; and cautioned you in friendship, lest, from officious tongues, the tale had reached you with double aggravation.

Mrs Bev. Proceed, sir.

Stuke. It is a debt due to my fame; due to an injured wife too—We are both injured.

Mrs Bev. How injured? And who has injured us?

Stuke. My friend, your husband.

Mrs Bev. You would resent for both, then—But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

Stuke. Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance. You thought me poor; and to the feigned distresses of a friend gave up your jewels.

Mrs Bev. I gave them to a husband.

Stuke. Who gave them to a————

Mrs Bev. What, whom did he give them to?

Stuke. A mistress.

Mrs Bev. No, on my life he did not.

Stuke. Himself confessed it, with curses on her avarice.

Mrs Bev. I will not believe it—He has no mistress; or if he has, why is it told to me?

Stuke. To guard you against insults. He told me, that, to move you to compliance, he forged that letter, pretending I was ruined, ruined by him too. The fraud succeeded: and what a trusting wife bestowed in pity, was lavished on a wanton!

Mrs Bev. Then I am lost indeed! and my afflictions are too powerful for me. His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear.——My affections, my strong affections, supported me through every trial.

Stuke. Be patient, madam.

Mrs Bev. Patient! the barbarous, ungrateful man! And does he think, that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it? But he shall find, that injuries such as these, can arm my weakness for vengeance and redress.

Stuke. Ha! then I may succeed. [*Aside.*] Redress is in your power.

Mrs Bev. What redress?

Stuke. Forgive me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure. Think of your wretched state. Already want surrounds you. Is it in patience to bear that? To see your helpless little one robbed of his birth-right? A sister, too, with unavailing tears, lamenting her lost fortune? No comfort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, outweighed by insults from the many?

Mrs Bev. Am I so lost a creature?——Well, sir, my redress?

Stuke. To be resolved is to secure it. The marriage vow, once violated, is, in the sight of Heaven, dissolved.—Start not, but hear me. 'Tis now the summer of your youth; time has not cropt the roses from your cheek, though sorrow

long has washed them. Then use your beauty wisely, and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men for shelter with the kindest!

Mrs Bev. And who is he?

Stuke. A friend to the unfortunate; a bold one too, who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you, that he loves you.

Mrs Bev. Would that these eyes had Heaven's own lightning, that, with a look, thus I might blast thee! Am I then fallen so low? Has poverty so humbled me, that I should listen to a hellish offer, and sell my soul for bread? Oh, villain, villain!——But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

Stuke. If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

Mrs Bev. An injured husband, too, shall thank thee.

Stuke. Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn as your own: as haughty and imperious; and as it loves, so can it hate.

Mrs. Bev. Mean, despicable villain! I scorn thee and thy threats. Was it for this, that Beverley was false? that his too credulous wife should, in despair and vengeance, give up her honour to a wretch? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

Stuke. Why send him for defiance then. Tell him I love his wife; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I will make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, coward, coward! thy soul will shrink at him. Yet, in the thought of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears. Keep thy own secret, and begone. Who's there?

Enter Lucy.

Your absence, sir, would please me.

Stuke. I will not offend you, madam.

[*Exit Stukely with Lucy.*

Mrs. Bev. Why opens not the earth to swallow such a monster? Be conscience, then, his punisher, till Heaven, in mercy, gives him penitence, or dooms him in his justice.

Re-enter Lucy.

Come to my chamber, Lucy; I have a tale to tell thee, shall make thee weep for thy poor mistress.

Yet heaven the guiltless sufferer regards;
And whom it most afflicts it most rewards.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Beverley's *lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley, Charlotte, and Lewson.

Char. The smooth-tongued hypocrite!

Lew. But we have found him, and will requite him——Be cheerful, madam; [*To Mrs. Bev.*] and for the insults of this ruffian you shall have ample retribution.

Mrs. Bev. But not by violence—Remember, you have sworn it; I had been silent else.

Lew. You need not doubt me; I shall be cool as patience.

Mrs. Bev. See him to-morrow then.

Lew. And why not now? By Heaven, the veriest worm that crawls is made of braver spirit than this Stukely——Yet, for my promise, I will deal gently with him—I mean to watch his looks—From those, and from his answers to my charge, much may be learnt. Next I will to Bates, and sift him to the bottom: if I fail there, the gang is numerous, and for a bribe will each betray the other——Good night; I will lose no time. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. These boisterous spirits, how they wound me! But reasoning is in vain. Come, Charlotte, we will to our usual watch. The night grows late.

Char. I am fearful of events; yet pleased—To-morrow may relieve us. [*Going.*

Enter Jarvis.

How now, good Jarvis?

Jar. I have heard ill news, madam.

Mrs. Bev. What news? Speak quickly.

Jar. Men are not what they seem. I fear me Mr. Stukely is dishonest.

Char. We know it, Jarvis. But what's your news?

Jar. That there's an action against my master, at his friend's suit.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, villain, villain! 'twas this he threatened, then! Run to that den of robbers, Wilson's—Your master may be there. Entreat him home, good Jarvis. Say I have business with him—But tell him not of Stukely—It may provoke him to revenge——Haste, haste, good Jarvis. [*Exit Jarvis.*

Char. This minister of hell! Oh, I could tear him piece-meal!——

Mrs. Bev. I am sick of such a world——Yet Heaven is just; and, in its own good time, will hurl destruction on such monsters. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* Stukely's *lodgings.*

Enter Stukely *and* Bates *meeting.*

Bates. Where have you been?

Stuke. Fooling my time away; playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman.

—No matter where——I have been vexed and disappointed. Tell me of Beverley; how bore he his last shock?

Bates. Like one (so Dawson says) whose senses had been numb'd with misery. When all was lost, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid and motionless; then snatching his sword, that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down, and, with a look of fixed attention, drew figures on the floor. At last, he started up, looked wild, and trembled; and, like a woman seized with her sex's fits, laughed out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face—so left the room.

Stuke. Why, this was madness.

Bates. The madness of despair.

Stuke. We must confine him then. A prison would do well. [*A knocking at the door.*] Hark! that knocking may be his. Go that way down. [*Exit Bates.*]—Who's there?

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. An enemy—an open and avowed one.

Stuke. Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is mine, sir; and should protect me from insult and ill-manners.

Lew. Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found, it is virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold and tyger's den are no security against the hunter.

Stuke. Your business, sir?

Lew. To tell you, that I know you——Why this confusion? That look of guilt and terror? Is Beverley awake; or has his wife told tales? The man, that dares like you, should have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers: not, with a coward's fear, to shrink beneath reproof.

Stuke. Who waits there?

[*Aloud, and in confusion.*

Lew. By Heaven, he dies that interrupts us. [*Shutting the door.*] You should have weighed your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had marked you for what you are, a little paltry villain.

Stuke. You think I fear you.

Lew. I know you fear me. This is to prove it. [*Pulls him by the sleeve.*] You wanted privacy—A lady's presence took up your attention—Now we are alone, sir. Why, what a wretch! [*Flings him from him.*] The vilest insect in creation will turn, when trampled on; yet has this thing undone a man—by cunning and mean arts undone him. But we have found you, sir; traced you through all your labyrinths. If you would save yourself, fall to confession: no mercy will be shewn else.

Stuke. First prove me what you think me—till then, your threatenings are in vain——And for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

Lew. Infamous coward! why, take it now then—[*Draws, and Stukely retires.*] Alas, I pity thee!——Yet that a wretch like this should overcome a Beverley! It fills me with astonishment!——A wretch, so mean of soul, that even desperation cannot animate him to look upon an enemy. You should not have thus soared, sir, unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword to keep the fools in awe, your villainy had ruined.

Stuke. Villainy! It were best to curb this licence of your tongue; for know, sir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

Lew. Laws! Darest thou seek shelter from the laws, those laws, which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talkest thou of reputation too, when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betrayed, robbed, and destroyed?

Stuke. Ay, rail at gaming; it is a rich topic, and affords noble declamation——Go, preach against it in the city: you will find a congregation in every tavern. If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonize it there: he will thank you, and reform.

Lew. And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the cit, that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the gamester's calling reputable.

Stuke. Rail on, I say——But is this zeal for beggared Beverley? Is it for him, that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groaned in prison, had but the sister's fortune escaped the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr Lewson.

Lew. How I detest thee for the thought! But thou art lost to every human feeling. Yet let me tell thee, and may it wring thy heart, that though my friend is ruined by thy snares, thou hast, unknowingly, been kind to me.

Stuke. Have I? It was, indeed, unknowingly.

Lew. Thou hast assisted me in love; given me the merit, that I wanted; since, but for thee, my Charlotte had not known it was her dear self I sighed for, and not her fortune.

Stuke. Thank me, and take her then.

Lew. And, as a brother to poor Beverley, I will pursue the robber, that has stripped him; and snatch him from his gripe.

Stuke. Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and should my friendship for him be slandered once again, the hand, that has supplied him, shall fall and crush him.

Lew. Why, now there is a spirit in thee! This is indeed to be a villain! But I shall reach thee yet—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee—And Beverley shall yet be saved; be saved from thee, thou monster! nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour. [*Exit.*

Stuke. [*Pausing.*] Then ruin has enclosed me. Curse on my coward heart! I would be bravely villanous; but it is my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings cau-

tion, and that security——More mischief must be done to hide the past——Look to yourself, officious Lewson—there may be danger stirring——How now, Bates?

Enter Bates.

Bates. What is the matter? It was Lewson, and not Beverley, that left you—I heard him loud—You seem alarmed too.

Stuke. Ay, and with reason——We are discovered.

Bates. I feared as much; and therefore cautioned you. But you were peremptory.

Stuke. Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active. Beverley, at worst, is but suspicious; but Lewson's genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

Bates. What means?

Stuke. Dispatch him——Nay, start not——Desperate occasions call for desperate deeds——We live but by his death.

Bates. You cannot mean it?

Stuke. I do, by Heaven.

Bates. Good night, then. [*Going.*

Stuke. Stay. I must be heard, then answered. Perhaps the motion was too sudden; and human weakness starts at murder, though strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this; and my first feelings were like yours; a foolish conscience awed me, which I soon conquered. The man, that would undo me, Nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? Lewson pursues us to our ruin; and shall we, with the means to crush him, fly from our hunter, or turn and tear him? It is folly even to hesitate.

Bates. He has obliged me, and I dare not.

Stuke. Why, live to shame then, to beggary and punishment. You would be privy to the deed, yet want the soul to act it. Nay, more, had my designs been levelled at his fortune, you had stepped in the foremost——And what is life without its comforts? Those you would rob him of, and, by a lingering death, add cruelty to murder. Henceforth, adieu to half-made villains—There is danger in them. What you have got is yours; keep it, and hide with it——I will deal my future bounty to those that merit it.

Bates. What is the reward?

Stuke. Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

Bates. Think of the means then.

Stuke. He is gone to Beverley's——Wait for him in the street—It is a dark night, and fit for mischief. A dagger would be useful.

Bates. He sleeps no more

Stuke. Consider the reward. When the deed is done, I have farther business with you. Send Dawson to me.

Bates. Think it already done—and so, farewell. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Why, farewell Lewson, then; and farewell to my fears. This night secures me. I will wait the event within. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the street. Stage darkened.*

Enter Beverley.

Bev. How like an out-cast do I wander? Loaded with every curse, that drives the soul to desperation—The midnight robber, as he walks his rounds, sees, by the glimmering lamp, my frantic looks, and dreads to meet me. Whither am I going? My home lies there; all that is dear on earth it holds too; yet are the gates of death more welcome to me—I will enter it no more—Who passes there? It is Lewson—He meets me in a gloomy hour; and memory tells me he has been meddling with my fame.

Enter Lewson.

Lew. Beverley! Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

Bev. So I have heard, sir; and now must thank you as I ought.

Lew. To-morrow I may deserve your thanks. Late as it is, I go to Bates. Discoveries are making that an arch-villain trembles at.

Bev. Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit, this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say I have wronged my sister——Now say as much. But first be ready for defence, as I am for resentment. [*Draws.*

Lew. What mean you? I understand you not.

Bev. The coward's stale acquaintance! who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out, 'What mean you? I understand you not.'

Lew. Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive, and pity you.

Bev. Your pity had been kinder to my fame. But you have traduced it; told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wronged my sister.

Lew. 'Tis false. Shew me the man, that dares accuse me.

Bev. I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

Lew. Nor shall it be for violence. Imprudent man! who, in revenge for fancied injuries, would pierce the heart that loves him. But honest friendship acts from itself, unmoved by slander or ingratitude. The life you thirst for shall be employed to serve you.

Bev. 'Tis thus you would compound then——First, do a wrong beyond forgiveness, and, to redress it, load me with kindnesses unsolicited.—I'll not receive it. Your zeal is troublesome.

Lew. No matter. It shall be useful.

Bev. It will not be accepted.

Lew. It must. You know me not.

Bev. Yes, for the slanderer of my fame; who, under shew of friendship, arraigns me of injustice; buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

Lew. Have I done this? Who told you so?

Bev. The world—'Tis talked of every where. It pleased you to add threats too. You were to call me to account—Why, do it now, then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

Lew. Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injured you. The base suggestion comes from Stukely: I see him and his aims.

Bev. What aims? I'll not conceal it; 'twas Stukely that accused you.

Lew. To rid him of an enemy—Perhaps of two—He fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

Bev. I must have proof of this.

Lew. Wait till to-morrow, then.

Bev. I will.

Lew. Good-night——I go to serve you—Forget what is past, as I do; and cheer your family with smiles. To-morrow may confirm them, and make all happy. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Pausing.*] How vile, and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride, which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than the world's just reproofs. But 'tis the fashion of the times; and in defence of falsehood and false honour men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad.

[*Stands musing.*

Enter BATES, *and* JARVIS.

Jar. This way the noise was; and yonder's my poor master.

Bates. I heard him at high words with Lewson. The cause I know not.

Jar. I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

Bates. Go to him, and lead him home. But he comes this way——I will not be seen by him. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Starting.*] What fellow's that? [*Seeing Jarvis.*] Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way; I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too—Jarvis!—To bed, old man; the cold will chill thee.

Jar. Why are you wandering at this late hour? Your sword drawn too? For Heaven's sake, sheath it, sir—The sight distracts me.

Bev. Whose voice was that? [*Wildly.*]

Jar. 'Twas mine, sir. Let me intreat you to give the sword to me.

Bev. Ay, take it—quickly take it—Perhaps I am not so cursed, but Heaven may have sent thee at this moment to snatch me from perdition.

Jar. Then I am blessed.

Bev. Continue so, and leave me: my sorrows are contagious. No one is blessed that is near me.

Jar. I came to seek you, sir.

Bev. And now thou hast found me, leave me. My thoughts are wild, and will not be disturbed.

Jar. Such thoughts are best disturbed.

Bev. I tell thee that they will not. Who sent thee hither?

Jar. My weeping mistress.

Bev. Am I so meek a husband, then, that a commanding wife prescribes my hours, and sends to chide me for my absence!——Tell her I'll not return.

Jar. Those words would kill her.

Bev. Kill her! Would they not be kind, then? But she shall live to curse me—I have deserved it of her. Does she not hate me, Jarvis?

Jar. Alas, sir, forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her! The streets are dangerous.

Bev. Be wise, and leave me then. The night's black horrors are suited to my thoughts——These stones shall be my resting-place. [*Lies down.*] Here shall my soul brood o'er its miseries, till, with the fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and tremble at the morning's light.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir—Upon my knees, I beg you to quit this place, and these sad thoughts. Let patience, not despair, possess you—Rise, I beseech you———There is not a moment of your absence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

Bev. Have I undone her, and is she still so kind? [*Starting up.*] It is too much—My brain cannot hold it—Oh, Jarvis, how desperate is that wretch's state, which only death or madness can relieve!

Jar. Appease his mind, good Heaven, and give him resignation! Alas, sir, could beings in the other world perceive the events of this, how would your parents' blessed spirits grieve for you even in Heaven! Let me conjure you, by their honoured memories; by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child, and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs.

Bev. Thou virtuous, good old man! thy tears and thy entreaties have reached my heart, through all its miseries.

Jar. Be but resigned, sir, and happiness may yet be yours.

Bev. Prithee be honest, and do not flatter misery.

Jar. I do not, sir. Hark! I hear voices—Come this way; we may reach home unnoticed.

Bev. Well, lead me then.—Unnoticed, didst thou say? Alas, I dread no looks but of those wretches I have made at home! O, had I listened to thy honest warnings, no earthly blessing had been wanting to me! I was so happy, that even a wish for more than I possessed, was arrogant presumption. But I have warred against the

power, that blessed me; and now am forced to the hell I merit. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* STUKELY'S *lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY *and* DAWSON.

Stuke. Come hither, Dawson. My limbs are on the rack, and my soul shivers in me, till this night's business be complete. Tell me thy thoughts; is Bates determined, or does he waver?

Daw. At first he seemed irresolute; wished the employment had been mine; and muttered curses on his coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

Stuke. And did he leave you so?

Daw. No; we walked together, and, sheltered by the darkness, saw Beverley and Lewson in warm debate. But soon they cooled, and then I left them to hasten hither; but not till it was resolved Lewson should die.

Stuke. Thy words have given me life. That quarrel, too, was fortunate; for, if my hopes deceive me not, it promises a grave to Beverley.

Daw. You misconceive me. Lewson and he were friends.

Stuke. But my prolific brain shall make them enemies. If Lewson falls, he falls by Beverley. An upright jury shall decree it. Ask me no questions; but do as I direct. This writ, [*Takes out a pocket-book.*] for some days past, I have treasured here till a convenient time called for its use. That time is come. Take it, and give it to an officer. It must be served this instant.

[*Gives a paper.*

Daw. On Beverley!

Stuke. Look at it. It is for the sums that I have lent him.

Daw. Must he to prison, then?

Stuke. I asked obedience, not replies. This night a jail must be his lodgings. It is probable he is not gone home yet. Wait at his door, and see it executed.

Daw. Upon a beggar?——He has no means of payment.

Stuke. Dull and insensible!—If Lewson dies, who was it killed him?——Why, he that was seen quarrelling with him: and I, that knew of Beverley's intents, arrested him in friendship—A little late, perhaps; but 'twas a virtuous act, and men will thank me for it. Now, sir, you understand me?

Daw. Most perfectly; and will about it.

Stuke. Haste, then; and when it is done, come back and tell me.

Daw. Till then, farewell. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Now, tell thy tale, fond wife! And, Lewson, if again thou canst insult me, I will kneel, and own thee for my master.

Not avarice now, but vengeance fires my breast.
And one short hour must make me cursed or blessed. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter STUKELY, BATES, *and* DAWSON.

Bates. Poor Lewson!—But I told you enough last night. The thought of him is horrible to me.

Stuke. In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

Bates. By his own door; he was leading me to his house. I pretended business with him, and stabbed him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

Stuke. And did he fall so suddenly?

Bates. The repetition pleases you, I see. I told you he fell without a groan.

Stuke. What heard you of him this morning?

Bates. That the watch found him in their rounds, and alarmed the servants. I mingled with the crowd just now, and saw him dead in his own house——The sight terrified me.

Stuke. Away with terrors, till his ghost rise and accuse us. We have no living enemy to fear, unless it is Beverley; and him we have lodged safe in prison.

Bates. Must he be murdered too?

Stuke. No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer. At what hour did Lewson fall?

Bates. The clock struck twelve as I turned to leave him. 'Twas a melancholy bell, I thought, tolling for his death.

Stuke. The time was lucky for us——Beverley was arrested at one, you say? [*To Dawson.*

Daw. Exactly.

Stuke. Good. We'll talk of this presently. The women were with him, I think?

Daw. And old Jarvis. I would have told you of them last night, but your thoughts were too busy.—It is well you have a heart of stone; the tale would melt it else.

Stuke. Out with it, then.

Daw. I traced him to his lodgings; and, pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seized him. 'Twas a damned deed—but no matter——I followed my instructions.

Stuke. And what said he?

Daw. He upbraided me with treachery, called you a villain, acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

Stuke. And the women——

Daw. For a few minutes astonishment kept them silent. They looked wildly at one another, while the tears streamed down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave them words; and

then, in the very bitterness of despair, they cursed me, and the monster that had employed me.

Stuke. And you bore it with philosophy?

Daw. 'Till the scene changed, and then I melted. I ordered the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shrieked, and would have followed him; but we forbade them. It was then they fell upon their knees, the wife fainted, the sister raving, and both, with all the eloquence of misery, endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion till that moment; and had the officers been moved like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves. But their hearts were steeled by custom. The tears of beauty, and the pangs of affection, were beneath their pity. They tore him from their arms, and lodged him in prison, with only Jarvis to comfort him.

Stuke. There let him lie, till we have farther business with him. And for you, sir, let me hear no more of your compassion——A fellow, nursed in villany, and employed from childhood in the business of hell, should have no dealings with compassion.

Daw. Say you so, sir?—You should have named the devil that tempted me——

Stuke. It is false. I found you a villain, and therefore employed you:—But no more of this; we have embarked too far in mischief to recede. Lewson is dead, and we are all principals in his murder. Think of that.—There is time enough for pity, when ourselves are out of danger. Beverley still lives, though in a gaol. His ruin will sit heavy on him; and discoveries may be made to undo us all. Something must be done, and speedily. You saw him quarrelling with Lewson in the street last night? [*To Bates.*

Bates. I did; his steward, Jarvis, saw him too.

Stuke. And shall attest it. Here is matter to work upon. An unwilling evidence carries weight with him. Something of my design I have hinted to you before. Beverley must be the author of this murder; and we the parties to convict him.—But how to proceed will require time and thought. Come along with me; the room within is fitted for privacy.—But no compassion, sir [*To Dawson.*]—We want leisure for it.——This way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* BEVERLEY'S *lodgings.*

Enter Mrs BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. No news of Lewson yet?

Char. None. He went out early, and knows not what has happened.

Mrs Bev. The clock strikes eight——I will wait no longer.

Char. Stay but till Jarvis comes. He has sent twice to stop us till we see him.

Mrs Bev. I have no life in this separation—Oh, what a night was last night! I would not pass another such to purchase worlds by it—My poor Bewerley too! What must he have felt?—The very thought distracts me—To have him torn at midnight from me! A loathsome prison his habitation! A cold damp room his lodging! The bleak winds, perhaps, blowing upon his pillow! No fond wife to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him! 'Tis too horrible—I wanted love for him, or they had not forced him from me.——They should have parted soul and body first—I was too tame.

Char. You must not talk so.——All that we could we did; and Jarvis did the rest—The faithful creature will give him comfort. Why does he delay coming?

Mrs Bev. And there is another fear. His poor master may be claiming the last kind office from him—His heart, perhaps, is breaking.

Char. See, where he comes—His looks are cheerful too.

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs Bev. Are tears, then, cheerful? Alas, he weeps! Speak to him, Charlotte——I have no tongue to ask him questions.

Char. How does your master, Jarvis?

Jar. I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words.—But do not you weep [*To Mrs Bev.*]; I have a tale of joy for you.

Mrs Bev. What tale?—Say but he is well, and I ave joy enough.

Jar. His mind, too, shall be well—all shall be well—I have news for him, that will make his poor heart bound again.——Fie upon old age—How childish it makes me! I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

Char. Shed them in showers, then, and make haste to tell it.

Mrs Bev. What is it, Jarvis?

Jar. Yet why should I rejoice, when a good man dies? Your uncle, madam, died yesterday.

Mrs Bev. My uncle!——Oh, Heavens!

Char. How heard you of his death?

Jar. His steward came express, madam—I met him in the street, enquiring for your lodgings.—I should not rejoice, perhaps; but he was old, and my poor master a prisoner. Now he shall live again. Oh, it is a brave fortune!—and it was death to me to see him a prisoner.

Char. Where left you the steward?

Jar. I would not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses; and besides, I wanted, once before I die, to be the messenger of joy to you. My good master will be a man again!

Mrs Bev. Haste, haste then; and let us fly to him! We are delaying our own happiness.

Jar. I had forgot a coach, madam, and Lucy has ordered one.

Mrs Bev. Where was the need of that? The news has given me wings.

Char. I have no joy, till my poor brother share it with me. How did he pass the night, Jarvis?

Jar. Why now, madam, I can tell you. Like a man dreaming of death and horrors. When they led him to his cell—for it was a poor apartment for my master—he flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless till day-break. A sigh, now and then, and a few tears, that followed these sighs, were all that told me he was alive. I spoke to him, but he would not hear me; and when I persisted, he raised his hand at me, and knit his brow so—I thought he would have struck me.

Mrs Bev. Oh, miserable!—but what said he, Jarvis? Or was he silent all night?

Jar. At day-break he started from the bed, and, looking wildly at me, asked who I was. I told him, and bid him be of comfort.—Begone, old wretch, says he—I have sworn never to know comfort.——My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone them all, and will know no comfort. Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself!

Mrs Bev. This is too horrible!—But you did not leave him so?

Char. No, I am sure he did not.

Jar. I had not the heart, madam. By degrees I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and he called me his kindest friend, and begged forgiveness of me like a child. My heart throbbed so, I could not speak to him. He turned from me for a minute or two, and, suppressing a few bitter sighs, enquired after his wretched family.—Wretched was his word, madam—Asked how you bore the misery of last night—If you had the goodness to see him in prison: and then begged me to hasten to you. I told him he must be more himself first.—He promised me he would; and, bating a few sudden intervals, he became composed and easy—And then I left him; but not without an attendant—a servant in the prison, whom I hired to wait upon him.—It is an hour since we parted.——I was prevented, in my haste, to be the messenger of joy to you.

Mrs Bev. What a tale is this? But we have staid too long—a coach is needless.

Char. Hark! I hear one at the door.

Jar. And Lucy comes to tell us——we will away this moment.

Mrs Bev. To comfort him, or die with him. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY, BATES, *and* DAWSON.

Stuke. Here's presumptive evidence at least—or if we want more, why we must swear more. But all unwillingly—we gain credit by reluctance. I have told you how to proceed. Beverley must die—we hunt him in view now, and must not slacken in the chace. 'Tis either death for him, or shame and punishment for us. Think of that, and remember your instructions—you, Bates, must to the prison immediately. I would be there but a few minutes before you; and you, Dawson, must follow in a few minutes after. So here we divide—but answer me; are you resolved upon this business like men?

Bates. Like villains, rather—but you may depend upon us.

Stuke. Like what we are, then—you make no answer, Dawson—compassion, I suppose, has seized you.

Daw. No; I have disclaimed it—my answer is Bates's—you may depend upon me.

Stuke. Consider the reward! Riches and security! I have sworn to divide with you to the last shilling—so here we separate, till we meet in prison—remember your instructions, and be men. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to a prison.* BEVERLEY *is discovered sitting. After a short pause, he starts up, and comes forward.*

Bev. Why, there's an end, then; I have judged deliberately, and the result is death. How the self-murderer's account may stand, I know not. But this I know—the load of hateful life oppresses me too much—the horrors of my soul are more than I can bear—[*Offers to kneel.*] Father of mercy! I cannot pray—despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and sealed me for perdition—conscience! conscience! thy clamours are too loud—here's that shall silence thee. [*Takes a phial out of his pocket, and looks at it.*] Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come, then, thou cordial for sick minds—come to my heart. [*Drinks.*] Oh, that the grave would bury memory as well as body! For if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the Everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper—I will think no more of it—reflection comes too late—once there was a time for it—but now 'tis past. Who's there?

Enter JARVIS.

Jar. One, that hoped to see you with better looks—why do you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me. And see, who comes to give it welcome!

Bev. My wife and sister! Why, 'tis but one pang more, then, and farewell world. [*Aside.*

Enter Mrs BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs Bev. Where is he? [*Runs and embraces him.*] Oh, I have him! I have him! And now they shall never part us more—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever—but do not look coldly on me!

Char. How is it, brother?

Mrs Bev. Alas! he hears us not—speak to me, love. I have no heart to see you thus.

Bev. Nor I to bear the sense of so much shame—this is a sad place!

Mrs Bev. We came to take you from it. To tell you the world goes well again. That Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help them—your uncle died yesterday.

Bev. My uncle! No, do not say so! Oh, I am sick at heart!

Mrs Bev. Indeed! I meant to bring you comfort.

Bev. Tell me he lives then—if you would bring me comfort, tell me he lives.

Mrs Bev. And if I did—I have no power to raise the dead—he died yesterday.

Bev. And I am heir to him?

Jar. To his whole estate, sir—but bear it patiently—pray bear it patiently.

Bev. Well, well—[*Pausing.*] Why, fame says I am rich, then?

Mrs Bev. And truly so—why do you look so wildly?

Bev. Do I? The news was unexpected. But has he left me all?

Jar. All, all, sir—he could not leave it from you.

Bev. I am sorry for it.

Char. Sorry! Why sorry?

Bev. Your uncle's dead, Charlotte.

Char. Peace be with his soul then—is it so terrible, that an old man should die?

Bev. He should have been immortal.

Mrs Bev. Heaven knows I wished not for his death. 'Twas the will of providence, that he should die—why are you disturbed so?

Bev. Has death no terrors in it?

Mrs Bev. Not an old man's death. Yet if it troubles you, I wish him living.

Bev. And I, with all my heart.

Char. Why, what's the matter!

Bev. Nothing—how heard you of his death?

Mrs Bev. His steward came express. Would I had never known it!

Bev. Or had heard it one day sooner—for I have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or, if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! what tale is this? And why are we to curse you—I will bless you for ever.

Bev. No; I have deserved no blessings. The world holds not such another wretch. All this large fortune, this second bounty of Heaven, that might have healed our sorrows, and satisfied our utmost hopes, in a cursed hour I sold last night.

Char. Sold! How sold?

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!—It cannot be!

Bev. That devil Stukely, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay false debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion——Sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

Char. Why, farewell all then.

Bev. Liberty and life—Come, kneel and curse me!

Mrs. Bev. Then hear me, Heaven! [*Kneels.*] Look down with mercy on his sorrows! Give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! Take from his memory the sense of what is past, and cure him of despair! On me! on me! if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I will bear them patiently, so he is happy! These hands shall toil for his support! These eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him! And every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done to cheer and comfort him!—So hear me! So reward me! [*Rises.*

Bev. I would kneel too, but that offended Heaven would turn my prayers into curses. What have I to ask for! I, who have shook hands with hope? Is it for length of days that I should kneel! No; my time is limited. Or is it for this world's blessings upon you and yours? To pour out my heart in wishes for a ruined wife, a child, and sister? Oh, no! for I have done a deed to make life horrible to you——

Mrs Bev. Why horrible? Is poverty so horrible?—The real wants of life are few. A little industry will supply them all—And cheerfulness will follow—It is the privilege of honest industry, and we will enjoy it fully.

Bev. Never, never—Oh, I have told you but in part. The irrevocable deed is done.

Mrs Bev. What deed!—And why do you look so at me!

Bev. A deed, that dooms my soul to vengeance—That seals your misery here, and mine hereafter.

Mrs Bev. No, no: you have a heart too good for it—Alas! he raves, Charlotte—His looks too terrify me—Speak comfort to him—He can have done no deed of wickedness.

Char. And yet I fear the worst——What is it, brother?

Bev. A deed of horror.

Jar. Ask him no questions, madam—This last misfortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

Enter STUKELY.

Bev. Why is this villain here?

Stuke. To give you liberty and safety. There, madam, is his discharge. [*Giving a paper to Mrs Beverly.*] Let him fly this moment. The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

Char. What mean you, sir?

Stuke. The arrest was too late, I say; I would have kept his hands from blood, but was too late.

Mrs Bev. His hands from blood!—Whose blood?—Oh, wretch! wretch!

Stuke. From Lewson's blood.

Char. No, villain! Yet what of Lewson? Speak quickly.

Stuke. You are ignorant then! I thought I heard the murderer at confession.

Char. What murderer?—And who is murdered? Not Lewson?—Say he lives, and I'll kneel and worship you.

Stuke. In pity, so I would; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your Lewson's dead!

Char. O horrible! Why, who has killed him? And yet it cannot be. What crime had he committed that he should die? Villain! he lives! he lives! and shall revenge these pangs!

Mrs Bev. Patience, sweet Charlotte!

Char. O, 'tis too much for patience!

Mrs Bev. He comes in pity, he says! O, execrable villain! The friend is killed, then, and this the murderer?

Bev. Silence, I charge you!——Proceed, sir.

Stuke. No. Justice may stop the tale—and here is an evidence.

Enter Bates.

Bates. The news, I see, has reached you. But take comfort, madam. [*To Char.*] There is one without inquiring for you. Go to him, and lose no time.

Char. O misery! misery! [*Exit.*

Mrs Bev. Follow her, Jarvis. If it be true that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

Bates. Jarvis must stay here, madam. I have some questions for him.

Stuke. Rather let him fly. His evidence may crush his master.

Bev. Why, ay; this looks like management.

Bates. He found you quarrelling with Lewson in the streets last night. [*To Bev.*

Mrs Bev. No; I am sure he did not.

Jar. Or if I did——

Mrs Bev. It is false, old man—They had no quarrel; there was no cause for quarrel.

Bev. Let him proceed, I say——Oh! I am sick! sick!———Reach a chair. [*He sits down.*

Mrs Bev. You droop and tremble, love.——Your eyes are fixed too———Yet you are innocent. If Lewson's dead, you killed him not,

Enter Dawson.

Stuke. Who sent for Dawson?

Bates. 'Twas I—We have a witness too you little think of—Without there!

Stuke. What witness?

Bates. A right one. Look at him.

Enter Lewson *and* Charlotte.

Stuke. Lewson! O villains! villains! [*To Bates and Dawson.*

Mrs Bev. Risen from the dead! Why, this is unexpected happiness?

Char. Or is it his ghost? [*To Stukely.*] That sight would please you, sir,

Jar. What riddle is this?

Bev. Be quick and tell it—My minutes are but few.

Mrs Bev. Alas! why so? You shall live long and happily.

Lew. While shame and punishment shall rack that viper. [*Pointing to Stukely.*] The tale is short—I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doomed to die. Bates, to prevent the murder, undertook it—I kept aloof to give it credit.———

Char. And give me pangs unutterable.

Lew. I felt them all, and would have told you—But vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed. The arrest by Dawson followed the supposed murder——And now, depending on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on Beverley.

Mrs Bev. Oh execrable wretch!

Bates. Dawson and I are witnesses of this.

Lew. And of a thousand frauds. His fortune ruined by sharpers and false dice; and Stukely sole contriver and possessor of all.

Daw. Had he but stopped on this side murder, we had been villains still.

Mrs Bev. Thus Heaven turns evil into good; and, by permitting sin, warns men to virtue.

Lew. Yet punishes the instrument. So shall our laws; though not with death. But death were mercy. Shame, beggary, and imprisonment, unpitied misery, the stings of conscience, and the curses of mankind shall make life hateful to him—till at last his own hand end him—How does my friend? [*To Bev.*

Bev. Why well. Who is he, that asks me?

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis Lewson, love—Why do you look so at him?

Bev. They told me he was murdered. [*Wildly.*

Mrs. Bev. Ay; but he lives to save us.

Bev. Lend me your hand—The room turns round.

Mrs. Bev. O Heaven!

Lew. This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight—And for your lives see that you guard him. [*Stukely is taken off by Dawson and Bates.*] How is it, sir?

Bev. 'Tis here—and here. [*Pointing to his head and heart.*] And now it tears me!

Mrs. Bev. You feel convulsed too—What is it disturbs you?

Lew. This sudden turn of joy, perhaps—He wants rest too—Last night was dreadful to him. His brain is giddy.

Char. Ay, never to be cured—Why, brother!—O! I fear! I fear!

Mrs. Bev. Preserve him, Heaven!—My love! my life! look at me!—How his eyes flame!

Bev. A furnace rages in this heart—I have been too hasty.

Mrs Bev. Indeed!—O me! O me!—Help, Jarvis! Fly, fly for help! Your master dies else.—Weep not, but fly! [*Exit Jarvis.*] What is this hasty deed?—Yet do not answer me—My fears have guessed.

Bev. Call back the messenger—'Tis not in medicine's power to help me.

Mrs Bev. Is it then so?

Bev. Down, restless flames!—[*Laying his hand*

on his heart.] down to your native hell—There you shall rack me—O! for a pause from pain!

Mrs. Bev. Help, Charlotte! Support him, sir! [*To Lewson.*] This is a killing sight!

Bev. That pang was well—It has numbed my senses.—Where's my wife?—Can you forgive me, love?

Mrs Bev. Alas! for what?

Bev. [*Starting again.*] And there's another pang—Now all is quiet—Will you forgive me?

Mrs Bev. I will—tell me for what?

Bev. For meanly dying.

Mrs Bev. No——do not say it.

Bev. As truly as my soul must answer it.——Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well. But pressed by shame—pent in a prison—tormented with my pangs for you—driven to despair and madness—I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch he left to guard me, and—swallowed poison.

Mrs Bev. O fatal deed!

Char. Dreadful and cruel!

Bev. Ay, most accursed—And now I go to my account. This rest from pain brings death; yet 'tis Heaven's kindness to me. I wished for ease, a moment's ease, that cool repentance and contrition might soften vengeance.—Bend me, and let me kneel. [*They lift him from his chair, and support him on his knees.*] I'll pray for you too. Thou power, that madest me, hear me! If for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice dooms me, here I acquit the sentence. But if enthroned in mercy where thou sittest, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope; that, in these last and bitter moments, my soul may taste of comfort! and for these mourners here, O! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!——Now raise me.

[*They lift him to the chair.*

Mrs Bev. Restore him, Heaven! Stretch forth thy arm omnipotent, and snatch him from the grave!—O save him! save him!

Bev. Alas! that prayer is fruitless. Already death has seized me—Yet Heaven is gracious—I asked for hope, as the bright presage of forgiveness, and like a light, blazing through darkness, it came and cheered me—It was all I lived for, and now I die.

Mrs Bev. Not yet!—Not yet!—Stay but a little, and I will die too.

Bev. No; live, I charge you. We have a little one. Though I have left him, you will not leave him. To Lewson's kindness I bequeath him. Is not this Charlotte? We have lived in love, though I have wronged you. Can you forgive me, Charlotte?

Char. Forgive you! O my poor brother!

Bev. Lend me your hand, love——So—raise me——No——it will not be——My life is finished——O! for a few short moments, to tell you how my heart bleeds for you—That even now, thus dying as I am, dubious and fearful of hereafter, my bosom pang is for your miseries—support her, Heaven!—And now I go——O, mercy! mercy! [*Dies.*

Lew. Then all is over——How is it, madam?——My poor Charlotte too!

Enter JARVIS.

Jar. How does my master, madam? Here is help at hand——Am I too late then?

[*Seeing Beverley.*

Char. Tears! tears! why fall you not——O wretched sister!——Speak to her, Lewson——Her grief is speechless.

Lew. Remove her from this sight—Go to her, Jarvis—Lead and support her. Sorrow like hers forbids complaint—Words are for lighter griefs—Some ministering angel bring her peace! [*Jarvis and Charlotte lead her off.*] And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it prayed for! Save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

Follies, if uncontrouled, of every kind,
Grow into passions, and subdue the mind;
With sense and reason hold superior strife,
And conquer honour, nature, fame, and life.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

BOADICEA.

BY

GLOVER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
DUMNORIX, *chief of the Trinobantians.*	BOADICEA, *queen of the Iceni ans.*
TENANTIUS, EBRANCUS, *officers under Dumnorix.*	VENUSIA, *wife of Dumnorix.*
FLAMINIUS, ENOBARBUS, *two captive Romans.*	*Roman Ambassador, Icenians, and Trinobantians.*

Scene—The British Camp before the Tent of Dumnorix.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter BOADICEA, DUMNORIX, *Icenians, Trinobantians, and Roman Ambassador.*

Rom. Am. SUETONIUS, leader of the Roman arms,
With gentlest greetings to the Icenian queen,
And Dumnorix, the Trinobantian chief,
Sends health, and proffers friendship. Let the wrongs,
The mutual wrongs, sustained by Rome and Britain——
Boad. May stern Andate, war's victorious goddess,
Again resign me to your impious rage,
If e'er I blot my sufferings from remembrance;
If e'er relenting mercy cool my vengeance,
Till I have driven you to your utmost shores,
And cast your legions on the crimsoned beach!
Your costly dwellings shall be sunk in ashes:
Your fields be ravaged; your aspiring bulwarks
O'erturned, and levelled to the meanest shrub;
Your gaping matrons, and your children's blood,
With mingled streams, shall dye the British sword;
Your captive warriors, victims at our altars,
Shall crowd each temple's spacious round with death:
Else may each power, to whom the Druids bend
Annul my hopes of conquest and revenge!
Dum. [*To the Ambassador.*] You come to offer terms. Stand forth and answer.
Did not Prasutagus, her dying lord,
On your insatiate emperor bestow
Half of his rich possessions, vainly deeming
The rest might pass unpillaged to his children?
What did ye then, ye savage sons of rapine?
You seized the whole inheritance by force;
Laid waste our cities; with the servile scourge
Disgraced a royal matron; you deflowered
Her spotless daughters, stole our noblest youth,
To serve your pride and luxury in Rome;
Our priests you butchered, and our hoary elders;
Profaned our altars, our religious groves,
And the base image of your Cæsar thrust
Among the gods of Britain; and, by Heaven!
Do you repair to these victorious tents
With proffered peace and friendship?
Rom. Am. Yes, to treat,
As faith, benevolence, and justice dictate.
Dum. How shall we treat with those, whose impious hands
Have rent the sacred bands of mutual trust?
How shall we treat with those, whose stony hearts
Compassion cannot melt, nor shame control,

Nor justice awe, nor piety restrain,
Nor kindness win, nor gratitude can bind?
Rom. Am. Thou art a stranger to our general's virtues.
No pillager, like Catus, but a soldier,
To calm and sober discipline inured;
He would redress, not widen, your complaints.
Dum. Can he restore the violated maid
To her untainted purity and fame?
Can he persuade inexorable death
To yield our slaughtered elders from the grave?
No, nor by soothing tales elude our vengeance.
Rom. Am. Yet hear us calmly, ere from yonder hills
You call the legions of imperial Rome,
And wake her eagles, which would sleep in peace.
Boad. Begone, and bear defiance to your legions.
Tell them, I come; that Boadicea comes,
Fierce with her wrongs, and terrible in vengeance,
To roll her chariot o'er their firmest ranks,
To mix their soaring eagles with the dust,
And spurn their pride beneath her horses' hoofs.
Rom. Am. Then be prepared for war.
Boad. We are prepared.
Come from your hills, ye fugitive remains
Of shattered cohorts, by their fear preserved.
The embattled nations of our peopled isle,
Yet fresh from seventy thousand slaughtered Romans,
Shall add you refuse to the purpled heap.
And yet amid triumphant desolation,
Though flames each Roman colony devour,
Though each distracted matron view her infant
Grasp with its tender hands the piercing spear;
Though your grey fathers to the falchion's edge
Each feeble head surrender—my revenge
Will pine unsated, and my greatness want
Redress proportioned to a queen's disgrace.
Dum. Go, and report this answer to Suetonius:
Too long have parents' sighs, the cries of orphans,
And tears of widows, signalized your sway,
Since your ambitious Julius first advanced
His murderous standard on our peaceful shores.
At length, unfettered from his parent sloth,
The British genius lifts his ponderous hands,
To hurl, with ruin, his collected wrath,
For all the wrongs a century hath borne,
In one black period, on the Roman race.
Rom. Am. Yet, ere we part, your price of ransom name
For the two captive Romans.
Boad. Not the wealth,
Which loads the palaces of sumptuous Rome,
Shall bribe my fury. Hence, and tell your legions,
The hungry ravens, which inhabit round
The chalky cliffs of Albion, shall assemble
To feast upon the limbs of these, your captains,
Shall riot in the gore of Roman chiefs,
These masters of the world!—Produce the prisoners. [*To an Icenian.*

Enter ENOBARBUS *and* FLAMINIUS, *in chains.*

Boad. Stay, if thou wilt, and see our victims fall. [*To the Ambassador.*
Enob. [*To Boad.*] Dart not on me thy fiery eyes, barbarian!
Vain are thy efforts to dismay a Roman.
Life is become unworthy of my care;
And these vile limbs, by galling chains dishonoured,
I give most freely to the wolves and thee!
Rom. Am. Mistaken queen, the Romans do not want
These instigations, nor thy proud defiance,
To meet your numbers in the vale below.
Enob. [*To the Ambas.*] Then, wherefore dost thou linger here in vain?
Commend us to Suetonius; bid him straight
Arrange his conquering legions in the field,
There teach these rash barbarians to repent
Of their disdain, and wish for peace too late.
Rom. Am. [*To the prisoners.*] Yes, to Suetonius, and the Roman camp,
These heavy commendations will we bear:
That, for two gallant countrymen, our love
And indignation, at their fate, may sharpen
Each weapon's point, and strengthen every nerve,
Till humbled Britain have appeased their shades.
[*Exit.*
Enob. Come, let us know our fate.
Boad. Prepare for death.
Enob. Then cease to loiter, savage.
Dum. [*To Enob.*] Now, by Heaven,
Wert thou no Roman, I could save and love thee.
That dauntless spirit, in another breast,
And in a blameless cause, were truly noble;
But shews, in thee, the murderer and ruffian.
Enob. Thy hate or favour are alike to me.
Flam. [*To Dum.*] May I demand, illustrious Trinobantian,
Why must we fall, because uncertain war
Hath made us captives?
Dum. If, in open battle,
With generous valour to have faced our arms,
Were all our charge against thee, thou mightst rest,
Secure of life; but leading thee to die
Is execution on a general robber.
Enob. [*To Flam.*] And dost thou meanly sue to these barbarians?
Flam. [*To Dum.*] Though our rapacious countrymen have drawn
Your just resentment, we are guiltless both.
Boad. [*To Flam.*] So are ten thousand infants, whom the name,
The single name, of Roman shall condemn,
Like thee, to perish by the unsparing sword.
Flam. Yet more than guiltless, we may plead desert
With Boadicea.
Boad. Insolent pretension!
A Roman plead desert with Boadicea!

This shall enlarge the portion of thy sufferings;
For this, not only shall thy blood embrue
Andate's shrine, but torture shall be added,
And fury wanton in thy various pains.
Enob. [*To Boad.*] Produce thy tortures; them and thee we scorn.
Ten. Fall back with reverence, Trinobantian soldiers!
See who advances from your general's tent.

Enter VENUSIA.

Ven. Victorious sister, may the unresisting labour
Of fortune weave new honours to adorn thee,
And Dumnorix, thy colleague, and my lord.
But if, amid these warlike consultations,
Ere yet the ordered pomp of battle moves,
A supplicating sound may reach thy ear,
Stoop from thy glory to an act of mercy.
Thy doom pronounced on these unhappy captives——
Boad. Ha!
Ven. Their deservings, and thy daughter's prayer,
Mixed with my own compassion, from the tent
Have called me forth, a suitor to thy pity,
That thou wouldst hear and spare them.
Boad. Spare these captives!
Dum. Why this request, Venusia?
Ven. Give them hearing:
They can unfold a story, which demands
Your whole attention.
Dum. Let us hear. Proceed. [*To Flam.*
Flam. The Romans' late injustice we abhorred,
Nor joined the band of spoilers. In that season,
We chanced one day to wander through the forest,
Which parts our confines from the Icenian land.
We found a beauteous virgin in our way.
Boad. Wretch, dost thou hope to barter with our sister
For thy base life?
Flam. I fear not death, oh, queen!
But dread dishonour, even among my foes.
Enob. Death is thy terror; reason else would teach thee,
No gratitude with cruelty can dwell.
Flam. Deep in that wood we met the lovely maid,
Chased by a brutal soldier. At our threats
He soon retreated. To our home we led her,
From insult guarded, sent her back with honour:
Nor was she less than Boadicea's daughter.
Ven. Now, dearest sister, whose successful standard
Not valour more than equity upholds;
And thou, my husband, who dost rise in arms,
Oppressive deeds in others to chastise,
From your own guiding justice will you stray,
And blend deservers with the herd of guilt?
Dum. And are you Romans? Yes, we will, Venusia,
Repay their worthy deed. Strike off their fetters.
Boad. What do I hear! A British chief's command!
Who'er unchains a Roman, on mankind
Lets loose oppression, insolence, and rapine,
Sets treason, falsehood, vice, and murder free!
Ven. Yet these preserved thy Emmeline from shame.
Boad. Not less the victim of eternal shame
Was she conducted to their hateful mansion.
To guard her honour, and be less than ruffians,
Had been repugnant to their name and race;
But fear of me compelled them to relieve her.
Then shall two Romans, nursed in fraud and falsehood,
From childhood trained to each flagitious deed,
By coloured pleas to shun the fate they merit,
Here find regard against the thousand mouths
Of Boadicea's sufferings? No, this moment
Shall they expire in torture.
Ven. Yet reflect;
Of all the paths, which lead to human bliss,
The most secure and grateful to our steps
With mercy and humanity is marked.
The sweet-tongued rumour of a gracious deed
Can charm from hostile hands the uplifted blade,
The gall of anger into milk transform,
And dress the power of enmity in smiles.
Boad. Still dost thou dare, Venusia——
Dum. Gently, sister:
And, trust me, these resemble virtuous men.
Boad. Was I not virtuous, whom the Romans lashed?
Were not my violated children virtuous?
Bear them this instant to the fiercest rack;
And, while their trembling limbs are strained with torture,
While, through the cruel agony of pain,
The bloody drops bedew their shivering cheeks,
Tell them how gentle are the pangs they feel,
To those the soul of Boadicea proved,
When Roman rage her naked limbs exposed,
And marked her flesh with ever-during shame!
Dum. [*To the Britons.*] Withhold your hand.
Boad. What means the Trinobantian?
Dum. To save thy benefactors, and proclaim,
Whate'er by valour we extort from fortune,
We yet deserve by justice.
Boad. To contend
With Boadicea, and protect her foes,
Did she awaken thy ignoble sloth,
Which else, without resentment of thy wrongs,
Had slept obscure at home?
Dum. Forbear; be calm.
Boad. Yes, under bondage thou hadst tamely bowed,
Had not I fired thy slow, inactive soul.
Dum. Not with unbridled passion, I confess,
I wield the sword and mount the warlike car.
With careful eyes I viewed our suffering isle,
And meditated calmly to avenge her.

Unmoved by rage, my soul maintains her purpose
Through one unaltered course; and oft before
As I have guided thy unruly spirit,
Against its wildness will I now protect thee,
And from a base, inhuman action save thee.
Boad. Thy boasted calmness is the child of fear;
Thou tremblest to exasperate the foe.
Well was it, Britons, in our former conquests,
That I presided o'er the scene of slaughter;
Else had those thousands of the Roman youth,
Whose bodies lie extended on our fields,
Stood at this hour a threatening host against you.
Come, then, ye warriors! follow your conductress,
And drag these slaves to death.
Dum. They will not move,
Fixed with amazement at thy matchless frenzy.
Do thou revere these warriors, who with scorn
Observe thy folly.
Ven. Husband, sister, hear!
Oh, if my humbled voice, my prostrate limbs,
If tears and sighs of anguish may atone
For this pernicious discord I have raised——
Boad. [*To Ven.*] Hence with thy despicable sighs and tears! [*To Dum.*]
And thou, presumptuous, what invidious power,
Foe to thy safety, animates thy pride
Still to contend with Boadicea's wrath?
Dum. No, by Andate, I contend not with thee.
At this important season, when the soldier
Thirsts for the conflict, it would ill become me
To trifle here in discord with a woman.
Nay, do not swell that haughty breast in vain:
When once the sacred evidence of justice
Illuminates my bosom, on a rock,
Which neither tears can soften, nor the gusts
Of passion move, my resolution stands.
Boad. Now Heaven fulfil my curses on thy head!
May every purpose of thy soul be frustrate,
May infamy and ruin overtake thee,
May base captivity and chains o'erwhelm thee,
May shameful crimson from thy shoulders start,
Like mine, dishonoured with a servile scourge!
With pain all shivering, and thy flesh contracting,
Low may'st thou crouch beneath the expected stroke,
Even from the hands thou savest!
Tenan. Alas, great princess!
Divert this wrath against the impending foe,
Whose formidable ranks will soon descend
From yonder hill.
Boad. [*To the Britons.*] Ungrateful and perfidious!
Now would I draw my spirit from your camp,
Leave you with them defenceless and exposed;
Then should your shattered chariots be o'erthrown,
Your javelins broken, and in hasty flight
Far from your trembling hands the buckler cast,
Did not the insatiate thirst, which burns my soul
To empty every vein of Roman blood,
Protect you, traitors, from my indignation.
But, by the ensanguined altars of Andate,
Thou, Dumnorix, be sure, shalt rue this day;
For thou, henceforward, art to me a Roman.
[*Exit.*
Ven. Oh, Dumnorix!
Dum. Let not this frantic woman
Grieve thy mild nature—Romans, cease to fear;
These are my tents: retire in safety thither.
[*Exeunt Flam. and Enob.*
Do thou go forth this instant and command
[*To Tenan.*
Each ardent youth to gird his falchion round him,
His ponderous spear to loosen from the turf,
And brace the target firmly on his arm.
His car let every charioteer prepare,
His warlike seat each combatant assume,
That every banner may in battle wave,
Ere the sun reaches his meridian height.
[*Exit Tenantius.*
Ven. My lord and husband!
Dum. Wherefore dost thou hold me,
And in my passage thy endearments plant?
I must prepare this moment to confront
The foul and ghastly face of cruel war:
And, by the gods, I rather court at present
That shape of horror than thy beauteous form.
Then go, thou dear intruder, and remove
Thy softness from me.
Ven. I will stay no longer
Than brave Tenantius hath performed thy orders.
Long have I known thy valour, skilled to throw
The rapid dart, and lift the unconquered shield.
A confidence, like this, hath still diffused
Enough of firmness through my woman's heart,
Ne'er to molest thee with a woman's fears,
This day excepted; now my weakness governs,
And terror, too importunate, will speak.
Hast thou encountered yet such mighty powers
As down that mountain suddenly will rush?
From every part the Romans are assembled,
All versed in arms, and terrible in valour.
Dum. Tell me, thou lovely coward, am not I
As terrible? or falls the Roman sword
On the tough buckler, and the crested helm,
With deadlier weight than mine? Away, and fear not;
Secure and calm, repose thee in thy tent;
Think on thy husband, and believe he conquers:
Amid the rage of battle he will think
On thee; for thee he draws the martial blade,
For thy loved infants gripes the pointed ash.
Go, and expect me to return victorious;
Thy hand shall dress my wounds, and all be well.
Ven. Far better be our fortune, than for thee
To want that office from my faithful hand,
Or me to stain thy triumphs with my tears!
Dum. Fear not. I tell thee, when thou seest my limbs

With dust bespread, my brows with glorious sweat,
And some distinguished wound to grace my breast,
Thou, in the fulness of thy love, shalt view me,
And swear, I seem most comely in thy sight.
Thy virtue, then, shall view me worthier of thee,
Than did thy fondness on our nuptial day.
Ven. It shall be so. All wounded thou shalt find
My heart prepared to stifle its regret,
And smooth my forehead with obedient calmness.
Yet hear me further; something will I offer
More than the weak effects of female dread;
Thou goest to fight in discord with thy colleague:
It is a thought, which multiplies my fears.
Dum. Well urged, thou dearest counsellor, who best
Canst heal this mischief. Let thy meekness try
The soft persuasion of a private conference,
To win from error a bewildered sister,
While none are present to alarm her pride.
Ven. I go, but, trembling, doubt my vain attempt;
Unless, commissioned with thy dear injunctions,
My soul, exerted to perform thy pleasure,
Could give persuasion all my force of duty.
[*Exit.*

Dum. Hark! we are summoned.

Enter TENANTIUS.

Tenan. Every band is formed:
The Romans, too, in close arrangement stand.
Dum. Ye warriors, destined to begin the onset,
My Trinobantians! it is time to seek
The embattled foe. And you, all-judging gods!
Look down benignant on a righteous cause.
Indeed we cannot give you, like the Romans,
A proud and sumptuous offering: we abound not
In marble temples, or in splendid altars:
Yet though we want this vain, luxurious pomp,
Rough though we wander on the mountain's head,
Through the deep vale, and o'er the craggy rock,
We still demand your favour; we can shew
Hands, which for justice draw the avenging steel,
Firm hearts, and manners undebased by fraud.
To you, my dauntless friends, what need of words?
Your cities have been sacked, your children slain,
Your wives dishonoured—Lo! on yonder hills
You see the spoilers; there the ruffians stand.
Your hands are armed; then follow, and revenge.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT. II.

SCENE I.

Enter FLAMINIUS *and* ENOBARBUS.

Flam. Ho! Enobarbus, thou may'st now come forward.
What has thy angry soul been brooding o'er?
Enob. Well, thou hast sued, and hast obtained thy suit;
Of these barbarians meanly hast implored
Thy wretched life, and hast it. Must I thank thee
For this uncommon privilege to stand
A tame spectator of the Roman shame,
To see exulting savages o'erturn
Our walls and ramparts, see them with the spoils
Of our waste dwellings, with our captive eagles
And ancient trophies, ravished from our temples,
March in rude triumph o'er the gods of Rome?
Flam. What, thou hadst rather die!
Enob. And thou hadst rather
Live, like a dog, in chains, than die with courage,
Thou most unworthy of the Roman name!
Flam. Did those, who now inhabit Rome, deserve
The name of Romans, did the ancient spirit
Of our forefathers still survive among us,
I should applaud this bold contempt of life.
Our ancestors, who lived while Rome was free,
Might well prefer a noble fate to chains;
They lost a blessing we have never known:
Born and inured to servitude at home,
We only change one master for another,
And Dumnorix is far beyond a Nero.
Enob. Mean'st thou to mock me?
Flam. No, I mean to shew
Thy stern opinions suit not with the times.
Enob. Still by our valour we control the world,
And in that duty will I match the foremost.
If our forefathers' manners be neglected,
Free from that blame, I singly will maintain them.
My sentiments are moulded by my spirit,
Which wants thy pliant qualities to yield
With every gust of fortune, rude or mild,
And crouch beneath example, base or worthy.
Flam. Well, if thou canst not brook a British master——
Enob. No, nor thy wanton folly will I brook,
Which sports alike with slavery or freedom,
Insensible of shame.
Flam. Suppose I free thee.
Enob. Free me!
Flam. This day, if fortune be propitious.
Enob. Ha! do not cheat me with delusive fable,
And trifle with my bonds.
Flam. By all my hopes,
I do not trifle.
Enob. Wilt thou give my bosom

Once more to buckle on the soldier's harness,
And meet in battle our insulting foes?
Shall my keen falchion gore the flying rout,
And raise a bleeding trophy to revenge,
For each indignity, which Rome hath borne?
Hold me no longer in suspense! instruct me,
From whence these hopes proceed!

Flam. Thou know'st I loved
The British princess.

Enob. Hast thou raised my hopes
To freedom, future victory, and honour,
And dost thou talk of love?

Flam. That love shall save us.
Thou saw'st the gentle Emmeline but now
Stole to our tent, and gave the tenderest welcome.
Unchanged I found her, soft and artless still.
The generous maid already hath suggested
The means of flight. The battle once begun,
While every Briton is intent on war,
Herself will guide us to a place of safety.

Enob. Now I commend thee.

Flam. Thou approvest, then?

Enob. Ay.

Flam. And see, the joyful moment is approaching;
See, where the unnumbered Trinobantians spread
In rude disorder o'er the vale beneath,
Whose broad extent this eminence commands.
Mark their wide-waving multitude, confused
With mingling standards, and tumultuous cars:
But, far superior to the rest, behold,
The brave and generous Dumnorix, erect
With eager hope, his lofty javelin shakes,
And with unpolished majesty adorns
The front of war.

Enob. I mark the rabble well;
And soon shall view the Romans from their station
Between those woods, which shade the adverse hills,
Sweep with resistless ardour to the vale,
And trample o'er the savages like dust.

[*A march.*

Flam. That smiling vale with pity I contemplate,
And wish more gentle footsteps might be seen
To press its verdure, and that softer notes,
Than war's terrific clamours, might be tuned
From those surrounding shades, to join the murmurs
Of that fair channel, whose sonorous bed
Receives the stream, descending from this grove
To form the limpid maze, which shines below.

Enob. I see it glistening in the noon-day sun.
But British gore will change its glassy hue.

Flam. Oh! might we rather on its friendly banks
Erect a grateful monument to peace!
That she, her sway resuming, might afford me
To clasp the gallant Dumnorix, and style him
My friend, my benefactor, and preserver.
Stand from before this tempest, while it passes.

Enter BOADICEA *and Icenians.*

Boad. Oh! I could drive this javelin through my heart,
To ease its tortures. Disobeyed! Controuled!
Even in my army's sight! Malignant powers,
If such there be, who o'er revenge preside,
Who steel the breast with ever-during hate,
And aid black rancour in its purposed mischief,
Be present now, and guide my indignation!

[*Pauses.*

The Trinobantians are advanced before me.
Let them sustain the onset; let the Romans
On Dumnorix with every cohort press,
Till he entreat for Boadicea's aid.
Then shall my eager eyes enjoy his ruin;
And when the insulting boaster is o'erthrown,
His bands dispersed, or gasping in the dust,
Then will I rush exulting in my car,
Like fierce Andate, on the wearied foe
Lead rout and slaughter, through a tide of gore
Impel my clotted wheels, redeem the day,
And, from the mouth of danger snatching conquest,
Crown my revenge with glory.

Enter VENUSIA.

Ven. Stand apart,
At my request, Icenians. O, unbend

[*To Boadicea.*

That lowering brow, and hear a suppliant sister!
So prone to error is our mortal frame,
Time could not step without a trace of horror,
If wary nature on the human heart,
Amid its wild variety of passions,
Had not impressed a soft and yielding sense,
That, when offences give resentment birth,
The kindly dews of penitence may raise
The seeds of mutual mercy and forgiveness.

Boad. Weak wretch, and yet whose impotence aspires
To mix in warlike councils, and determine
The fate of captives, won in fields of death,
Thou wouldst do better to reserve thy tears;
Thou shalt have cause for penitential torrents.

Ven. They will not wait a second birth of woe;
At thy severity they burst already.
Why turns on me that formidable aspect,
Wont with commanding sternness to behold
Its foes abashed, and victory its vassal?
Yet how much brighter is the wreath of glory,
When interwove with clemency and justice?
Thou goest to battle; there obtain renown;
But learn compassion from my tears, nor think
Benignity enfeebles, or dishonours
The most exalted valour.

Boad. Shall the tears
Of abject importunity detain me,
While Vengeance, striding from his grisly den,
With fell impatience grinds his iron teeth,
And waits my nod to satisfy his hunger?

Hence to the employment of thy feeble distaff!
Ven. Not skilled, like thee, in war's ennobling toils,
Inferior praise, and humbler tasks I court,
And own my safety in thy loftier virtues;
Yet not like thee, with unforgiving wrath,
Could I resign a sister to her grief
At this tremendous hour, so near deciding
The fate of both. One gentle word bestow,
And I will leave thee with obedient haste;
Nay, I will seek the altars, and request,
That in the future triumphs of this day,
Heaven may refuse to Dumnorix a share,
And give thee all.
Boad. Does Dumnorix consent
To sacrifice the Romans? Art thou mute?
Still does he brave me? But your favoured captives
Shall not escape. They soon shall join the victims,
Which this unconquered javelin shall reserve
To solemnize the fall of Rome's dominion.
Then to my glory Dumnorix shall bend;
In sight of Britain shall his baffled pride
The pomp of public sacrifice behold,
Behold and pine. You take a band of soldiers,
[*To an Icenean.*
Watch well around the Trinobantian tents,
And guard these Romans, as your lives. I tell thee,
[*To Venusia.*
Their gore shall yet besmear Andate's altar.
Ven. In silent awe I heard thy first resentment,
Yet hoped, the well-known accents of affection,
In kindness whispered to thy secret ear,
Might to thy breast recall its exiled pity,
That gentle inmate of a woman's heart.
Boad. Durst thou, presumptuous, entertain a thought
To give this bosom, nerved with manly strength,
The weak sensations of a female spirit?
Ven. When I remind thy elevated soul,
That we by mutual interest are but one,
And by the indissoluble ties of birth;
Are those sensations weak, which nature prompts?
With justice strengthened, can her powerful voice
Find no persuasion?
Boad. None. Provoke no more
With plaintive murmurs my indignant ear.
Thou, and thy husband, authors of my shame,
Before the assembled chiefs, may rest assured,
No prayers shall soften, no atonement bribe,
And no submission shall appease the wrong.
May desolation trample on my dwelling
A second time, rapacious force, again,
And insult, revel through my inmost chambers,
If I forgive you! Thou hast food for anguish;
Go, and indulge its appetite at leisure.
Ven. Yes, I will hasten to the holy shrine,
There wring my hands, and melt in copious sorrow,
Not for my injured self, but thee, remorseless!
To mourn thy faded honours, which, deformed
By harsh injustice to thy blameless friends,
Ne'er will revive in beauty. Not success,
Not trophies rising round thee, not the throng
Of circling captives, and their conquered standards,
Nor glorious dust of victory, can hide
From just reproach thy unrelenting scorn,
While none deplore thee, but the wronged Venusia.
[*Exit.*
Boad. Stern power of war, my patroness and guide,
To thee each Roman captive I devote.
Come then, vindictive goddess, in thy terrors;
O'erwhelm with rage his sacrilegious head,
Who would defraud thy altars! O confound
His ranks, his steeds, his chariots, and thy favour
To me, thy martial votaress, confine,
In sex like thee, and glowing with thy fires!
[*Exeunt all but Enobarbus and Flaminius.*
Enob. Do thou come forward now, and say, what terrors
Has thy dejected soul been brooding o'er?
Yon furious dame, who filled thee so with dread,
Is marching onward. Raise thy head, and look;
See, where even now with sullen pride she mounts
Her martial seat; yet wondrous slow, by Heaven,
Her car descends, nor soon will reach the vale.
Thou lookst desponding. Art thou still dismayed?
Thinkst thou yon dreadful woman will return?
From us she moves, though slowly; then take comfort!
Flam. Far other cares than terror fill my breast.
Enob. What means this languor? Wherefore heaves that sigh?
Flam. O Enobarbus, wilt thou bear my weakness?
I see the moment of deliverance near,
Yet pine with grief.
Enob. Whate'er the folly be,
With which thy bosom teems, the gods confound it!
Flam. To see the dearest object of my soul,
Just see her after such a tedious absence,
Then vanish from her sight perhaps for ever:
When these reflections rise, the sweet exchange
From bonds to freedom, which to her I owe,
Is mixed with bitterness, and joy subsides.
Enob. Why didst thou leave the fair Italian fields,
Thou silken slave of Venus? What could move
Thee to explore these boisterous northern climes,
And change yon radiant sky for Britain's clouds?
What dost thou here, effeminate? By Heaven,
Thou shouldst have loitered in Campania's vales,
And in thy garden nursed, with careful hands,
The gaudy-vested progeny of Flora;

Or indolently paced the pebbled shore,
And eyed the beating of the Tuscan wave,
To waste thy irksome leisure. Wilt thou tell me,
What thou dost here in Britain? Dost thou come
To sigh and pine? Could Italy afford
No food for these weak passions? Must thou traverse
Such tracts of land, and visit this cold region,
To love and languish? Answer me, what motive
First brought thee hither? But forbear to urge
It was in quest of honour; for the god
Of war disclaims thee.

Flam. Well, suppose I answer,
That friendship drew me from the golden Tiber,
With thee to combat this inclement sky,
Will it offend thee?

Enob. No, I am thy friend,
And I will make a Roman of thee still;
But let me see no languishing dejection
More on thy brow, nor hear unmanly sighs.
Gods! canst thou dream of love, when yonder see,
The Roman legions, all arrayed for battle,
Are now descending; see their dreaded eagles,
Their dazzling helmets, and their crimson plumes;
A grove of javelins glitters down the steep;
They point their terrors on the astonished foe;
Soon will they charge the Britons in the vale,
And with the auspicious glories of this day
Enrich the annals of imperial Rome.
O curst captivity! with double weight
I feel thee now! malicious fate! to suffer
A Roman thus to stand confined in bondage,
And see the triumphs, which he cannot share.
By Heaven, Flaminius! I will never bear it.
Where is thy Briton? Will she lead us hence?
Else, by the god of war, unarmed I rush
To join the glorious scene, which opens there.

Flam. I see her coming, and will fly to meet her. [*Exit.*

Enob. Our time is short, remember, do not dally.
I have a thought, lies ripening in my breast,
And teems with future glory; if the fight
Prove undecisive, and these tents subsist,
Soon will I bid thee, hostile camp, farewell.
Thou sawest me come in thraldom; I depart
A fugitive: if ever I return,
Thou shalt receive me in another guise;
Then shalt thou feel me; when my shining helm
Shall strike cold terror through thy boldest guards,
And from its lofty crest destruction shake.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter FLAMINIUS *and* ENOBARBUS.

Flam. Our lovely guide attends us. Thy impatience
Hath called me loiterer.

Enob. Thou mayest loiter still.
Thou canst not hasten, nor retard our fate,
Which is irrevocably fixed.

Flam. What sayest thou?

Enob. I say, prepare to die. If Boadicea
Return once more, our destiny is fixed.
Whate'er her merciless revenge may purpose,
Elate with conquest, or incensed by loss,
If on the rack to strain our bursting sinews,
If from the bleeding trunks to lop our limbs,
Or with slow fires protract the hours of pain,
We must abide it all. Collect thy spirit,
And, like a Roman, dauntless wait thy doom.

Flam. I hear thee, but thy meaning—

Enob. Hear again:
Before the tent some paces as I stood,
And joyful saw the Trinobantian guard,
Of us neglectful, from this quarter drawn
To view the impending battle; on a sudden
A cursed Icenian cast his jealous eye
Athwart my steps, then call'd a numerous band,
Who prowl around us, as a destin'd prey.

Flam. Malicious fortune!

Enob. Now thou seest my meaning.

Flam. Our flight were vain, while these observe us.

Enob. True.
What has thy tame submission now availed,
Thy abject supplication to barbarians?
Hadst thou with courage met thy fate at first,
We had been dead, ere now.

Flam. To view the sun
Through his gay progress from the morn, till even,
Possess my friends, my parents, and my love,
Within the circle of my native walls,
Were joys I deemed well worthy of my care;
But since that care is fruitless, I can leave
This light, my friends, my parents, love, and country,
As little daunted at my fate as thou,
Though not so unconcerned.

Enob. Oh, Mars and Vesta!
Is it a vision, which you raise before me
To charm my eyes? Behold a scene, Flaminius,
To cheer a Roman in the gasp of death!
The Britons are defeated; look, Flaminius,
Back from the vale in wild tumultuous flight
Behold their numbers sweeping toward the hill;
Already some are swarming up its side,
To reach their camp for shelter; pale dismay
With hostile rage pursues their broken rear,
While massacre, unchidden, cloys his famine,
And quaffs the blood of nations. Oh! in vain

Dost thou oppose thy bosom to the tide
Of war, and brandish that recovered standard!
Vain is thy animating voice to those,
Whom fear makes deaf! Oh, Dumnorix! thy toils
Are fruitless; Britain in the scale of fate
Yields to the weight of Rome. Now, life, farewell!
Shine on, bright Phœbus! those who rest behind
To share thy splendors, while I sink in darkness,
Are far beneath my envy. I resign
These eyes with pleasure to eternal shades;
They now have seen enough.
Flam. Whence this despair?
A blind confusion fills the spacious camp.
Already consternation hath dispersed
Our guard. Even Dumnorix retires—He comes;
Avoid him—Trust me, I am well instructed,
And will conduct thee to a safe retreat.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter DUMNORIX *with a standard.*

Dum. Thou hard-kept remnant of our shattered fortune,
Stand there before the partial eye of Heaven,
Which has preferred the Romans' splendid altars
To the plain virtue of a British heart.
Presumptuous frenzy! Why is Heaven reproached?
Oh, Boadicea, thou perfidious mischief!

Enter VENUSIA.

Ven. Now let my duty o'er my fear prevail,
Fill my whole breast with tenderness, and heal,
With sweetest comfort, thy distress.
Dum. My wife!
Thou most unlike to you degenerate woman,
Her country's bane!
Ven. I tremble at thy words.
Dum. Be not dismayed; the camp is still our own.
Night is impending, and the Romans halt.
Ven. But what of Boadicea?
Dum. Hear, and mourn.
The Trinobantians scarce had filled the vale,
When, from a narrow pass between the woods,
Forth burst the Romans wedged in deep array.
I found our struggle vain, and sent for aid
To Boadicea; she, with scorn, replied,
I did not want the assistance of a woman;
Nor left her station, till my broken ranks
Were driven among the Iceni ans; in a moment
All was confusion, slaughter, and defeat.

Enter BOADICEA.

Dum. Gods! art thou safe?
Ven. Oh! most unhappy sister!
When last we parted, cruel were thy words,
A sure presage of endless grief to me;
Yet my desponding spirit ne'er foreboded,
That thou couldst deviate from a prosperous course,
When every gale conspired to swell thy glory.
Boad. Throw not on me the crime of envious fortune.
Dum. Dost thou blame fortune, traitress?
Boad. Then the blame
Take on thy single head.
Dum. Avoid my sight!
Boad. Thou ledst the van.
Dum. Avaunt!
Boad. Thou fled'st the first.
Now find'st too late the importance of a woman.
Dum. Too true I find a woman cursed with power
To blast a nation's welfare. Heavenly rulers!
How have our Britons merited this shame?
Have we with fell ambition, like the Romans,
Unpeopled realms, and made the world a desert?
Have we your works defaced; or how deserved
So large a measure of your bitterest wrath,
That you should clothe this spirit of a wolf
In human form, and blend her lot with ours?
Boad. Beset with perils, as I am, pursued
By rout and havoc to the encircling toil;
Untamed by this reverse, my lofty soul,
Upbraiding still thy arrogance, demands,
Who spared the captive Romans? Who provoked
My just resentment? Who, in power, in name
And dignity inferior, but elate
With blind presumption, and by envy stung,
Dared to dispute with me supreme command,
Then pale and trembling turned his back on danger?
Ven. Oh, once united by the friendliest ties,
And leaders both of nations, shall this land
Still view its bulwarks, tottering with disunion,
Enhance the public and their own misfortunes?
Thou, my complacent lord, were wont to smooth
That manly front at pity's just complaint;
And thou, entrusted with a people's welfare,
A queen and warrior, let disdain no more
Live in the midst of danger—See Venusia
Upon her knees——
Dum. Shall thy perfections kneel
To this——
Ven. Oh! stop, nor give resentment utterance.
In such a cause the proudest knee might sue
To less than Boadicea—Turn not from me!
[*To Boadicea.*
Look on a prostrate sister; think, thou hear'st
Our children's plaintive notes enforce my prayer,
And Albion's genius mix his solemn moan:
That lamentations through thy ears resound,
From all the wives and mothers of those thousands,
Whose limbs lie stretched on yonder field of death;
Those wretched wives and mothers, oh! reflect,
But for the fatal discord of this day,
With other looks, with other cries and gestures

With different transports, and with different tears,
Might have received their sons and husbands home,
Than they will now survey their pale remains,
Which there lie mangled by the Roman sword,
To feed the raven's hunger—yet relent!
Yet let restoring union close our wounds,
And to repair this ruin be thy praise!

Dum. Rise, rise. Thy mildness, whose persuasive charm
No cruelty, but hers, could hear unmoved,
In vain would render placable and wise
That malice, inhumanity, and frenzy,
Which have already wasted such a store
Of glory and success.

Boad. Oh!

Dum. Dost thou groan?

Boad. No, no, I do not feel a moment's pain.

Dum. Thy words are false. Thy heart o'erflows with anguish.

Boad. No, I despise both thee and fortune still.

Dum. By Heaven, I know distraction rends thy soul,
And to its view presents the approaching scene
Of shame and torture, when the indignant Romans
Exact a tenfold vengeance for their sufferings;
And when thou passest through their streets in chains,
The just derision of insulting foes,
A frantic woman, who resigned her hopes,
And, to indulge an empty pride, betrayed
Her children, friends, and country; then recal,
What once was Boadicea, fallen how low
From all her honours, by her folly fallen
From power, from empire, victory, and glory,
To vilest bonds, and ignominious stripes.

Boad. May curses blast thee, worse than I can utter,
And keener pangs than whips or shackles seize thee!

Ven. Oh! sister, how unseemly is this rage!
Whom dost thou load with these ungenerous curses?
Thy faithful friend, thy counsellor and brother,
Whom thou hast injured, injured past the power
Of reparation. Dost thou call for whips
To print those venerable limbs with shame,
For bonds to humble that majestic head,
Which foes themselves must honour? Yet, if chains
Must be our fate, what cruel hand hath forged them,
But thine alone? Thy hand hath heaped destruction
On him, thy once revered ally, on me,
On my poor children, guiltless of offence,
And on thy own, who claimed protection from thee;
Yet thou, obdurate, to thy rage a prey,
Dost chide remorse and pity from thy breast.

Dum. Source of thy own afflictions! to behold thee [*To Boadicea.*
Distracted thus, thus fallen and lost, to see
Thus strongly painted on thy labouring features
The pangs thou feel'st within, awakes compassion.

Boad. Ha! no——divine Andate shall uphold me
Above thy pity. Think'st thou, Boadicea
Is thus deserted by her patron goddess,
Thus void of all resources? Think so still,
And be deceived. Even now I feel her aid; [*Aside.*
I feel her here; the warlike queen inspires
My pregnant soul; the mighty plan is forming;
It grows, it labours in my ardent bosom;
It springs to life, and calls for instant action;
Lead on, exert thee, goddess! till the furies,
Which heretofore have thundered at thy heels,
Start at the new-born horrors of this night. [*Exit.*

Ven. Oh! Dumnorix, how virtue hath recoiled
Upon itself! my interposing pity,
Thy manly firmness in a generous act,
Gave these disasters being.

Dum. I forbid thee
To blame thy virtues, which the gods approve,
And I revere. Now leave me to concert,
With our surviving chiefs, the means of safety.

Ven. Oh! that, like me compliant, at thy word,
Peace, a benign companion, would attend,
And moderate thy cares, while I depart! [*Exit.*

Dum. Have I been guilty? answer me, my heart,
Who now wouldst burst my agonizing breast—
Hath Dumnorix been guilty? Wilt thou, Britain,
To me impute the horrors of this day?
Perhaps a Roman's policy had yielded,
And to a colleague's cruelty and pride
Had sacrificed humanity and justice:
I did not so, and Albion is destroyed.
Yet, oh, be witness, all ye generous spirits,
So lately breathing in those heaps of death,
That in this day's extremity and peril,
Your Dumnorix was mindful of his charge;
My shivered javelin, my divided shield,
And blunted sword, be witness for your master,
You were not idle in that dreadful hour;
Nor even amid the carnage piled around me,
Will I relinquish my pursuit of hope——
Hope may elude me—For myself I fear not——
But my Venusia—Ha! prepare, my soul——
There is thy struggle, on her tender mind
To graft thy firmness, which can welcome death,
And hold it gain, when liberty is lost. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter DUMNORIX.

Dum. TILL good Tenantius and the rest return,
I have been led by solitary care
To yon dark branches, spreading o'er the brook,
Which murmurs through the camp; this mighty camp,
Where once two hundred thousand sons of war,
With restless din, awaked the midnight hour.
Now horrid stillness in the vacant tents
Sits undisturbed; and these incessant rills,
Whose pebbled channel breaks their shallow stream,
Fill with their melancholy sound my ears,
As if I wandered like a lonely hind,
O'er some dead fallow, far from all resort!
Unless that, ever and anon, a groan
Bursts from a soldier, pillowed on his shield
In torment, or expiring with his wounds,
And turns my fixed attention into horror.
Venusia comes—The hideous scene around me
Now prompts the hard but necessary duty.——
Yet how to name thee, death, without thy terrors!

Enter VENUSIA.

Ven. Thou didst enjoin my absence. I departed.
With ill-timed care if now returning——
Dum. No.
Ven Alas! deep-plunged in sadness still I find thee.
Dum. Dost thou? Come nearer. Thou hast seen this day,
How thy perfidious, thy inveterate sister
Hath stained my glory, and my fortune baffled;
Thou hast received me vanquished, who before
Was used to greet thee with the sound of conquest.
Now tell me truly; am I still the same
In my Venusia's eyes?
Ven. What means my lord?
Dum. Am I still loved and honoured, as before?
Ven. Canst thou suspect that fortune rules my love?
Thy power and honours may be snatched away,
Thy wide possessions pass to other lords,
And frowning heaven resume whate'er it gave,
All but my love, which ne'er shall know decay,
But ev'n in ruin shall augment its fondness.
Dum. Then will my dictates be regarded still.
Ven. Impart this moment thy revered commands;
And if it prove within my slender power
To ease thy troubles, I will bless the gods,
And, unrepining, to our fate submit.
Dum. Think not my own calamities distress me;
I can encounter fortune's utmost malice:
But, oh! for thee, Venusia——
Ven. Do not fear.
While in these faithful arms I hold my lord,
I never shall complain. Let every ill,
Let ruin and captivity o'ertake me,
With thee I will be happy.
Dum. Ha! Venusia!
Could thou and I find happiness together,
Deprived of freedom? Dost thou mark?
Ven. I do.
Dum. Thou art most fair; but could thy lovely face
Make slavery look comely? Could the touch
Of that soft hand convey delight to mine,
With servile fetters on?
Ven. Why dost thou gaze
Thus stedfastly upon me?
Dum. I would have thee
Reflect once more upon the loss of freedom.
Ven. It is the heaviest, sure, of human woes.
Dum. Learn one thing more, and, though relentless Heaven
Its care withdraws from this ill-destined isle,
Thou, in the fall of nations, shalt be safe.
Oh! heed, Venusia! never did thy welfare
Raise in my breast such tender cares before;
Else from the public danger would I spare
These precious moments to assist thy virtue?
Ven. Thou makest me all attention.
Dum. Reach thy hand.
Now, while I hold thee, do I bless Andate,
That this free hand, protected by my sword,
Hath not yet known the shameful doom of bondage.
Ven. Nor shall I know it; thy unshaken valour
Will be my safeguard still.
Dum. If fate confounds
My utmost efforts, can I then protect thee?
Ven. Why dost thou leave me to despair? Why fill
My breast with terrors? Never did I see thee,
Till this sad hour, thus hopeless and dejected.
Oh! how shall I, a woman, weak and fearful,
Sustain my portion of the general woe,
If thou, in perils exercised and war,
Dost to ill fortune bow thy gallant spirit?
Dum. Think not, Venusia, I abandon hope.
No, on the verge of ruin will I stand,
And, dauntless, combat with our evil fate;
Nor till its rancour bear me to the bottom,
My soul shall ever entertain despair:
But as the wisest and the best resolved
Cannot controul the doubtful chance of war,
I would prepare thee for the worst event.
Ven. Fly where thou wilt, my faithful steps shall follow.

I can pursue thy course with naked feet,
Though roaming o'er the rough and pointed crags,
Or through the pathless tract of deepest woods;
By thy dear hand supported, would I pass
Through the cold snow, which hides the mountain's brow,
And o'er the frozen surface of the vale.
Dum. Thou best of women! I believe thou wouldst;
Believe thy constant heart would teach those limbs,
Thus soft and gentle, to support all hardship,
And hold with me society in toil.
But should we want the wretched power to fly,
What then?
Ven. What then?
Dum. The Romans may surround us.
Ven. How wouldst thou act in such a dreadful season?
Dum. Ne'er shall the hands of Dumnorix endure
The shame of fetters; ne'er shall Rome behold
This breast, which honourable war hath seamed,
Pant with the load of bondage: generous wounds!
Ye deep engraven characters of glory,
Ye faithful monitors of Albion's cause,
Oft, when your midnight anguish had rebuked
Oblivious slumber from my watchful pillow,
And in her danger kept my virtue waking:
You, when that office can avail no more,
Will look more graceful on my death-cold bosom,
Than to be shewn before the scoffing Romans,
Should they behold that Dumnorix in shackles.
Whom they once dreaded in the field of war.
Ven. Assist me, Heaven!
Dum. Speak out. I watch to hear thee.
My powers are all suspended with attention.
Ven. What shall I do?
Dum. Explain thy thoughts.
Ven. I cannot.
Dum. Why canst thou not? Remember who thou art,
And who thy husband is.
Ven. The first of men,
Joined to the least deserving of her sex.
Dum. View thy own heart; be conscious of thy merit;
And, in his strength confiding, be secure,
That thou art worthy of the greatest man,
And not unequal to the noblest task.
Ven. Oh, I will struggle to assert that claim!
Yet, dearest lord, extend thy whole indulgence,
Nor undeserving of thy love esteem me,
While trembling thus.
Dum. I know thy native softness.
Yet wherefore dost thou tremble? Speak, my love.
Ven. Oh, I have not thy courage, not been used,
Like thee, to meet the dreadful shape of death;
I never felt the anguish of a wound;
Thy arm hath still kept danger at a distance:
If now it threatens, and my heart no more
Must beat with safety, it is new to me.
Dum. It is, my love. My tenderness implies
No expectation, that thy gentle mind
Should be at once familiarized with fate.
Not insurmountable I hold our danger.
But to provide against delusive fortune,
That thou may'st bear, unterrified, the lot,
Which best shall suit thy dignity and name,
Demands thy care; take counsel of thy virtue.
Ven. I will.
Dum. And arm thy breast with resolution.
Ven. Indeed I will, and ask the gracious gods
To fill my heart with constancy and spirit,
And shew me worthy of a man, like thee:
Perhaps their succour, thy revered injunction,
And high example, may controul my terrors.
But, Oh! what power shall soothe another care,
Than life more precious, and a keener pang
Than death's severest agony, relieve;
The sad remembrance of my helpless infants,
Our love's dear pledges, who before me rise
In orphan woe, defenceless and forsaken,
And all my borrowed fortitude dissolve!
Dum. Thou perfect pattern of maternal fondness,
And conjugal compliance, rest assured,
That care was never absent from my soul.
Confide in me; thy children shall be safe.
Ven. How safe?
Dum. Shall live in safety. Thou shalt know.
Mean time retire. Our anxious chiefs, returned,
Wait my commands, and midnight is advancing.
[*Exit Venusia.*
She goes——her love and duty will surmount
This hideous task——Oh, morning, bright in hope,
Closed by a night of horror, which reduces
This poor——dear woman, yet in blooming years,
Blessed in her husband, in her offspring blessed,
Perhaps to cut her stem of being short
With her own tender hand——if ever tears
Might sort with valour, nor debase a soldier,
It would be now——Ha! whither do I plunge?

Enter EBRANCUS, TENANTIUS, *and Trinobantians.*

Dum. Well, my brave friends, what tidings?
Ebran. Through thy quarter,
With weary steps, and mourning, have we traversed
A silent desert of unpeopled tents,
Quite to the distant station of the Icenians.
Their chiefs we found in council round the queen;
The multitude was arming: twenty thousand
Were yet remaining, and unhurt by war,
Unlike our Trinobantians, who, unaided,
The fatal onset bore. Those huge battalions,
Which Rome so dreaded, are, alas! no more.
Dum. Be not dejected. Far the greater part

Are fled for shelter to their native roofs,
And will rejoin us, when with force repaired
We may dispute our island still with Rome.
But have you gained access to Boadicea?
Ebran. We have.
Dum. What said she?
Ebran. She approved thy counsel.
Dum. You told her, then, my purpose to retreat
Through yonder forest?
Ebran. To herself alone
We told it.
Dum. I commend you. You have saved us
A conference, both needless and unpleasing.
Ebran. She further bade us note, how all the Icenians
Were then in arms, and ready to advance.
Dum. Return, and tell her, (let thy phrase, Ebrancus,
Be soft and humble) ere two hours be wasted,
We must begin our march. Do you explore
[*To the other Trinobantians.*
The secret passage, and with winged haste
Bring back your tidings. Thou, Tenantius, wait;
[*Exeunt Ebrancus and Trinobantians.*
To thee my inmost bosom I must open,
And to thy friendship trust my tenderest cares.
Thou must pursue thy journey, heed me well,
Quite through the forest——Dost thou know the pass?
Tenan. Yes; where those gushing waters leave the grove,
To seek the valley deeper in the shade,
From the same fountain flows a smaller brook,
Whose secret channel through the thicket winds,
And will conduct me farther down the vale——
Dum. Which once attained, proceed and gain my dwelling.
Give me thy honest hand. Come nearer, soldier,
Thy faithful bosom would I clasp to mine——
Perhaps thy general and thou may never
Embrace again.
Tenan. What means my fearless chief?
Why hast thou called this unaccustomed moisture
Into thy soldier's eyes?
Dum. Thou dost not weep,
My gallant veteran! I have been to blame.
A tenderness, resulting from a care,
Which struggles here, subdued me for a moment.
This shall be soon discharged, and all be well.
I have two boys: if, after all my efforts,
(I speak, not prompted by despair, but caution)
Rome should prevail against me, and our hopes
Abortive fall, take thou these helpless infants;
With thee transport them to our northern frontiers,
And hide them deep in Caledonian woods.
There, in their growing years, excite and cherish
The dear remembrance of their native fields;
That, to redeem them from the Italian spoiler,
If e'er some kind occasion should invite,
Forth from their covert they may spring undaunted.
Ne'er let the race of Dumnorix divert
One thought from Albion to their own repose.
Remind them often of their father's toils,
Whom thou leavest grappling to the last with fortune.
And if beneath this island's mouldering state,
I, to avoid disgraceful chains, must sink,
Fain would my spirit in the hope depart,
That on the ruins, which surround my fall,
A new-born structure may hereafter stand,
Raised by my virtue, living in my sons. [*Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter VENUSIA.

Ven. A HOLLOW sound of tumult strikes my ear;
Perhaps the howl of some night-roaming wolves,
Who, waked by hunger, from their gloomy haunts
Are trooping forth, to make their fell repast
On my fresh-bleeding countrymen, whose limbs
O'erspread the valley. Shall I mourn your fall,
Lost friends, who, couched in death, forget your cares,
I, who may shortly join your ghastly band,
Unless that forest yield its promised aid?
O hope, sweet flatterer! whose delusive touch
Sheds on afflicted minds the balm of comfort,
Relieves the load of poverty, sustains
The captive, bending with the weight of bonds,
And smooths the pillow of disease and pain,
Send back the exploring messenger with joy,
And let me hail thee from that friendly grove!

Enter DUMNORIX.

Dum. Why hast thou left thy couch?
Ven. I heard a sound,
Like tumult at a distance.
Dum. So did I,
As near the opening pass I stood, to watch
Our messenger's return.

Enter EBRANCUS.

What means this haste?
Why lookst thou pale?
Ebran. With thy instructions charged,
I sought the Icenian quarter. All around
Was solitude and silence. When I called,
No voice replied. To Boadicea's tent
With fearful haste I trod. Her daughters there

I found in consternation. I enquired
The cause: they answered only with their tears;
Till from the princess Emmeline at last
I learned, that all the Icenians were that hour
In silent march departed; but their course
She could not tell me: that her furious mother
Had, with a fell, determined look, enjoined them
To wait her pleasure, which should soon be known;
Mean time to rest immoveable and mute.

Enter an Icenean carrying a bowl.

Ven. My Dumnorix, defend me!
Dum. Ha! what means
This wild demeanour—wilt thou speak, Icenean?
Fear not, my love; thy Dumnorix is near.
What is that bowl, thou carriest?
Icen. Honoured chief,
If aught appears disordered in my gesture,
Which ill becomes the reverence I owe thee,
Charge that demerit to my horrid errand,
And not to me.
Ven. What will befall us now!
Dum. [*To the Icenean.*] Wilt thou begin?
Icen. I come from Boadicea.
Dum. Where is she?
Icen. Far advanced o'er yonder vale.
Dum. With what intention?
Icen. To assail the Romans.
Dum. Assail the Romans!
Icen. To surprise their camp,
At this dead hour, with unexpected slaughter.
Before she marched, to me this secret charge,
In words like these she gave. 'Observe our course;
'When I have passed the camp's extremest verge,
'Back to my daughters and Venusia speed:
'Tell them, I go our fortune to restore,
'If unsuccessful, never to return.
'Should that stern doom attend me, bid them take
'The last, best gift, which dying I can leave them;
'That of my blood no part may prove dishonoured.
'The Trinobantian, of his Roman friends
'So well deserving, may accept their grace.'
This said, with wild emotion in her breast,
Her visage blackening with despair and horror,
She straight committed to my trembling hands
Two fatal bowls, which flow with poisoned streams:
I have accomplished half my horrid task
With Boadicea's daughters.
Dum. Frantic woman!
Who hopes with fury and despair to match
The vigilance and conduct of Suetonius.
Icen. From this ill-fated hand receive the draught,
Whose hue and odour warrant it the juice
Of that benumbing plant, the Druids gather;
That plant, whose drowsy moisture lulls the sense,
And, with a silent influence, expels
The unresisting spirit from her seat.
Dum. Mistaken woman! did she deem Venusia
Was unprovided of this friendly potion——
Perform thy orders; bear it to my tent.
Thou mayst not want it yet——take comfort, love.

Enter a second Icenian.

2d Icen. Oh! Dumnorix!
Dum. Icenian, spare thy voice.
Thy flight, thy terror, and thy wounds interpret
Too plainly.
2d Icen. We are vanquished.
Dum. I believe thee.
2d Icen. Oh! I have much to tell thee—but I faint.
Dum. [*To Ebrancus.*] Conduct him hence, and learn the whole event,
[*Exit Icenian, with Ebrancus.*
Ven. On you, celestial arbiters, we call.
Now as we stand environed by distress,
Now weigh our actions past, deformed, or fair.
If e'er oppression hath defiled his valour,
In help and pity to the woes of others,
Our hearts been scanty, and our hands reserved,
Let our transgressions ratify our doom:
Else with your justice let our merits plead,
To hold its shield before us, and repel
These undeserved misfortunes!
Dum. Heaven may hear,
And through that forest lead us still to safety.
Ha! no; each power against us is combined;
What but their anger, levelled at our heads,
Could bring Tenantius back, so strictly charged
To seek our home—the intercepting foes
Have seized the secret pass.
Ven. Whose guardian care
Now to the gloomy shelter of a desert,
To solitary innocence and peace,
Will guide our friendless orphans?
Dum. True, Venusia.
Through every trial Heaven is pleased to lead us,
Droop not—one comfort never can forsake us.
The mind, to virtue trained, in every state,
Rejoicing, grieving, dying, must possess
The exalted pleasure to exert that virtue.

Enter TENANTIUS.

Ven. Speak, speak, Tenantius!
Tenan. We pursued our course,
But had not travelled far, before we heard
The sound of footsteps dashing through the brook,
Whose winding channel marks the secret way.
Not long we stood in wonder, ere a troop
Of Romans sallied forth, and made us captives.
Dum. Why then, farewell to what was left of hope.
Tenan. Not so, my lord.

Ven. Speak. What resource is left?
Tenan. We were conducted to the Roman leaders;
One fierce and haughty, gentler far the other,
Who calmed his stern companion, gave us comfort,
Named thee with reverence; then, an ardent zeal
Disclosing for thy safety, and requesting
A short, but friendly conference between you,
With courtesy dismissed us.
Ven. Is he near?
Tenan. Hard by he waits for an impatient answer,
Just where the pass is open to the tent.
Dum. What would the Roman?
Ven. Hasten back, Tenantius,
And say, that Dumnorix consents to parley.
Dum. Ha! trust our freedom in a Roman's power?
Tenan. Unarmed and single will the Roman join thee.
Dum. Oh, ineffectual effort!
Ven. Only see him,
If but to parley for thy children's safety.
Weak as I am, unequal to these conflicts,
I would embrace destruction, ere request thee
Once to comply with aught below thy greatness.
Dum. Let him approach.

Enter EBRANCUS.

What hast thou learnt, my soldier?
Ebran. Like ours, the Icenian force is all destroyed.
Dum. And Boadicea.
Ebran. Nought of her I know,
But that she found the Roman host embattled,
Which she had fondly deemed immersed in sleep.
Dum. And so is fallen a victim to her folly.
Retire. [*Exit Ebrancus.*

Enter FLAMINIUS.

Tenan. [*To Flam.*] Thy helmet cast aside, restores thee
To my remembrance. Lo! thy benefactors.
Flam. Brave Dumnorix!
Dum. My captive!
Flam. Yes, Flaminius,
Who owes to thy humanity his life.
Dum. Where hast thou hid thee from my notice? Rather,
Whence now return'st, ennobled with command,
No more in thraldom, but a Roman leader?
Flam. Amid the tumult of your late defeat
We sought the adjacent forest; thence we passed
The vale below, and reached the Roman tents.
Dum. And now are masters of our late retreat—
Had I been cruel, Britain had been safe.
Flam. Was this an act unworthy of a soldier?
Dum. Our woes are all the progeny of folly,
Not charged to thee or fortune.
Ven. Heaven, well pleased,
Perhaps ordained this unforeseen event,
That our benevolence to brave Flaminius
Its due return of gratitude should find.
Flam. The life you gave me, to your mutual welfare
I here devote. My influence, my power,
My thoughts, my care, to soften your afflictions,
Shall all combine. Surrender to your friend,
Before Suetonius, with his legions, pours
On your defenceless camp, who long in arms
Hath stood, expecting the appointed signal,
Which he enjoined us with the dawn to rear.
Dum. Though thou didst well, accepting life from me,
That gift from thee must Dumnorix refuse.
Flam. Thou wilt not rob my gratitude of power,
To shew how well thy goodness was bestowed!
Dum. Wouldst thou see me led
A sullen captive, and through haughty Rome,
Inglorious, count my paces to the clink
Of my own chains? This faithful woman too—
Ven. Like thee, disdains a being so preserved.
Flam. Oh, let me water with my tears your feet!
If every drop, which issues from my heart,
Could from the doom you justly scorn secure you,
Before you now the purple sluice should open;
And let my knees, in humblest adoration,
Before such elevated virtue bend.
Oh, god-like Britons! my acknowledged patrons
And benefactors, if my soul retain not
Your memory for ever dear and sacred,
May disappointment, poverty, and shame
Deform my life, and pining sickness close
My youthful eyes untimely in the grave!
Dum. Thou seem'st, of all the Romans, to possess
A heart which feels for others. Rise and hear.
Though we reject the wretched boon of life,
Thou may'st, Flaminius, yet repay our bounty.
Flam. Then will I ask no other grace from Heaven.
Dum. We have two children——
Ven. Oh, my bleeding heart!
My poor, deserted infants, whom these arms
No more must cherish, nor my lulling voice
Hush in the quiet of my sheltering bosom!
Dum. [*Aside.*] Yet shall not this unman me. I will feel
A father's anguish, but conceal the pain.
[*To Flam.*] Know, then, I meant this faithful friend, Tenantius,
Should traverse yonder wood to reach my dwelling,
Which lies remote, and thence convey my sons
Far from these borders, to extremest north,
Where they might rest secure, nor share the ills
Doomed to their parents. Wilt thou let him pass?
Flam. I will, and Jove be witness to my word!

Dum. Give thy last charge, Venusia, to Tenantius.
One word apart with thee, my Roman friend.
As thou art generous, answer me with truth.
When must thou make thy signal?
Flam. At the dawn,
Whose beams, though faint, already tinge the east.
Dum. What time will bring your legions near this tent?
Flam. An hour at farthest.
Dum. I have heard, Flaminius,
Of your forefathers' spirit, how they fell
Oft on their swords to shun ignoble bondage.
This part have we to act; and, friendly Roman,
When thou shalt see our cold remains—my own
Are little worth attention—Oh, remember
Venusia's goodness, and her gentle clay
Defend from shame and insult!
Flam. Thou dost pierce
My heart—I cannot answer—But believe
These tears sincere.
Dum. Enough. Perform thy promise.
Thy obligations will be then discharged.
Farewell. Fulfil thy general's commands.
[*Exit Flaminius.*
Ven. [*To Tenan.*] Thou future parent of my orphan babes,
Soon as their generous minds imbibe thy precepts,
And thy example warms their budding virtues,
Do not forget to tell them, that no perils,
Nor death in all its terrors, can efface
Maternal love; that their ill-fated mother,
Amid this awful season of distress,
Wept but for them, and lost her fears in fondness.
Dum. We have been long companions, brave Tenantius,
Thy leader I, once fortunate and great,
And thou my faithful and intrepid soldier.
Nay, do not weep; we have not time for wailing.
By thy approved fidelity and love,
Thy chief, just entering death's unfolded gates,
Stops, and once more conjures thee to retain
This his last charge in memory—his children.
[*Exit Tenantius.*
The sun is risen. All hail! thou last of days
To this nigh-finished being. Radiant power!
Thou through thy endless journey mayest proclaim,
That Dumnorix died free, for thou shalt view it.
Behold! the appointed signal from the grove,
Just as Flaminius warned us, is upreared,
To call Suetonius and his legions on.
Come Desolation, Tyranny, resort
To thy new seat; come, Slavery, and bend
The neck of Albion, all her sons debase,
And ancient virtue from their hearts expel!
Now, then, ye honoured mansions of our fathers,
Ye hallowed altars, and ye awful groves,
The habitation of our gods, farewell!
And yet the guilty authoress of these woes
Deserves a share of praise, who, still retaining
One unextinguished spark of generous honour,
Scorned to remain spectatress or partaker
Of Albion's fall, and, dying, still is free.
Need I say more, Venusia?
This last embrace. And now prepare, Venusia.
Ven. Oh, my lord!
Dum. Why heaves that sigh?
Ven. Alas, I am a woman!
Dum. True, a defenceless woman, and exposed
To keener sorrow by thy matchless beauty;
That charm, which captivates the victor's eye,
Yet, helpless to withstand his savage force,
Throws wretched woman under double ruin.
But wherefore this? Thy virtue knows its duty.
Ven. Stay but a little!
Dum. Would I might for years!
But die that thought!—False tenderness, away!
Thou British genius, who art now retiring
From this lost region, yet suspend thy flight,
And in this conflict lend me all thy spirit——
We only ask thee to be free, and die. [*Aside.*
Well, my Venusia, is thy soul resolved,
Or shall I still afford a longer pause?
Ven. Though my weak sex by nature is not armed
With fortitude like thine, of this be sure,
That dear subjection to thy honoured will,
Which hath my life directed, even in death
Shall not forsake me; and thy faithful wife
Shall with obedience meet thy last commands.
But canst thou tell me? Is it hard to die?
Dum. Oh! rather ask me, if to live in shame,
Captivity, and sorrow, be not hard?
Ven. Oh, miserable!
Dum. In a foreign land
The painful toils of servitude to bear
From an imperious mistress?
Ven. Dreadful thought!
Dum. Or be insulted with the hateful love
Of some proud master?
Ven. Oh, proceed
No further!
Dum. From thy native seat of dwelling,
From all the known endearments of thy home,
From parents, children, friends, and—husband torn!——
Ven. Stop there, and reach the potion; nor to drink
The cure of troubles will I longer pause.
[*Exit Dumnorix.*
For every past possession of delight,
Both in my offspring and their godlike sire,
A dying matron bends her grateful knee,
Ye all-disposing powers! as now these blessings
Must reach their period, to my sons transfer
That copious goodness, I have shared so long!
Through my resigning soul that promise breathe,
And my last moments comfort thus with peace!

Re-enter DUMNORIX *with a bowl.*

Dum. [*Aside, seeing Venusia on her knees.*]
Hold, resolution; now be doubly armed.
[*He gives her the bowl, and she drinks.*
Now stand awhile before the fanning breeze;
So, with its subtle energy, the potion,
Less rudely stealing on the powers of life,
Will best perform its office, to remove
Pain, fear, and grief, for ever from thy breast.
Dost thou not feel already every terror
Begin to lessen? that a calm succeeds
Within thy bosom, banishing the sense
Of present pain, and fear of future woes?
How dost thou fare, Venusia?
Ven. I perceive
No alteration; every sense remains
Yet unimpaired. Then, while these moments last,
Let me on thee direct my eyes to gaze,
While unobstructed still their sight endures;
Let me receive thee to my faithful bosom,
Before my heart is motionless and cold.
Speak to me, Dumnorix, my lord, my husband!
Give one kind accent to thy dying wife,
Ere yet my ears be frozen, and thy voice
Be heard no longer; join thy lip to mine,
While I can feel thy last and tenderest kisses.
Dum. Yes, I will utter to thy dying ear
All my fond heart, sustain thee on my bosom,
And cheer thy parting spirit in its flight.
Oh, wheresoe'er thy fleeting breath shall pass,
Whate'er new body, as the Druids sing,
Thou shalt inform hereafter, still thy soul,
Thou gentle, kind, and ever-pleasing creature,
Shall bear its own felicity along,
Still in its native sweetness shall be blessed,
And in its virtue, which can thus subdue
The fear of death, still brave the power of fortune!
But thou begin'st to droop!
Ven. My eyes grow dizzy.
Dum. Keep firm, my heart! [*Aside.*
Ven. A heaviness, like sleep,
O'ercomes my senses—Every limb is faint——
Thy voice is scarce distinguished in my ears.
Dum. Indeed!
Ven. Alas! thou look'st so kindly on me!
My weak and darkened sight deceives me sure,
Or thy fond eye did never yet o'erflow
With tenderness like this.
Dum. I never viewed thee
For the last time.
Ven. Look, look upon me still——
Why dost thou turn thy face away?
Dum. For nothing.
Vet. Nay, thou art weeping, Dumnorix—And wherefore
Wouldst thou conceal thy tears?
Dum. I cannot hide them.
Ven. And dost thou weep?
Dum. I do.
Ven. Then didst thou love me
With such excess of fondness? For Venusia
Do these soft streams bedew that awful face?
Dum. Love thee! Behold, when Albion grows around me,
Yet thou these springs of tenderness canst open,
To wet the cheeks of British Dumnorix.
Ven. Oh, ecstacy! which stops my parting soul,
And gives it vigour to enjoy these transports!—
Once more receive me to thy breast.
Dum. Venusia!
Ven. Thy tenderness makes death delightful to me——
Oh, I would speak!—would answer to thy kindness——
My faultering tongue——
Dum. What sayst thou?
Ven. Cease to grieve——
No pain molests me—every pain is calm——
Support my drowsy burthen to that couch——
Where death—serenely smiles.
[*He bears her off.*

Enter FLAMINIUS, *speaking to the Romans behind the scene.*

Flam. My warlike friends,
Keep back—Our troops on every side advance;
I cannot long controul them. Yet I tremble
To enter there——By Heaven, he lives, and sees me!

Re-enter DUMNORIX, *with his sword drawn.*

Dum. Importunate Flaminius! art thou come
To rob my dying moments of their quiet?
Flam. Forgive the crime of ignorance—Forgive,
Since accident hath joined us once again,
If strong compassion at thy fate yet pleads——
Dum. What! when Venusia is no more?
Flam. No more!
Dum. No; and be further lessoned by a Briton,
Who, since his union with the best of women,
Hath never known an interval of love,
And at this solemn pause yet melts in fondness:
While death's black curtain shrouds my cold Venusia,
Of dearer value doth my soul esteem her,
Than should those eyes rekindle into lustre,
And every charm revive with double power
Of winning beauty, if alone to shine
Amid the gloom of bondage.
Flam. I will urge
No more. Farewell—our legions hover nigh.
[*Exit.*
Dum. Now in my breast resume thy wonted seat,
Thou manly firmness, which so oft has borne me
Through every toil and danger. Oh, return,
Rise o'er my sorrow, and complete thy last,
Thy highest task, to close a life of glory——
They come!—Be swift, my sword—By thee to fall,

Near that dear clay extended, best becomes
A soldier's courage, and a husband's love.
[*Exit.*

Enter ENOBARBUS, FLAMINIUS, *and Romans.*

Enob. To Boadicea's quarter I advanced,
At thy request, who, since her last defeat,
Blind with despair and disappointed fury,
Fled to her tent; expiring, there, I found her,
With one ill-fated daughter, both by poison;
Nor had the friendly Emmeline escaped,
But by the swift prevention of my hand.
Dost thou not thank me, whose suggestion prompted
Our quick return to seize the secret pass?
Thou gav'st me freedom; love and fame repay thee.

Flam. If thou could'st add, that Dumnorix survived——

Enob. [*Looking into the tent.*] Thou seest the gods have otherwise decreed.
Forbear to mingle vain regret with conquest.
He hath done nobly. Fair befall his urn!
Death is his triumph, which a captive life
Had forfeited to Rome, with all the praise
Now from the virtuous to his ashes due.

Flam. Then art thou fallen at last, thou mighty tower,
And more than Roman edifice of glory?
See, too, Venusia, pale in death's embrace,
Presents her faded beauties. Lovely ruin!
Of every grace and virtue once the seat!
The last kind office from my hand receive,
Which shall unite thee to thy husband's side,
And to one grave your mingling reliques trust.
There soon a hallowed monument shall rise;
Insculptored laurel with the myrtle twined,
The well-wrought stone adorning, shall proclaim
His generous valour, and thy faithful love.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

CREUSA.

BY

WHITEHEAD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
XUTHUS, *king of Athens.*	CREUSA, *queen of Athens.*
ILYSSUS, *an unknown youth, attendant on the temple at Delphi.*	PYTHIA, *priestess of Apollo.*
ALETES, *a Grecian sage.*	LYCEA, *and other women attending on the queen.*
PHORBAS, *an old Athenian.*	*Virgins belonging to the temple.*
Priests of Apollo.	*Guards, &c.*
Citizens of Athens.	

Scene—The vestibule of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and the laurel grove adjoining.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Vestibule of the Temple.*

Enter ILYSSUS *and Virgins.*

Ilys. HASTE, haste, ye virgins; round the columns twine
Your flowery chaplets; and with streams, fresh-drawn
Of Castaly, bedew the sacred porch
Of the great god of day. Already see
His orient beam has reached the double top
Of high Parnassus, and begins to shed
A gleamy lustre o'er the laurel grove!
Haste, haste, ye virgins. From the vale beneath
I hear the noise of chariots and of steeds,
Which hither bend their course; for every sound
Seems nearer than the former.—And behold
A reverend stranger, who, perhaps, proclaims
The approach of some great monarch, to consult
All-seeing Phœbus, or implore his aid.
Haste, haste, ye virgins!

Enter PHORBAS.

Phor. Tell me, gentle maids,
And thou, fair youth, who seem'st to lead the train,
Is this the temple of the Delphic god?

Ilys. It is; and on the middle point of earth
Its firm foundation by immortal hands
Stands fixed.—But break we off; the folded gates
Unbar, and, lo! the priestess' self appears!

[*The Pythia speaks as she descends from the temple.*

Pyth. Hence, ye profane! nor with unhallowed step
Pollute the threshold of the Delian king,
Who slew the Python!—Say, from whence thou art,
And what thy business, stranger.

Phor. Sacred maid,
From Athens am I come, the harbinger
Of great Creusa, mine and Athens' queen.

Pyth. Comes she on pious purpose, to adore
The mystic shrine oracular?

Phor. She does;
And with her comes the partner of her bed,
Æolian Xuthus: he, whose powerful arm

Saved Athens from her fate; and, in return,
From good Erectheus' bounteous hand received
His daughter and his crown.—Would he had found
Some other recompence! [*Half aside.*
Pyth. [*Overhearing him.*] Would he had found!
Old age is talkative, and I may learn
Somewhat of moment from him.—Wherefore come they?
Does famine threaten, or wide-wasting plague
Infest the land?
Phor. Thank Heaven, our crowded streets
Have felt no dire disease; and plenty still
Laughs in our blooming fields. Alas! I fear
The childless goddess, who presides o'er Athens,
Has found a surer method to declare
How ill she brooks, that any stranger hand
Should wield the Athenian sceptre.
Pyth. Does from her
The vengeance come?
Phor. I know not whence it comes;
But this I know, full fifteen years have rolled
Since first their hands were joined, and rolled in vain;
For still the royal pair in silence mourn,
Cursed with a barren bed. For this they come,
To explore the latent cause, and beg of Heaven
To grant an heir, or teach them where to fix,
On what selected head, the Athenian crown.
Pyth. And Heaven, no doubt, will hear and grant their prayer.——
Ilyssus, haste, and bid the priests prepare
For sacrifice. You, Nysa, and your sisters,
Amid the laurel grove, with speed perform
The morning's due lustration.
Then hither all return.——Myself, meanwhile,
Will tempt the vice of age, and try to draw
Some useful secrets from him. [*Aside.*
The good king,
Of whom you speak, Erectheus, did his people
Esteem and love him as they ought? for fame
Talked largely of his worth. He was a king—
Phor. He was my good old master; such a king
As Heaven but rarely sends. Did we esteem
And love him, dost thou ask? Oh, we adored him;
He was our father, not our king.—These tears,
At least, may speak my heart.—We must not hope,
In these degenerate times, to see him equalled.
He never did an unkind act, but once,
And then he thought the public good required it;
Though much, I fear, the evils we lament
From thence derive their origin.
Pyth. What act?
That unkind act?
Phor. O maid, 'twere long to tell
The whole unhappy story; yet, in part,
Hear what to me appears too closely joined
With these our present ills. There was a youth,
Athenian born, but not of royal blood,
His name Nicander; him unlucky fate
Had made the lover of our present queen,
While yet a maid. What will not love attempt
In young ambitious minds? He told his pain,
And won the fair, in secret, to admit,
And to return his passion. The good king
Was for a time deceived, but found, at last,
The audacious fraud, and drove the guilty youth
To banishment perpetual. Some say
'Twas by his means he fell, though that my heart
Consents not to believe. Thus much is sure;
Nicander wandered forth a wretched exile,
And, ere few days had passed, upon the road
Were found his well-known garments stained with blood.
Sure sign of murder, and as sure a sign
No needy robber was the instrument.
Pyth. How bore Creusa this?
Phor. At first her sorrows
Were loud and frantic. Time, at length, subdued
Her rage to silent grief. The good old king,
To soothe her woes, consented she should raise
A tomb to her Nicander, and perform
A kind of annual rites to parted love.
Pyth. But that not long continued, for we find
She married Xuthus.
Phor. 'Twas a match of state;
He saved her country, and she gave her hand,
Because that country asked it. But her heart
Is buried with Nicander. Still to him,
And Xanthus' self permits it, she performs
Her yearly offerings, and adorns with flowers
An empty tomb.——Would he had lived, and reigned
Her wedded lord! we had not wanted then
The assistance of a stranger arm to guard
The Athenian state; nor had we then been driven
To search for heirs at Delphi.
Pyth. Stop thy tongue,
Or speak with reverence of the sacred shrine!—
Thy words were hasty, but thy silence now
Makes just atonement for them.—Then, perhaps,
Thou think'st this want of heirs a curse entailed
By Heaven on Athens, for Nicander's death
And Xuthus' reign?
Phor. I am Athenian born,
Nor love Æolian kings, however great
And good they may be.
Pyth. The imperial Xuthus
Is much renowned.
Phor. Is virtuous, brave, and pious;
Perhaps too pious.——
Pyth. How!
Phor. Forgive me, maid;
I speak my thoughts with freedom.
Pyth. What thou speak'st
To me is sacred. Then, perchance, thou rank'st
His journey hither, to address the god,
Among those acts which thou wouldst call too pious?
Phor. For me the gods of Athens would suffice.
Yet do I pay just reverence, holy maid,

To thee, and to thy shrine.
Pyth. Thy zeal for Athens
Is too intemperate. But the train returns,
And interrupts our converse. Say, Ilyssus,
Are they prepared?

Enter ILYSSUS *and Virgins.*

Ilys. They are, and only wait
The approaching victims.
Pyth. By yon train, the queen
Is now on her arrival. Thou, Ilyssus,
Receive her here; while I, as custom wills,
Deep in the temple's inmost gloom retire,
And wait the inspiring god. Ilyssus, hear;
When thou hast paid due honours to the queen,
Haste to Aletes; in the laurel grove,
Impatient I expect him; tell him, youth,
Things of uncommon import do demand
His instant presence. But the croud approaches.
Stranger, farewell. I feel, I feel within
An heaven-born impulse, and the seeds of truth
Are labouring in my breast. Stranger, farewell.
[*The Pythia returns to the temple, and the gates shut.*

Enter CREUSA *and Attendants.*

Cre. No farther need we conduct. Bid the guards
Return, and wait the king.
Phor. Does aught of moment
Detain him on the road?
Cre. He stops a while
At great Trophonius' cave, that he may leave
No duty unperformed. Heaven grant his zeal
May meet with just success!
Ilys. Please you, great queen,
In yon pavilion to repose, and taste
Some light refection.
Cre. Ha! Lycea, Phorbas,
What youth is this? There's something in his eyes,
His shape, his voice—What may we call thee, youth?
Ilys. The servant of the god, who guards this fane.
Cre. Bear'st thou no name?
Ilys. Ilyssus, gracious queen,
The priests and virgins calls me.
Cre. Ha? Ilyssus!
That name's Athenian. Tell me, gentle youth,
Art thou of Athens, then?
Ilys. I have no country,
Nor know I whence I am.
Cre. Who were thy parents?
Thy father, mother?
Ilys. Ever honoured queen,
I never knew a mother's tender cares,
Nor heard the instructions of a father's tongue.
Cre. How cam'st thou hither?
Ilys. Eighteen years are past,
Since, in the temple's portal, I was found
A sleeping infant.
Cre. Eighteen years! good Heaven!
That fatal time recalls a scene of woe—
Let me not think. Were there no marks to shew
From whom or whence thou wert?
Ilys. I have been told
An osier basket, such as shepherds weave,
And a few scattered leaves, were all the bed
And cradle I could boast.
Cre. Unhappy child!
But more, O ten times more unhappy they,
Who lost, perhaps, in thee their only offspring!
What pangs, what anguish must the mother feel,
Compelled, no doubt, by some disastrous fate—
But this is all conjecture.
Ilys. O great queen,
Had those from whom I sprung been formed like thee;
Had they e'er felt the secret pangs of nature,
They had not left me to the desert world
So totally exposed. I rather fear
I am the child of lowliness and vice,
And happy only in my ignorance.
Why should she weep? Or if her tears can fall
For even a stranger's but suspected woes,
How is that people blest where she presides
As mother and as queen! Please you retire.
Cre. No, stay. Thy sentiments at least bespeak
A generous education. Tell me, youth,
How has thy mind been formed?
Ilys. In that, great queen,
I never wanted parents. The good priests
And pious priestess, who with care sustained
My helpless infancy, left not my youth
Without instruction. But O, more than all,
The kindest, best good man, a neighbouring sage,
Who has known better days, though now, retired
To a small cottage on the mountain's brow,
He deals his blessings to the simple swains
In balms and powerful herbs—he taught me things,
Which my soul treasures as its dearest wealth,
And will remember ever. The good priests,
'Tis true, had taught the same, but not with half
That force and energy; conviction's self
Dwelt on Aletes' tongue.
Cre. Aletes, saidst thou?
Was that the good man's name?
Ilys. It is, great queen;
For yet he lives, and guides me by his counsels.
Cre. What did he teach thee?
Ilys. To adore high Heaven,
And venerate on earth heaven's image, truth!
To feel for others' woes, and bear my own
With manly resignation. Yet I own
Some things he taught me, which but ill agree
With my condition here.
Cre. What things were those?
Ilys. They were for exercise, and to confirm
My growing strength. And yet I often told him
The exercise he taught resembled much
What I had heard of war. He was himself
A warrior once.

Cre. And did those sports delight thee?
Ilys. Great queen, I do confess my soul mixed with them.
Whene'er I grasped the osier-platted shield,
Or sent the mimic javelin to its mark,
I felt I know not what of spirit in me.
But then I knew my duty, and repressed
The swelling ardour. 'Tis to shades, I cried,
The servant of the temple must confine
His less ambitious, not less virtuous cares.
Cre. Did the good man observe, and blame thy ardour?
Ilys. He only smiled at my too forward zeal;
Nay seemed to think such sports were necessary
To soften what he called more rigorous studies.
Cre. Suppose, when I return to Athens, youth,
Thou shouldst attend me thither! wouldst thou trust
To me thy future fortunes?
Ilys. O most gladly!
But then to leave these shades, where I was nursed
The servant of the god, how might that seem?
And good Aletes too, the kind old man
Of whom I speak? But wherefore talk I thus?
You only throw these tempting lures to try
The ambition of my youth. Please you, retire.
Cre. Ilyssus, we will find a time to speak
More largely on the subject; for the present
Let all withdraw and leave us. Youth, farewell!
I see the place, and will retire at leisure.
Lycea, Phorbas, stay.
Ilys. [*Aside.*] How my heart beats!
She must mean something sure; though good Aletes
Has told me polished courts abound in falsehood.
But *I will* bear the priestess' message to him,
And open all my doubts. [*Exit.*
Phor. Great queen, why stand'st thou silent? Something seems
To labour in thy breast.
Cre. Alas! good Phorbas,
Didst thou observe that youth? When first my eye
Glanced on his beauteous form, methought I saw
The person of Nicander.
Phor. Gracious queen,
Your heart misleads your eyes. The image there,
Too deeply fixed, makes every pleasing object
Bear some resemblance to itself.
Cre. Lycea—
And yet, though thou wast there, I well believe,
Thy youth can scarce remember how he looked,
When from the fight triumphant he returned
Graced with the victor laurel; such a wreath
Is now *Ilyssus* wears—Indeed, Lycea,
Thy mother, had she lived, had thought as I do.
Nay, when he spake, the voice too was Nicander's.
I know not what to think; perhaps 'twas fancy,
Perhaps 'twas something more.
Phor. Illustrious queen!
You do abuse your noble mind, and lend
To mere illusions of the brain, the force
And power to make you wretched. Grant there were
Some slight resemblance of Nicander's form
In young Ilyssus, though my eyes perceive not
Even the most distant likeness; grant there were,
Yet wherefore should the sight so nearly touch thee?
Casual similitude! we know too well
Nicander left no heir. [*She seems disturbed.*
I say not this,
Great queen, to heighten, but relieve your sorrows,
And banish from your breast each vain surmise
Which fancy might suggest.
Cre. Too well, indeed,
O Phorbas, much too well indeed we know
Nicander left no heir to his perfections,
No image of himself. And yet, good Phorbas,
Blame not my folly, nor demand a reason
If I intreat thee to examine strictly
The fortunes of this young unknown. The priests
Or priestess may know more than they entrust
To his unwary youth. The sage he spake of,
Couldst thou not search him out? 'tis somewhere near
He dwells, I think, upon the mountain's brow.
Thou wonderest at me; call it, if thou please,
A woman's weakness; but obey me, Phorbas.
Phor. You say I wonder; 'tis indeed to see
My honoured queen employ her thoughts thus idly
On griefs long past; when things of dear concern
To her and Athens should alarm her nearly.
Cre. What things of near concern?
Phor. See'st thou not, queen,
Thy crown, Erectheus' crown, the crown of Athens,
Wavering in fortune's power?
Cre. The gods will fix it.
Phor. The gods! Ah, great Creusa, may my fears
Be vain and groundless; but I fear the gods
Have left us to ourselves. When we resigned
The Athenian sceptre to a stranger hand,
We did reject their guidance. Wherefore come we
To Delphi now, but that the offended gods
Have turned too long an inattentive ear
To our ill-judged petitions?
Cre. Why ill-judged?
We asked but heirs.
Phor. We did; for Xuthus' heirs,
The race of Æolus. I know, great queen,
They were to spring from thee; but Heaven permits not
The native pureness of the Athenian soil
Should mix with foreign clay. I wish we find not
More alien kings at Delphi.
Cre. Think'st thou Xuthus
Deceives us, then? His worth, his piety,

Forbid the thought. Besides, the sacred place
Admits not of deceit.
Phor. Credulity
Is not the vice of age. Forgive me, queen,
If I suspect that piety which brings us
To search for kings at Delphi. Might not Athens
Have chosen her own monarch? Her brave youth,
Her bearded sages, are they not the flower
And pride of Greece? Nay, might'st not thou, Creusa,
With liberal hand bestowed the imperial wreath?
And who has better right?
Cre. The gods, who gave it
To me, and my great ancestors.
Phor. Whate'er
The gods bestow can never be resumed,
Though we repent. The pious populace
Will reverence kings from heaven!
Cre. And wherefore not?
Phor. O, queen! perhaps my fears are too officious;
But let thy servant beg——
Cre. I know thy zeal
For me, and for thy country. Rest assured,
Creusa never will consent to aught
Which can endanger Athens.
Phor. My heart thanks thee!
Cre. Meanwhile the youth, Ilyssus——
Phor. Should the king,
Confirmed by oracles, presume to fix
A stranger on the throne——
Cre. He will not do it.
Phor. I hope he will not; yet——
Cre. The youth I spake of,
Wilt thou enquire?——
Phor. Should Xuthus lay aside
His usual mildness, and assume at once
The monarch and the husband, couldst thou then——
Cre. In Athens' cause I could resist them all.
But cease these vain suspicions. A few hours
Will prove thy fears were groundless. Meanwhile, Phorbas,
Thou wilt find methods to inform thyself
Touching this unknown youth.
Phor. By yonder guards,
The king should be at hand.
Cre. I will retire
To the pavilion, and expect him there.
Yet hear me, Phorbas; let not Xuthus know
Why thou enquirest.
Phor. Xuthus has other cares.
Cre. The priestess too, I would confer with her:
Though that Lycea may perform. Farewell,
And prosper in thy task—Alas, Lycea!
[*Exit Phorbas.*
There is a secret labours in my breast,
But fate forbids that I should give it utterance.
This boding heart was early taught to feel
Too sensibly; each distant doubt alarms it;
It starts at shadows——But retire we, maid.
Grief is the unhappy charter of our sex;
The gods, who gave us readier tears to shed,
Gave us more cause to shed them. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Laurel Grove.*

Enter ALETES *and* ILYSSUS.

Alet. SEEMED she disturbed when she beheld thee?
Ilys. Much;
And when I gave her the slight hints I knew
Relating to my fortunes, she dissolved
In silent tears: such soft humanity
Sure never dwelt in any breast but hers.
Nor did I think till now that I had cause
Of discontent; but since she wept my fate,
I seem to find a reason in her grief,
And feel myself unhappy.
Alet. Why unhappy?
Ilys. I know not why: and yet to be confined
Thus to a single spot, to draw in air,
To take in nourishment, to live, to die—
For this was man designed? Ah, good Aletes!
Sure thou hast taught me, godlike man was made
For nobler purposes of general good,
For action, not for rest. The queen proposed
I should attend her to the Athenian state;
Wouldst thou advise it? Dost thou think, Aletes,
She meant I should attend her?
Alet. Doubtless, youth,
If she proposed, she meant it.
Ilys. And wouldst thou
Advise I should attend her?
Alet. Wherefore not?
Ilys. May I desert these shades? Or can I leave
Thee, thee, my good Aletes?
Alet. O, Ilyssus!
Strive not to hide thy heart; from me thou canst not:
I formed it, and I know it. Delphi's shades
Have now no peace for thee; thy bosom feels
Ambition's active, unrelenting fires.
Thou wishest and thou hopest thou knowest not what.
'Tis glory thou wouldst have. Go then, brave youth,
Where virtue calls thee: be the means but noble,
Thou canst not soar too high.
Ilys. My more than father!
Thy words inspire me, and I feel a warmth
Unknown before——But then, my birth——
Alet. Thy birth!
Did I not teach thee early to despise

A casual good? Thou art thyself, Ilyssus.
Inform me, youth, wouldst thou be what thou art,
Thus fair, thus brave, thus sensibly alive
To glory's finest feel, or give up all,
To be descended from a line of kings,
The tenth perhaps from Jove? I see thy cheek
Glows a repentant blush—Our greatest heroes,
Those gods on earth, those friends of human kind,
Whose great examples I would set before thee,
Were once unknown, like thee. And yet, if birth
Concern thee, know, prophetic is my speech;
Thy fate is now at work, and a few hours
May shew thee what thou art—My words alarm thee.

Ilys. They do, indeed. Oh, tell me!——

Alet. 'Tis in vain
Thou wouldst enquire from me, what Heaven conceals
Till its fit time. Didst thou not say, Ilyssus,
The Pythia would be here?

Ilys. She comes.

Alet. Retire,
And leave us to ourselves.

Ilys. I will—And yet,
Might I not know——

Alet. From me thou canst know nothing.

Ilys. A few hours, said you?

Alet. Hence, and beg of Heaven
To prosper the event! Retire, and leave us.

[*Exit Ilyssus.*

Enter PYTHIA.

Pyth. Now, good Aletes, if thy pregnant mind,
Deep judging of events, has ever framed
Such artful truths as won believing man
To think them born of Heaven, and made my name
Renowned in Greece, Oh, now exert thy power!
No common cause demands it. Kings and states
Are our solicitors, and Athens' fate
Hangs on my lips.

Alet. I know it. And now,
If, as thou sayest, my secret kind advice,
And worn experience in the ways of men,
Have gained thy altars credit, and with gifts
Loaded thy shrines, now, by one grateful act,
Thou mayest repay me all.

Pyth. What act? Oh, speak!
And gladly I obey.

Alet. An act, my Pythia,
Which, though at first it may seem bold and dangerous,
Shall in the end add lustre to thy shades,
And make even kings protectors of thy fane.
Oh, Pythia! 'twas the hand of Heaven itself
Which brought these royal suppliants to thy shrine.
I could unfold a tale—but let it rest.
Thou shalt ere night know all, and bless with me
The indulgent Powers above. Only in this
Obey me blindly, Pythia.

Pyth. Say, in what?

Alet. Declare Ilyssus heir to Athens' crown.

Pyth. Ilyssus heir! What meanest thou? 'Tis a fraud
Too palpable.

Alet. I knew 'twould startle thee.
But 'tis because thou knowest the fraud, my Pythia,
That it alarms thee. Didst thou really think
This youth were heir to the Athenian crown,
Wouldst thou not seize the happy gift of chance,
And to the world proclaim it?

Pyth. True; I should;
And bless my fate, that, in these sacred shades,
I had nursed up, unknowingly, a king
For my protector. But what then might seem
The consequence, now seems the cause, Aletes:
Will they not say I made the king, to gain
The kind protector?

Alet. So to thee it seems;
But who will say it? The believing many
Will bow with reverence and implicit faith
To what thy shrine ordains; and for the few
Who may suspect the cheat, true policy
Will keep them silent. Should they dare detect
A fraud like this, and spurn at right divine,
Where were their power! The many-headed beast
Would feel the slackened rein, and from his back
Shake off the lordly rider. Nay, should Athens
Be blind to her own good, the states of Greece,
Thou know'st it well, would arm in thy defence,
And force her to receive the king thou gav'st her.
His form, his unknown birth, his winning softness,
His education here in Heaven's own eye,
All plead in his behalf. And, as he tells me,
The queen already, with unusual marks
Of favour, has beheld him. For the king,
A pious awe and reverence for the gods
Is his distinguished attribute. Thou seem'st
To weigh my words. To clear thy doubts at once,
Know, many days are past since first I knew
Of their approach. Thou think'st I should have told thee.
It needed not. I have myself prepared
Each previous circumstance, and found due means
To forward the event. Thy part is easy;
Behold the oracle.

Pyth. [*Reads.*] "A banished youth is Athens' cause of woe."
How know'st thou that?

[*Looking earnestly at him.*

Alet. Demand not, but read on.

Pyth. [*Reads.*] "For that youth, banished Athens must receive
Another youth; and on the young unknown,
Who tends my shrine, and whom I call my son,
Bestow the imperial wreath. The god declares
No more."

Alet. Thou seem'st amazed.
Pyth. I am indeed,
To find thee thus instructed on a theme
I came prepared to mention. The queen's passion,
Her lover banished——
Alet. What thou secst I know
May tell thee I know more. But say from whence
Thou gainest thy intelligence.
Pyth. From one
Whose zeal may thwart thy schemes; a warm old man,
And firm in Athens' cause, who came to-day
Before the rest, and, led by my enquiries,
Gave me those hints, on which I thought to build
Prophetic, doubtful answers. But I find
My best instructor here.
Alet. Perhaps thou dost.
Of this rest well assured, I ne'er had asked
Of Pythia aught but what I knew with safety
She might comply with.
Pyth. Tell me what thou know'st.
Alet. Not yet; 'tis better thou remain in ignorance
Till all be finished. But pronounce the oracle,
And leave the rest to me. Dost thou distrust me?
Pyth. I do not. Yet, if on slight hints alone
Thou form'st this weighty fraud, consider well
What may, or may not follow. By thy looks,
There should be something hid. Thy coming hither
Was much upon the time we found this child;
And since, with what almost paternal care
Thou hast instructed him! Though that, indeed,
Might spring from thy benevolence of heart,
Which I have known is boundless. Say, Aletes,
What should I think? Thou smil'st.
Alet. Wilt thou obey me?
Pyth. I will: and yet, if 'tis a fraud, Aletes,
The warm old man, of whom I spake, detests
A stranger king. Even Xuthus' self, whose worth
He doth acknowledge great, he views with pain
Upon the Athenian throne.
Alet. I know him well;
'Tis Phorbas. Do not wonder at my words,
But find a means that I may see the queen
In secret, unobserved by prying eyes,
And all that old man's fears and rage shall vanish.
He shall with joy receive a stranger king.
Wilt thou devise the means?
Pyth. I now begin
To hope indeed. There is some secret hid
Of most important weight. But does the queen—
Alet. I will not answer thee; my time's too precious.
Only devise some means that I may see her
Quite unobserved by all.
Pyth. You cannot see her
Till all be past. Will that suffice?
Alet. It will.
Pyth. Here in the laurel grove.
Alet. No place more fit.
But, oh, be careful, Pythia, that the king
Observe us not! for 'tis of mighty moment
He should believe this substituted youth
Of race Æolian. To which end, my Pythia,
I have among the priests these few days past,
When they suspected not the approach of Xuthus,
Dropped doubtful hints, as if I had discovered
Some antique marks amid the osier twigs
Which formed Ilyssus's cradle, that denote
He sprang from Æolus. And at the cave
Of great Trophonius, have I taken due care
Such answers should be given, as would induce
One of less faith than Xuthus to expect
An heir of his own family.
Pyth. The boy,
Knows he of thy intentions?
Alet. No, nor must,
Till ripening time permit. His fate depends
Upon his ignorance. Soft, who comes here?
Pyth. It is the warm old man, and, as I think,
Some fair attendant of the queen. Retire;
I would know more, but—Wherefore dost thou gaze
So ardently upon them?
Alet. Hence, away!
We must not now be seen. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LYCEA *and* PHORBAS.

Lyc. This place seems quite retired. Here if thou wait,
I will inform the queen, and her impatience
Will bring her on the instant. Surely, Phorbas,
Something mysterious lurks beneath her tears,
Her strange anxieties. Since thou wert absent,
This unknown youth alone has filled her thoughts;
Of him alone she talks, recounts his words,
Describes his looks, his gestures, loves to dwell
On each particular. Ere thou wert gone,
She wished, and even expected thy return;
Dispatched me often, though she knew 'twas vain,
To watch for thy arrival. When the king
Approached, she smoothed her brow, as if to hide
The strugglings of her mind; nay, seemed afraid
He should suspect her sorrows.
Phor. Then, to him
She mentioned not this youth?
Lyc. Her conduct there
Was most mysterious. With a voice of fear,
She slightly dropped, that she had seen a youth
Whom she could wish to bear with her to Athens.
The king consented, and, with smiles, proposed
They should adopt him.
Phor. Ha! adopt him, saidst thou?
Lyc. In short, he spake; but at his words a glow
Of sudden joy spread o'er her face, her tongue
Forgot restraint, and in his praise grew lavish;

Then stopped again, and, hesitating, strove
To check its zeal, as fearful to betray
Some hidden transport.
Phor. Whatsoe'er it be,
I soon shall damp her joy. This youth, Lycea,
Must not to Athens—But behold, the queen!
Lyc. Oh, how impatient! ere I could return
To tell her thou wert here, she comes herself,
Eager to learn thy tidings.

Enter CREUSA.

Cre. Now, my Phorbas,
Say what thou know'st at once. The king already
Consents he should attend us.
Phor. Never, never
Shall Athens see that youth.
Cre. What mean'st thou, Phorbas?
Phor. Too much already of Æolian blood
Has hapless Athens known.
Cre. Æolian blood!
Phor. The king consents! I doubt not his consent—
Yes, 'twas my word, great queen, Æolian blood;
This youth descends from Æolus.
Cre. Be dumb,
Or bring me better tidings.
Phor. Worse I cannot;
But what I speak is truth.
Cre. Peace, monster, peace!
Thou know'st not truth. 'Tis thy affected zeal
For Athens, for thy country, that suggests
This horrid falsehood; 'tis thy hate of Xuthus.
Phor. What means my queen? Or, how have I deserved
Such harsh expressions? Does my honest love
For Athens and Creusa subject me
To such unkind suspicions?
Cre. Gracious gods!
It cannot be—alas, forgive me, Phorbas!
I know not what I say; thy words strike through me,
They pierce my very soul. Oh, I had hoped!—
But tell me all; though I believe thee honest,
Thy zeal for Athens, and for me, may make thee
Too hasty of belief. Why art thou silent?
Phor. Amazement stops my tongue; these starts of passion,
This violence of grief, must have a cause.
Cre. Perhaps they have; perhaps to thee, good Phorbas,
This bursting heart may open all its sorrows.
But tell me first, what are thy proofs? From whence
Gain'dst thou this cursed intelligence?
Phor. O, queen!
Thy looks, thy words——I know not how to answer.
Yet if there be offence in what I speak,
My ignorance offends, not I offend.
Know, then, Creusa, from the priests who attend
This Delphic shrine, by your command I learnt
My first intelligence.
Cre. And did they say
This youth was of Æolian race?
Phor. They did:
At least their words imported little less.
They judged me Xuthus' friend, not enemy,
As would thy rage suggest, and as a friend,
Dropped hints they thought would please me.
Cre. Then, perhaps,
It was not truth they spake; they but deceived
Thy ear with well-judged flattery.
Phor. What followed
Confirmed it truth. Has the king mentioned to thee
What promises were given him at the shrine
Of sage Trophonius?
Cre. General promises
Of sure success, no more.
Phor. Know, then, great queen,
As I returned from converse with the priests,
I met his friend and bosom favourite, Lycon.
Joy sparkled in his eyes, and his vain tongue
O'erflowed with transport. I observed it well,
And gave the torrent passage, nay, with art,
Even led it blindly forward; till at length
He opened his whole soul, and, under seal
Of firmest secrecy, told me the king
Would find an heir at Delphi, such an heir
As would rejoice the unapparent shades
Of his great ancestors. At that I started.
He found his error then, and told me, glozing,
That great Trophonius had almost proclaimed,
Though not expressly, Xuthus here should find
An heir of his own race.
Cre. Of his own race!
Phor. So said he. Whether great Trophonius spake
This oracle, I know not; but I know
Too well whose oracle to me declared it.
Cre. Think'st thou this youth——
Phor. Grant it were only done
To try my zeal, why should they try it now,
Unless some close design required that trial?
Yes, mighty queen, I do believe this youth
Is our intended king. But, by yon Heaven,
If it be he, or any other he
Of Xuthus' race, he shall not reign in Athens!
This poignard first shall drink his blood.
Cre. Forbear!
That thought distracts me—Though perhaps 'tis just—
Oh, Phorbas! 'Twas my hope, my wish, my prayer,
That youth might reign in Athens. But thy words
Strike deadly damps, like baleful aconite,
And poison all within.
Phor. What means my queen?
Cre. O, Phorbas! O, Lycea! But first swear
By Nemesis, and the tremendous powers
Who punish broken faith, no word, no hint,

Shall 'scape your lips of all your queen declares.
Both. We swear.
Cre. Know, then—Oh, pain to memory!
I had a son.
Phor. A son!
Lyc. Good Heaven!
Phor. A son!
Cre. Oh, my full heart! Thy mother, my Lycea,
Knew all the fatal process of my woes,
And was their only solace. Phorbas, yes,
I had a son; but, witness every god,
Whose genial power presides o'er nuptial leagues,
Nicander was my wedded lord. That night,
That fatal night, which drove him forth from Athens,
Forced from my swelling womb, ere yet mature,
Its precious burthen. To thy mother's cares,
I owed my life. In secret she assuaged
My piercing pangs, and to Nicander's arms,
In secret, she conveyed the wretched infant.
What followed well thou know'st. Nicander fell,
And with him, doubtless, fell the dear, dear charge
Consigned to his protection. Yet, good Phorbas,
When I beheld this youth, his looks, his voice,
His age, his unknown birth, all, all conspired
To cheat me into hopes. Alas, how fallen!
How blasted all!
Phor. Great queen, my tears confess,
An old man's tears, which rarely fall, confess
How much I share your anguish. Had I known
Nicander was your lord, by earth and Heaven
I would have raised all Athens in his cause,
Nay, been a rebel to the best of masters,
Ere the dear pledge of your unspotted loves
Should thus have fallen untimely. Now, alas!
I have not even one flattering hope to give thee.
Till now, I oft have wondered why so far
Their rage pursued Nicander. 'Tis too plain
They knew the precious burthen which he bore,
And for the hapless child the father died.
Cre. Oh, gods! I feel the truth of what thou utter'st,
And my heart dies within me. Oh, Lycea!
Who, who would be a mother?
Phor. Be a queen,
And turn thy grief to rage. Shall aliens sport
With thy misfortunes? Shall insulting spoilers
Smile o'er the ruins of thy hapless state,
While all the golden harvest is their own?
Shall Xuthus triumph? Shall his race succeed,
While thine (I mean not to provoke thy tears)
Thy tender blossoms, are torn rudely off,
Almost or ere they bloom?
Cre. It shall not be;
No, ye immortal powers! Yet let us wait
Till the dire truth glare on us. One short hour,
And doubt shall be no more. Then, Phorbas, then,
Should he presume to place on Athens' throne
His alien race, nay, though this beauteous youth,
This dear resemblance of my murdered lord,
Should be the fatal choice, by that dear shade,
Which perished as it reached the gates of life,
I will—I think I will—assist thy vengeance—
Soft! who comes here? 'Tis he! how innocent,
How winning soft he looks! whate'er it be,
He knows not the deceit. Look on him, Phorbas;
Nay, thou shalt question him.
Phor. Not I. Great queen,
Resume yourself, nor let this fond persuasion
Betray you to a weakness you should blush at.
Cre. If possible, I will.

Enter ILYSSUS.

Ilys. Illustrious queen,
The altar stands prepared, and all things wait
Your royal presence. From the king I come,
His messenger.
Cre. We will attend his pleasure.
Be near me, Phorbas; I may want thy counsel.
Ilys. She looks not on me, sure, as she was wont.
I will speak to her. [*Aside.*] Permit me, gracious queen,
To pay my humblest thanks; for, by your means,
The king is kind as you are.
Cre. Rise, Ilyssus!
Perhaps you needed there no advocate.
Phorbas, lead on. My resolution melts,
And all my sex returns. One look from him
Outweighs a thousand proofs. Phorbas, lead on,
Or I am lost in weakness.
[*Exeunt Creusa and Phorbas.*
Ilys. [*Stopping Lycea.*] Gentle maid,
Stay yet a moment. Wherefore does the queen
Look coldly on me? Know'st thou if in aught
I have offended?
Lyc. Things of mightiest import
At present fill her mind, nor leave they room
For less affairs. My duty calls me hence. [*Exit.*
Ilys. I hope it is no more; yet each appearance
Alarms me now. Aletes, thou hast raised
Such conflicts here, such hopes, such fears, such doubts,
That apprehension sinks beneath their weight.
Well might'st thou say these solitary shades
Have now no peace for me. Yet once thou taught'st me,
That the pure mind was its own source of peace.
But that philosophy I find belongs
To private life; for where ambition enters,
I find it is not true. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Vestibule of the Temple.*

Enter ALETES.

Alet. WHY should I doubt? It will, it must succeed.
Yet I could wish that I had seen Creusa
Before 'twas undertaken; for, perhaps——
'Tis better as it is. Her part had then
Been difficult to act; now what she does,
Assisting or opposing the design,
Will all seem natural—The Pythia sure
Will act as I directed——Hark! the rites
Should be ere this performed. Why stay they then?
That noise proclaims them finished, and the crowd
Will soon be here—They come: I must not yet
Be seen; the Pythia in the laurel grove
May tell me what has passed. [*Exit.*

CREUSA *descends hastily from the Temple, in great disorder,* LYCEA *following.*

Lyc. Stay, mighty queen;
You know not what you do; your rage transports you;
You leave the rites unfinished, and the crowd,
In wild amazement, gaze on your departure.
Cre. I will not stay; nor will I tamely bear
My disappointed hopes. Oh, honest Phorbas!
Oh, good old man! thy penetrating mind
Saw early their designs. 'Tis to supply
Nicander's loss (Oh, ne'er to be supplied!)
That we must call in strangers to the throne,
And yield our sceptres to Æolian hands.
Yes, ye great shades of my progenitors,
I hear ye call! ye shall, ye shall have vengeance!
Lyc. Whatever you design, conceal at least
This transport of your rage.
Cre. Why loiters Phorbas?
He saw my anguish; wherefore comes he not
To its relief? They fool me past endurance.
Rely they on the weakness of my sex?
Lycea, they shall find this feeble arm
In such a cause can lay the distaff by,
And grasp the unerring thunderbolt of Jove.
Oh, Phorbas, art thou come?

Enter PHORBAS *from the Temple.*

Phor. Now, mighty queen,
Are my suspicions just? Is Phorbas honest?
Cre. As light as truth itself. My counsellor,
My bosom friend!
Phor. Now shall a casual likeness,
If such there be, a semblant cast of features,
The sport of nature in a human form,
Shall trifles, light as these, weigh down conviction?
Oh, queen! from first to last the apparent scheme
Glares on us now. Why were we brought to Delphi,
But that this youth has long been nurtured here
In secret from the world? perhaps the son
Of Xuthus' self, placed here at first to hide
The guilt and shame of some dishonest mother,
Though now applied to more pernicious ends.
Cre. It may be so.
Phor. And why, say why, to-day,
While Xuthus stays behind for oracles
He wanted not, is young Ilyssus bid
To meet your eyes, and win, with artful tales,
Your easy heart?
Cre. Bid! Was he bid to do it?
Phor. I saw the priestess whisper something to him,
Then loud she bid him wait for thy approach.
She must, forsooth, retire to sacred glooms,
And wait for inspiration. Xuthus' gold
Was what inspired the traitress. Yet, good Heaven,
When from the shrine she gave the fraudful words,
With what strange art the holy hypocrite
In mimic trances died!—A banished youth
Is Athens' cause of woe! Too truly said,
Though for a wicked purpose, to allure
Thy easy faith, and lead thee to admit
The fraud which followed.
Cre. Never, never, Phorbas,
Will I that fraud admit. How readily
Did Xuthus, when my foolish fondness asked it,
Consent to my request! Thou heard'st him say
[*To Lyc.*
We should adopt this youth; in seeming sport
He spake it, but even then the insulting tyrant
Couched fatal truths beneath the ambiguous phrase.
Phor. Why should a youth designed for solitude
Be taught the arts of war? He saw himself
The impropriety. Who is this sage
That has instructed him? And why should Lycon
O'erflow with sudden joy, but that he found,
From thy apparent fondness for the boy,
Their schemes grew practicable. Nay, to-day,
When to the priestess' self my honest love
For Athens, and dislike of stranger kings,
Burst freely forth, she chid my hasty zeal,
Commended Xuthus, talked of piety
And reverence to the gods; 'twas to their priests
She meant, their meddling priests, who dare presume
To sport with thrones, to sell their gods for gold,
And stamp rank falsehoods with the seal of heaven!
Lyc. Forbear, you are too loud so near the temple;
Xuthus himself will hear.
Cre We would be heard.
Instruct me, Phorbas, by what means to crush
This impious combination.

Phor. Athens yet
Has honest hearts. Yes, Phorbas yet has friends
Who dare be patriots, and prefer their country
To Xuthus' kindest smile. Some such are here,
Even now at Delphi. But, illustrious queen,
We must with caution act. The name of Heaven,
Howe'er usurped, adds vigour to their cause,
And weakens ours. We might in secret find
A sure revenge.
Cre. What?
Phor. Death.
Cre. Of Xuthus?
Phor. His
Might follow, but the more immediate cause
Should earliest be removed; the boy.
Cre. The boy!
Why should he die? Believe me, honest Phorbas,
He knows not of the fraud. His every look
Proclaims his innocence. If impious men
Make him their instrument of evil deeds,
Can he be blamed? Bred up in shades, poor youth,
He never knew the arts of base mankind,
Nor should he share their punishment.
Phor. O queen,
They have too well succeeded. This fond passion,
Which their insidious cunning first inspired,
Clings close about your heart, and may at last
Undo us all!——But hark, that noise declares
The finished rites. Retire we to the grove,
And there will I enforce——
Cre. No, let us stay.
I will confront this artful politician,
And shew him I am yet a queen.
Phor. Perhaps
'Twere better to retire till our full scheme
Were ripe for vengeance.—Yet if we remain,
High words must rise, which will alarm her pride,
And fit her for my purpose. [*Aside.*

Enter XUTHUS, ILYSSUS, *Priests, Virgins, Guards, &c. from the temple.*

Xut. [*Coming up to Creusa.*] Thy looks, Creusa, thy abrupt departure,
Affronting to the god himself, and these
His sacred ministers, too plainly shew
Irreverent rage, resisting Heaven's high will.
Nor dost thou want, I see, unthinking woman,
Inflamers of thy folly.—But of this
Enough; behold the youth whom Heaven designs
Thy heir, and mine!
Cre. My heir!
Xut. Thy heir, Creusa.
What means that haughty look? Why, with contempt,
Dost thou behold him? Is he changed, Creusa?
Have a few hours so totally transformed him?
Is all that winning grace, of which thou spakest
Almost with rapture, is that native charm
Of innocence all vanished? Hear him speak,
Hear if he talks less sensibly, than when
Thy pleased attention hung upon his words,
And lent each syllable an added grace.
What hast thou found, or thy grave monitor,
What has he found, which can so suddenly
Have wrought this wondrous change? Is it because
The gods have thought, with thee, that he deserves
A crown? or is it that my will consents?
And therefore thine, proud queen, perversely strives
To combat thy affections?
Cre. We, methinks,
Have changed affections. The calm, steady Xuthus,
Whose equal mind ne'er knew the stormy gusts
Of discomposing passion, now can feel
Indecent warmth, when touched by pious zeal.
Nay, he, to whom the tenderer sentiments
Seemed but the weakness of the human frame,
Now wakes inspired with some unusual softness.
Have oracles the power to raise at once
The kind affections? Or did he conceal
The smothered flame, till, authorized by Heaven,
It might burst out unquestioned?
Xut. Haughty queen,
I understand thee well; thou think'st this youth
A substitute of mine, and darest affront
Yon awful shrine, the fountain of pure truth.
But by that god who bears the vengeful bow,
And whose large eye——Yet wherefore should I strive,
By oaths, to undeceive thee; breasts, like mine,
Can scorn the imputed falsehood they detest.
Nor am I now to learn from what vile source
Thy vain suspicions rise. But know, proud queen,
This youth shall reign in Athens; and yet more
To punish thy vain pride, since thou provokest it,
I do believe him of Æolian race.
Cre. Thou dost?
Xut. I do. A race as glorious, queen,
As Cecrops' boasted lineage. For the youth,
Were I to beg the choicest boon of Heaven
From my own loins to rise, I could not hope
A nobler offspring.
Phor. Hearest thou that? [*Aside to Creus.*
Cre. I do,
And will revenge the insult.
Ilys. [*Kneeling.*] Gracious queen!
What have I done which should estrange thee from me?
Am I the unhappy cause of these dissentions?
Cre. Kneel not to me, Ilyssus.
Xut. Kneel not to her;
'Tis I am thy protector, and thy friend,
Nay, now thy father.
Ilys. Yet, oh, mighty king,
Permit me, at her royal feet, to pay
My humblest duty. If I call thee father,
She sure must be a mother.
[*She turns away disordered.*
Xut. Rise, Ilyssus,
Thou seest she standst unmoved.

Ilys. No, now she softens!
I see it in her eyes.
Cre. I will, I will,
Be mistress of my soul. Why kneelest thou, youth?
I blame not thee.
Xut. Me, then, thou blamest, Creusa.
I am the object of thy rage. 'Tis Xuthus
Thou think'st unworthy of the Athenian throne.
Cre. Athens might well have spared a foreign lustre,
Secure of fame, had Xuthus ne'er been born.
Xut. Ungrateful queen, had Xuthus ne'er been born,
What now had Athens been?
Cre. Perhaps in ruins;
And better so, than to become the prey
Of needy wandering strangers.
Xut. Earth and Heaven!
This the return?—I knew thou never lovest me,
Yet, witness Heaven, I ravished not thy hand.
Thou gavest it sullenly, but yet thou gavest it;
And I well hoped thy female sense of honour,
Of duty to thy lord, might have secured,
At least, my future peace. Thy tenderer thoughts,
The wife's best ornament, I knew were buried
In a plebeian grave.
Cre. Plebeian grave!
Xut. Fool that I was, I flattered thy vain sorrows,
Indulged their weak excess, and raised, I find,
Imaginary rivals in the tomb:
But never more, Creusa, never more
Shalt thou affront my ill-requitted fondness.
I will destroy that pageant of thy passion,
Tear from that idol shrine the insulting wreaths,
And cancel thy mock worship.
Ilys. Gracious queen,
Retire a while!
Cre. Begone!—Insulting tyrant,
Touch but a wreath that's sacred to Nicander,
And, by pale Hecate's awful rites I swear,
Thy life shall pay the forfeit; nay, the lives
Of thy whole dastard race.——Plebeian grave!
Had that plebeian lived, imperial Xuthus
Had crouched beneath his feet.
Xut. Oh, would to Heaven
This sceptred arm could raise him from the earth,
That thou might'st see how infamous a slave
Thou darest prefer to Xuthus!—Come, Ilyssus,
We leave her to her follies. Look not on her,
She merits not thy tenderness. Away!
If reason should again resume its seat,
We may expect her at the banquet. Come,
All here must be our guests.
[*Exeunt Xuthus, Ilyssus, &c.*
Phor. Curb not thy passion, give it vent, great queen,
And let it burst in thunder on thy foes!
Cre. It shall, by Heaven, it shall!—I thought till now
My griefs were sacred, but this monster dares
Insult even misery itself. Oh, Phorbas,
Forgive me, if my tears will force a passage.
Now, they are gone, and I will weep no more.
Come, faithful counsellor of vengeance, come!
Instruct me how to act, steel all my soul;
Let not remorse, or pity's coward voice,
The bane of noble deeds, intrude to cross us.
Nicander's injured ghost shall aid our counsels.
Say, shall he die?
Phor. Not yet; first be his schemes
Abortive all, his politic designs;
Then let him die despised.
Cre. Agreed; but how?
Phor. Now, at the banquet, may we crush at once
His full blown hopes. The fatal cause removed,
The effect, of course, must cease.
Cre. What cause?
Phor. The boy.
I see thou shudderest at it; but, great queen,
Hear but the cogent reasons I shall offer,
And thou wilt think as I do. For the boy,
Heaven knows, I wish to spare him; but no means,
No earthly means but this, can curse completely
This politic designer. Doubtless, long
This favourite scheme, to place on Athens' throne
His hated race, has laboured in his breast,
And all his hours employed. On this alone
He builds the firm foundation of his peace,
His happiness to come. His death were nothing:
He knows his friends, the minions of his fortune,
He knows all Greece, such is their dread and awe
Of Delphi's shrine, will join in the support
Of this deceitful claim; and that firm hope
Will make him triumph even in death, and laugh
At our too shallow vengeance.
Cre. Laugh he shall not.
No, I will punish home.
Phor. You cannot punish
By any means but this. And know, great queen,
I have a poison of such subtle force,
(Why dost thou start?) of such amazing strength,
Yet so peculiar in its operation,
That it shall seem the surfeit of the feast,
Not we have done the deed. At least shall seem so
To all but Xuthus' self; for he, methinks,
Should know the truth, at least suspect it strongly,
And yet not dare revenge.
Cre. I cannot bear it;
Howe'er we fail in our revenge, my Phorbas,
The boy must live.
Phor. Good Heaven! Is this Creusa?
Is this the vengeful queen, who would not hear
Remorse or pity's voice? Farewell, then, Athens;
Yes, my poor country, thou must sink enslaved
To foreign tyrants. She, who should defend
Thy rights, thy liberties, stands tamely by,
And sees the yoke imposed, nay, smiles to see it:
Thy queen, the last of her illustrious line,
Consents to thy destruction.
Cre. Never, Phorbas.

Do what thou wilt. With this last parting pang
I give him to thy rage. Yet, oh, beware,
I see him not again! One look from him
Would baffle all thy schemes.
Phor. Now, at the banquet,
Will we infuse the draught, even in the cup
Which the king's self presents to his young heir,
In token of election.
Cre. Stay, good Phorbas.
Phor. Already have I, for the just design,
Suborned a faithful slave. Nay, should it fail,
I have a trusty band, a chosen few,
Athenian souls, who scorn to bow the knee,
To any foreign lord; these will I place
At the pavilion doors, if need require,
To second our attempt.
Cre. Yet stay, good Phorbas.
How kindly did he seem to sympathize
With my distress! Nay, almost chid the king,
When his loud rage——
Phor. He had been taught his lesson.
'Twas all design, all artifice to work
Upon a woman's weakness.
Cre. Thinkst thou so?
Phor. I do. But, oh, my queen, be more than woman;
Conquer this foible of thy sex.
Cre. Heaven knows
How much it costs to do it! Go, then, Phorbas,
I cannot bid thee prosper. [*Exit Phorbas.*
Thou knowst what I feel. Haste, call him back.
No, stay——I think the bitterness is past,
And I can bear it now. Lend me thy arm,
I would retire, Lycea. Yet, from what
Should I retire? I cannot from myself!——
Oh, boy! thou art revenged; whate'er thou sufferest
Is light, to what thy murd'ress feels! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Laurel Grove.*

Enter PHORBAS *and* ATHENIANS.

Phor. THIS way, my friends; at the pavilion doors
Stand ready armed, that, if we need your aid,
You may observe the sign, and crush at once
These vile usurpers on the rights of Athens.
I hope we want ye not. I must be hid
Awhile, lest Xuthus should suspect my presence.
The queen, too, may repent; I'll therefore shun her
Till the deed's done, irrevocably done. [*Aside.*
But stir not till I come—What noise is that?
Retire, my friends; the temple's postern door
Grates on its hinge. Be secret, and we prosper.
[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter ALETES *and* PYTHIA.

Alet. This quarrel was unlucky. A slight breach
Had lent my purpose strength; but wrought thus high
It may defeat our hopes. She cannot now,
With ease, recede from her too rash resolves,
At least not unsuspected. Did she, say'st thou,
Reject thy message?
Pyth. Scarcely did she pay
The decent dues my sacred office claims.
And when I prest her more, with sullen pride
She silently withdrew.
Alet. See her I must.
Where went she?
Pyth. To the shades, which overhang
The Aonian fount.
Alet. I will pursue her thither.
Pyth. It may not be, for now I know thy secret,
'Tis my turn to be prudent. Know'st thou not,
Thou should'st be cautious, nor expose thyself
To prying eyes? I heard her, as she passed,
In broken whispers bid Lycea haste
To Phorbas, and inform that trusty friend
That she would wait him in the laurel grove.
Here, then, thou may'st surprise them both, and crown
At once thy whole design.
Alet. Thou counsellest well,
And I will guide me by thy kind advice.
Oh, Pythia, how did every thing conspire
To give me hopes, that I should place the boy
Secure on Athens' throne, unknown to all
But those whom fate had made his firmest friends!
The very means I used to make it sure,
Have been most adverse to the cause I laboured.
Had I relied on Xuthus' piety,
Nor mentioned Æolus, success were mine;
And let me hope it still. What most I fear
Is the queen's warmth of passion. To which end
I must proceed with tenderness, and hide,
For some short time, Ilyssus from her knowledge.
I have unnumbered cautions to premise,
Which her o'erflowing joy may haply ruin.
The banquet, is it ready?
Pyth. It has long,
In vain, expected its illustrious guests.
The king already has forgot his rage,
And hopes returning thought may move the queen
To equal amity: he, therefore, finds
Continual causes to delay the feast.
Alet. Retire. Perhaps 'tis she; I hear the steps
Of some who move this way. [*Exit Pythia.*
What means he here?
Why art thou absent from the banquet, youth?

Enter ILYSSUS.

Ilys. It has no joys for me. I fear, Aletes,
Thou and the Pythia have most foully played
For my advancement.
Alet. Ha!
Ilys. Where are the parents,
Whom thou didst promise to my hopes? Alas!
I find no parents here, no kind regards,
No inexpressive fondness. Stern debate
And foul dissention kindle here their torch
To usher in my greatness. Even Creusa,
Whose tenderness, I know not how, alarmed
My throbbing heart with hopes, and doubts, and fears,
Unfelt before, even she has taught her eyes
To look with strangeness on me. The good king,
Who yet withdraws not his protection from me,
Seems lost in anxious thought. Unkind Aletes,
Art thou the cause of this? Say, am I sprung
Of race Æolian? For, by Heaven I swear,
By that pure fountain of immortal truth,
I will not brook deceit. I will again,
Howe'er the glittering mischief tempt my youth,
Become that humble unknown thing I was,
Rather than wear a crown by falsehood gained.
Speak, then, and give me ease.
Alet. My dearest boy——
His virtue charms me, though it may prevent
His own success. Oh, happy, happy Athens,
To gain a king like him, whose honest soul
Starts at imagined fraud! [*Aside.*
Ilys. Speak on, Aletes,
And do not, by that look of tenderness,
And murmuring to thyself, alarm me more.
Alet. What should I speak? This very morn, Ilyssus,
This very morn I told thee a few hours
Would shew thee what thou wert; but thy impatience
Brooks not that short delay. It seems Aletes
Has lost his usual credit with Ilyssus,
Even with the youth his anxious care has formed.
Think'st thou, the man who taught thy feeling heart
To start at falsehood, would himself commit
The fraud thou shudderest at? What have I done,
Which should induce thee to a thought so base?
Did e'er my precepts contradict my heart?
Did I e'er teach a virtue I not practised?
—I see thou art confounded. Know then, youth,
I blame not thy impatience, nay, I praise
That modesty which can so soon resume
Its seat, when all things round are big with wonder.
Ere night thou shalt know all; till then, Ilyssus,
Behave as Athens' king.
Ilys. Oh, good Aletes,
Forgive my rashness. Yes, I know thee honest
As truth itself, and know the wonderous debt
I owe thy goodness. Yes, if thou confess
That I have reason for these anxious cares,
Thou wilt permit me still to question thee.
Nay, look upon me whilst I speak to thee.
Perhaps thou hast some secret cause, Aletes,
For all that kind attention thou hast shewn me,
From infancy till now—Why dost thou turn
Thy eyes to earth? 'Tis plain thou hast a cause:
Thou knowest from whom I spring; how canst thou else
With confidence assert, that yet ere night
I shall know all?—Say this at least, Aletes;
Shall the queen's anger cease?
Alet. It shall, Ilyssus.
Even now I wait her here; on what design
I must not yet inform thee. The next time
Thou shalt behold her, thou wilt find a change
Incredible indeed, from rage to fondness,
From cold reserve to tears of bursting joy.
[*Ilyssus is going to speak eagerly.*
—Ask me no more.—Yet something didst thou say
Relating to the cause which fixed me here,
Thy guardian, thy instructor, and——the time
Will come, when thou wilt know it all, Ilyssus,
And bless my memory.
Ilys. Thou weepest, Aletes!
My tears will mingle too.
Alet. Forbear, and leave me.
Yet stay a while, for now perhaps we part
To meet no more.
Ilys. No more! Thou wilt not leave me
When most I want thy care! 'Twas my first thought,
'Twas the first boon I asked of the good king,
That thou might'st be my kind instructor still.
He praised my gratitude, and I had promised
To bring him to thy cottage. He himself
Shall be a suitor to thee.
Alet. Thou hast asked
Thou knowest not what; it cannot be, Ilyssus,
That Xuthus and Aletes e'er should meet
On terms of amity. The smiles of greatness
To me have lost their value. For thy love
I could do much, and to be severed from thee
Pulls at my heart-strings. But resistless fate
Has fixed its seal, and we must part for ever,
How hard soe'er it seem. Thy youth will soon,
Amidst the busy scenes of active greatness,
Forget its monitor: but I must bear,
In hopeless solitude, the pangs of absence,
Till thought shall be no more.
Ilys. Oh, heavenly powers!
Then there is something dreadful yet concealed.
I cannot part from thee in ignorance.
Tell me, Aletes!
Alet. Would I could! But now
It must not be.—Haste to the banquet, youth;
Thy duty calls thee thither.
Ilys. Go, I cannot,
Till thou assurest me we shall meet again.
Alet. If possible, we will. If not, remember,
When thou shalt know thyself, that on thyself
Thy fate depends; that virtue, glory, happiness,
Are close connected, and their sad reverse

Is vice, is pain, is infamy. Alas!
These were the lessons of thy private life.
This I have told thee oft, but my fond tongue
Runs o'er its former precepts, and forgets
Thou now must mount a throne; a larger scene
Of duty opens.
Ilys. Yet the tender friend,
Who should direct me, leaves me to myself.
Canst thou abandon me?
Alet. Would fate permit,
I would attend thee still. But, Oh, Ilyssus,
Whate'er becomes of me, when thou shalt reach
That envied pinnacle of earthly greatness,
Where faithful monitors but rarely follow,
Even there, amidst the kindest smiles of fortune,
Forget not thou wert once distressed and friendless.
Be strictly just; but yet, like Heaven, with mercy
Temper thy justice. From thy purged ear
Banish base flattery, and spurn the wretch,
Who would persuade thee thou art more than man;
Weak, erring, selfish man, endued with power
To be the minister of public good.
If conquest charm thee, and the pride of war
Blaze on thy sight, remember thou art placed
The guardian of mankind, nor build thy fame
On rapines, and on murders. Should soft peace
Invite to luxury, the pleasing bane
Of happy kingdoms, know, from thy example,
The bliss or woe of nameless millions springs,
Their virtue, or their vice. Nor think by laws
To curb licentious man; those laws alone
Can bend the headstrong many to their yoke,
Which make it present interest to obey them.
Oh, boy!——

Enter PYTHIA *hastily.*

Pyth. Ilyssus! wherefore art thou here?
The king expects thee, and the banquet waits.
Ilys. I cannot go.
Alet. Thou must; thy fate depends
Upon thy absence now. The queen approaches.
After the banquet I again will see thee,
And thou shalt know the whole. I will, by Heaven. [*Exit Ilyssus.*
Pythia, away, and wait me in the temple.
[*Exit Pythia.*
She saw them not; on her contracted brow
Sits brooding care. She speaks! my heart beats thick,
And my tongue trembles to perform its office.
Now fate attend, and perfect thine own work!

Enter CREUSA.

Cre. To what have I consented? Ha! Who art thou,
That thus intrudest on sacred privacy,
When the o'erburthened mind unloads its griefs,
Its hoarded miseries?
Alet. Thy better genius!
Cre. That voice is sure familiar to my ear!
Who art thou? Speak!
Alet. One whom adversity
Has taught to know himself. I bring thee tidings
Of an unhappy man, who wronged thee much,
But much repented of the wrongs he did thee;
Of thy Nicander, queen.
Cre. Nicander, say'st thou?
Oh, then thou art indeed my better genius!
Alet. Now arm thy soul for wonders yet to come!
Perhaps he lives.
Cre. He lives!
[*Looking on him with amazement.*
Alet. [*After great irresolution and struggles with himself.*] Behold him here!
[*She faints.*
What has my rashness done! The blush of life
Has left her cheek, the pulse forgets to move.
Where shall I turn? I cannot call for aid,
Nor can I leave her thus. She breathes, she stirs!
Yes, yes, Creusa, thy Nicander lives,
And he will catch at least this dear embrace,
Though now thou art another's!
Cre. Gracious gods!
It is, it is Nicander, 'tis my lord!
Oh, I am only thine! no power on earth
Shall e'er divide us more.
It cannot be, my senses all deceive me——
And yet it is. Oh, let me gaze upon thee,
Recall each trace which marks thee for my own,
And gives me back the image of my heart!
How time and grief have changed thee! But my love
Can know no change. My lord, my life, my husband!
Where hast thou wandered? How hast thou been hid
From love's all-piercing sight? The bloody ruffians,
How didst thou escape their rage? Or did they wreak
Upon the helpless innocent alone
Their impious vengeance?
Nic. Nor on me, nor him
Did vengeance fall.
Cre. Does he live?
Nic. He does.
Cre. Oh, honest Phorbas! Murder now in virtue. [*Aside.*
Nic. The fabled murder was all stratagem,
Contrived for thy dear sake; no impious ruffians
Pursued our steps: I found that I had wronged thee
Beyond redress, nor knew another means,
But by my death, to save thee from dishonour.
Despair I thought might conquer love, and thou
Once more be Athens' pride. The precious charge
Forbade a real death: I therefore stained
With blood my well-known garments, which produced——

Cre. A cursed effect. But I have nearer fears:
How cam'st thou hither? Wherefore to these shades?
The boy, where is he?
Nic. Far from hence——
Cre. Thank Heaven!
Nic. He lives in peace and safety. What disturbs thee?
Cre. Nothing——I dare not tell him what I feared,
His honest breast might shudder at the guilt,
Though now it be more needful. [*Aside.*] The dear boy,
Say, is he brave?
Nic. As woman could desire.
Cre. And formed like thee?
Nic. His person far exceeds
What my most vigorous youth could boast, Creusa;
And his firm mind is wisdom's aged strength,
With all youth's graces softened.
Cre. 'Tis too much,
Oh, happy mother! Call'st thou him Nicander?
Nic. No, Ion; 'twas the name that matron chose,
Who gave him to my care,
Cre. Then Ion be it;
Ion shall reign in Athens. Know'st thou, love,
The cursed design which this Æolian here,
And the vile maid——
Nic. The priestess, it should seem,
With Xuthus, has conspired to fix his race
On Athens' throne.
Cre. But never shall his race
That sceptre wield.
Nic. It never shall, Creusa.
I have a means——
Cre. My means, thank Heaven, are surer. [*Aside.*
Nic. But I will tell thee all from first to last.
Hear, then, and weigh my words, for fate is in them.
Xuthus, the Athenian king——
Cre. I think not of him.
Nic. Beware of that. Whate'er thou think'st, Creusa,
Xuthus must still reign on, thy lord and husband.
Cre. Xuthus, my lord! then what art thou, Nicander?
Dost thou despise me for a crime thyself
Hast forced me to commit? My soul was thine,
Even when I gave my hand, and still remains
Undaunted, undefiled.
Nic. I know it well,
You dearest, best of women. My torn heart
Drops blood while I propose it, yet we must,
We must for ever part. Forbear, Creusa!
That killing look strikes through me. Think, Oh, think,
What in this age of absence I have borne,
How combated each tender thought, and lived
For thy dear sake, a victim to despair.
But now if thou consent'st, all, all is mine,
And I forgive my fate. The dear, dear boy,
I have a means to place him on the throne
Secure as we could wish.
Cre. Secure he shall be;
I will proclaim him to the world as mine,
And Athens shall with joy receive its sovereign;
The tyrant Xuthus shall be taught to fear
A master's frown.
Nic. Thy rashness, my Creusa,
May ruin all.
Cre. I will be rash, if this
Be rashness, to declare to earth, to Heaven,
A mother's heart-felt joy, whose only child,
Snatched from the grave, unhoped for, comes to claim,
With every grace and every virtue crowned,
The imperial seat of his great ancestors.
And shall we want a means?
Nic. We need not wait;
For by my care the important means is found
Already, and no human power but thine
Can hinder our success. I would have hid
The secret from thee till thy wished consent
Had given my purpose strength; but thou defeat'st
My utmost caution, and wilt force me tell thee,
Ilyssus is young Ion!—Ha! Creusa!
What means this look? Good Heaven! How her eye fixes!
What have I done? What said, which could attack
The seats of sense with this amazing force?
My wife, my queen, Oh speak!
Cre. Off, touch me not!
Thou canst not bring relief. Oh, I am cursed
Beyond all power of aid! Thou too art cursed,
And know'st it not! He dies, he dies, Nicander!
Nic. Amazement! Who?
Cre. Oh, had he not been mine,
His youth, his softness, each attracting grace——
I should have staid whole ages, ere in thought
I had consented to so damned a deed.
Tears, tears, why burst ye not? But what have I
To do with tears? Those are for tender mothers.
The tygress weeps not o'er her mangled prey.
He dies, he dies, Nicander!
Nic. Who? Ilyssus?
Speak, speak, Creusa!
Cre. Phorbas urged the deed,
And I consented; at the feast he dies
By poison. Oh, my soul!
Nic. Fly, then, this instant!
Perhaps thou may'st prevent it; as thou cam'st
He parted hence. I knew not to his death!
Cre. I go, I fly.
Nic. Yet stay, thy rashness there,
If fate has saved him, may undo us yet.
The Pythia! true, the Pythia shall rush in
To stop the fatal banquet, and declare
The feast unhallowed; at this lucky moment

She waits me in the temple. Stay, Creusa.
[*Exit Nicander.*
Cre. The Pythia, no; I will myself outstrip
The lightning's speed. Whatever be the event,
'Tis not too late to die. [*Exit*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Laurel Grove.*

Enter PHORBAS *and* LYCEA.

Lyc. Oh, earth! Oh, Heaven! Oh, wretched, wretched Athens!
Phor. Speak on, Lycea; wherefore art thou silent?
Why dost thou lead me to this secret shade?
What mean thy flowing tears?
Lyc. The queen, the queen!
Phor. Say, what of her?
Lyc. I know not; all to me
Is terror and confusion.
Phor. What thou know'st
Relate.
Lyc. She sent me forth to seek thee, Phorbas;
I found thee not, but met, at my return,
Creusa's self. Despair was in her eyes,
With hasty steps she shot impatient by me,
Nor listened when I spake. I followed wondering,
And entered the pavilion.
Phor. The pavilion!
Why, went she to the banquet?
Lyc. Eager went,
Despair and anguish mixing in her look.
But, O good Heaven! how changed was that despair
To inexpressive joy, when, from the crowd,
She learnt Ilyssus had delayed the feast,
And won the king once more to ask her presence.
'Where is he? let me clasp him to my breast,'
She cried; 'I now no longer will resist
'Heaven's high command.' Imperial Xuthus rose,
With transport, to receive her; and loud shouts
Proclaimed the people's joy. When, death to sight!
Eternal pain to memory! the slave
Presents the goblet; 'Fill,' she cried, 'a third!
'I, too, will hail Ilyssus king of Athens.
'But, first, all swear, swear by immortal Jove,
'By the far darting god who here presides,
'And the chaste guardian of our native fanes,
'Swear here, swear all, and binding be the oath,
'Ilyssus only shall be Athens' king.'
Phor. What could she mean?
Lyc. Attentive Xuthus caught,
With joy, the happy omen, and all swore
Ilyssus only should be Athens' king.
This done, I saw her from Ilyssus' hand
Snatch the dire goblet, and to him resign
Her own untouched. The slave, who mixed the draught,
Turned pale and trembled; I, with eager zeal,
Pressed forward, but in vain; she firmly grasped
The bowl, and drank it to the dregs.
Phor. The poison, ha!—I knew her foolish fondness
Would start at murder's name. But wherefore die?
Why turn upon herself her impious rage?
'Twas madness all; or else some new contrivance,
Some fresh Æolian fraud. I care not what.
I yet will blast their schemes. Yes, let her die,
By her own folly perish. Athens still
Survives, and shall survive. I must be sudden.
She, doubtless, will betray me to the king,
And cut off even this last resource. Lycea,
Be secret, and thy country shall be free.
Lyc. Were it not better, Phorbas, first to see her.
Perhaps, some secret unrevealed may lurk
Beneath this shew of unexampled rashness.
She left the banquet soon, and, with the Pythia,
Entered the temple.
Phor. With the Pythia, say'st thou?
Then there is mischief toward.
Lyc. Yet now alone
We may surprise her, for I saw the maid
Quick from the fane return with hasty steps,
As if dispatched on some important message;
Perhaps to find thee out. Sure thou shouldst see her.
Phor. And perish, ha! No, no, my sacred country,
Too much already have I been deceived;
I will not leave thee in a woman's power.
Yet hold, Lycea may inform her of them,
And my designs prove yet abortive. Maid,
Thy presence may be needful.
Lyc. Mine! good Heaven!
In what? Creusa will require my aid;
At least my tears are due to my poor queen
In her last moments.
Phor. Stay, she wants them not;
I know the poison's force too well, Lycea.
To fear a death so sudden. This way, maid;
Nay, thou must go; I shall have business for thee,
Some secret message to the queen, Lycea.
Which thou alone canst bear. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter PYTHIA *and* NICANDER.

Pyth. 'Twas he, I saw him, and Lycea with him.
Sure he should be informed! Thou hearest me not,

Nic. This action of the queen sits near my heart.
Pyth. She bade me tell thee—But why waste we time?
Thou now may'st enter at the postern gate,
Unseen by all.
Nic. Why didst thou not rush in, and stop the feast?
Thy speedy presence there had saved us all.
Pyth. What could I do? The queen was there already,
And all seemed peace and joy; could I suspect
That poison lurked beneath so fair a seeming?
Nic. She breaks through my designs.—Unhappy woman!
My soul bleeds for her, and confusion hangs
On every rising thought. The dear, dear boy!
Where is he? at the banquet still?
Pyth. He is.
Nic. And where Creusa?
Pyth. I already told thee,
But thou regardest not, in the temple's gloom
Retired she sits, expecting thy approach.
We there may settle all.
Nic. I fear her much.
Thou seest her passions are too near concerned
To be of use to us; thy cooler sense
Must here direct us. Doth the poison's power
Affect her yet?
Pyth. Not yet; I would have tried
Some powerful antidote to quell its force;
But she refuses life, and only begs
To see her son and thee.
Nic. I will attend
Upon the instant. But first hear me, Pythia;
Thou seest on what a precipice we stand;
It were in vain to hope we could conceal
The truth from Xuthus; from the rest we may;
'Tis thy task, therefore——
Pyth. What? to own the fraud,
And publish to the king, that Delphi's shrine
Is not oracular? Ha!
Nic. To the king
'Twere better sure to publish the deceit
Than to the world; and, where's the means but this,
To hide it? By Creusa's art thou say'st
He is already bound in solemn oaths
To leave Ilyssus heir to Athens' throne.
Canst thou not add still stronger oaths, or ere
Thou dost reveal the secret of our fate?
Then who shall dare to break them? Shall the king?
Thou know'st his scrupulous piety extends
Almost to weakness. What should tempt him to it?
Creusa dead can frame no schemes against him;
The boy to him alone must owe his greatness;
And for Nicander, never more shall Greece
Hear his forgotten name.
Pyth. It must be so;
And yet——
Nic. What yet? To Phorbas thou with ease
May'st own the truth. He will not start at fraud
In sacred things. But see, the queen approaches,
Impatient of our stay. She changes not!
The bloom of health is still upon her cheek!
Fain would I hope——But hopes, alas! are vain.——
What hast thou done, Creusa?
Cre. [*Entering.*] Saved Ilyssus!
Nic. Thou mightst have lived with honour.
Cre. Lived! good Heaven!
I start, I tremble at the thoughts of life.
Canst thou reflect on what I had designed,
On what I am, and what, alas! I have been,
And not perceive death was my only refuge?
Am I not Xuthus' wife? and what art thou?
O hadst thou seen the torments of my soul,
When in one hasty moment it ran o'er
The business of an age, weighed all events,
Saw Xuthus, thee, Ilyssus, Athens, bleed
In one promiscuous carnage! Light, at length,
Burst through the gloom, and heaven's own voice proclaimed
One victim might suffice.
For Xuthus honour strove, and mightier love
Assumed Nicander's cause. Who, then, could fall?
Could Xuthus? Could Nicander!—No; Creusa.
Nic. Would thou hadst been less kind!—But, O my queen,
To blame thee now were vain.
Cre. To blame! 'tis praise,
'Tis triumph I demand. He lives! he reigns!
Young Ion lives! young Ion reigns in Athens!
O bring him, Pythia, bring him to my arms;
Let me but pour a last sad blessing o'er him,
And death has lost its terrors.
How now, Lycea?

Enter LYCEA, *hastily.*

Lyc. Mighty queen, I know not
If thy command would authorize the attempt,
But Phorbas, with an armed Athenian band,
Now enters the pavilion, to destroy
The king and young Ilyssus.
Nic. Earth and Heaven!
What say'st thou, maid?
Cre. O let me fly to save him!
Here shall their poniards——
Nic. Rest thou there, Creusa.
Thy embassies to-day have proved too fatal.
My life for his I save him from the stroke,
And on the instant send him to thy arms.
Now, fate, be doubly mine! [*Exit.*
Cre. Off, let me go, I will not be restrained.
They tear him piecemeal!
Pyth. Patience, mighty queen!
What man can do Nicander will perform.
Cre. He is a father only to my child,
He cannot tell them what a mother feels.——
Phorbas was born the curse of me and mine.
I might have known to what his impious rage

Would urge him on, and should have first informed him.——
Gods! must I never know sweet peace again!
Not even in death have rest!
Pyth. Behold, who comes
To bless thee ere thou diest, and cease to murmur
At Heaven's high will.

Enter ILYSSUS.

Cre. It is, it is Ilyssus——
My son, my son!
Ilys. Good Heavens! and do I live
To see a parent melt in fondness o'er me!——
Aletes saved me from the soldiers' arms,
And bade me fly to find a mother here.
Art thou, indeed, that mother, mighty queen!
And may I call thee so? Thou art! thy looks,
Thy tears, thy kind embraces—all, all proclaim
The truth.—O let me thus, thus on my knees—
Cre. Rise, rise, my child; I am, I am thy mother.
Ilys. O sacred sound, Ilyssus is no more
That outcast youth. A mother and a queen
He finds at once.
Cre. But art thou safe, my child?
Hast thou no wound?
Ilys. The old grey-headed man,
Who brought this morn the news of thy arrival,
Had raised against my breast his eager sword,
Defenceless I; when good Aletes came
And snatched me from the stroke. I would have staid,
Unarmed with him have staid, but his command
Was absolute, that I should fly to find,
What I have found, a mother! [*Embracing.*
Yet, oh, queen!
Why am I thus encompassed round with wonder?
May I not know this riddle of my fate?
Why first condemned to pass my infant days
In this obscure retreat? If I am thine,
Thy son, illustrious queen, sure I was born
To thrones and empires?
Cre. Thou art born to thrones,
And shalt in Athens reign.
Ilys. As Xuthus' heir?
Is Xuthus, then, my sire? Forgive me, queen,
I have a thousand, and a thousand doubts——
Can Xuthus be my sire?
Pyth. Forbear, Ilyssus,
Nor press thy fate too far. When time permits,
Thou shalt know all.
Cre. Shalt know it now, Ilyssus.
Not Xuthus is thy sire, but that brave man,
Who but this instant snatched thee from thy fate,
And by that act proclaimed himself a father.
Ilys. Aletes?
Cre. Not Aletes, but Nicander,
My wedded lord, thy sire!—And see, he comes
To bless thee, and confirm the sacred truth.——
Good Heaven, he bleeds!

Enter NICANDER.

Nic. To death, to death, Creusa.
Amid the fray I met the fate I sought for.
All else is safe, and Xuthus now pursues
A scattered few, who fall beneath his sword.—
Where is my boy?——Ye guards of innocence!
How has he been beset, and how escaped!
Where is my boy? for I may own him now,
And clasp him to my breast; no more Aletes,
The sage instructor of a youth unknown,
But the dear father weeping o'er his child.
Ilys. Oh, sir, what gratitude before inspired
Let duty pay.
Nic. I have no time to waste
In fondness now. Hear my last words, Ilyssus,
And bind them to thy heart. Thou still must live
The son of Xuthus. The good Pythia here
Will tell thee all the story of thy fate:
And may'st thou prosper as thou dost obey
Her sacred counsel! Xuthus, too, must know
The fatal tale; but to the world beside
It must be hid in darkness.
Pyth. Phorbas sure
Should be informed.
Nic. Phorbas has breathed his last;
And the bribed slave, who mixed the poisonous draught,
Fell by this hand.—Ilyssus, oh, farewell!
I will not bid adieu to thee, Creusa;
Thy colour changes, and the lamp of life
Fades in thy eye; we soon shall meet again.
Ilyssus, oh!——
Ilys. How hard he grasps my hand!
My lord, my father! Have I learned so late
To call thee by that name, and must I lose,
For ever lose?——Good Heaven! she grasps me too!
What means it, Pythia? the cold damps of death
Are on her.
Cre. Oh! my child, enquire no farther;
'Tis fitting we should part. Lycea, Pythia,
Intreat of Xuthus—yet I need not fear
His goodness; though I wronged him, foully wronged him,
He yet will prove a father to my child,
And from the world conceal the fatal truth.
Oh, I am cold—what bolts of ice shoot through me!
How my limbs shiver!—Nearer yet, my child;
My sight grows dim, and I could wish to gaze
For ever on thee.——Oh! it will not be——
Ev'n thou art lost, Ilyssus!——Oh——Farewell.
[*Dies.*
Ilys. She dies, she dies! Was I, then, only mocked
With a vain dream of bliss, to be plunged back
In deeper misery? Did I but hear
The tender name of child breathed fondly o'er me,
To make me feel what 'tis to lose that name?

Oh, I am ten times more an orphan now,
Than when I knew no parents!

Enter XUTHUS, *&c.*

Xut. Where is this murderess, who, with vile deceit,
Seemed to consent to ours and Heaven's designs,
Only to make us a more easy prey
To her assassins?——Ha, Creusa dead!
And the brave stranger who preserved us all!
Is he, too, dead?——The boy——
Pyth. Ilyssus lives.
And thou hast sworn, great king, that he shall reign
Supreme in Athens. Say, dost thou confirm
That oath?
Xut. I do, by Heaven!
Pyth. Ask here no more.
The fatal tale is for thy private ear.
Retire, and learn it all. For poor Creusa,
She wronged not thee, upon herself alone
She drew Heaven's vengeance. And too surely proves,
That murder, but intentional, not wrought
To horrid act, before the eternal throne
Stands forth the first of crimes. Who dare assume,
Unwarranted, Heaven's high prerogative
O'er life and death, with double force shall find
Turned on themselves the mischiefs they designed. [*Exeunt omnes.*

BARBAROSSA.

BY

BROWN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

BARBAROSSA, *usurper of Algiers.*
SELIM, *son of the deceased prince.*
OTHMAN, *his friend.*
SADI, *friend to Othman.*
ALADIN, *partizan of Barbarossa.*
Officer.
Slave.

WOMEN.

ZAPHIRA, *widow of the deceased prince.*
IRENE, *daughter to Barbarossa.*
Slave.

Officers, Attendants, and Slaves.

Scene—The Royal Palace of Algiers.———Time—A few hours about midnight.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter OTHMAN *and a Slave.*

Oth. A STRANGER, say'st thou, that enquires of Othman?
Slave. He does; and waits admittance.
Oth. Did he tell
His name and quality?
Slave. That he declined:
But called himself thy friend.
Oth. Where didst thou see him?
Slave. Even now, while twilight closed the day, I spied him
Musing amid the ruins of yon tower,
That overhangs the flood. On my approach,
With aspect stern, and words of import dark,
He questioned me of Othman. Then the tear
Stole from his eye. But when I talked of power
And courtly honours here conferred on thee,
His frown grew darker: 'All I wish,' he cried,
'Is to confer with him, and then to die!'
Oth. What may this mean?——Conduct the stranger to me. [*Exit Slave.*
Perhaps some worthy citizen, returned
From voluntary exile to Algiers,
Once known in happier days.

Enter SADI.

Ah, Sadi here!
My honoured friend!
Sadi. Stand off—pollute me not!
These honest arms, though worn with want, disdain
Thy gorgeous trappings, earned by foul dishonour.
Oth. Forbear thy rash reproaches: for beneath
This habit, which, to thy mistaken eye,
Confirms my guilt, I wear a heart as true
As Sadi's to my king.
Sadi. Why then beneath
This cursed roof, this black usurper's palace,
Darest thou to draw infected air, and live
The slave of insolence! Why lick the dust
Beneath his feet, who laid Algiers in ruin?
But age, which should have taught thee honest caution,
Has taught thee treachery!
Oth. Mistaken man!
Could passion prompt me to licentious speech
Like thine——
Sadi. Peace, false one! peace! The slave to power
Still wears a pliant tongue.—Oh, shame! to dwell

With murder, lust, and rapine! did he not
Come from the depths of Barca's solitude,
With fair pretence of faith and firm alliance?
Did not our grateful king, with open arms,
Receive him as his guest? O fatal hour!
Did he not, then, with hot, adulterous eye,
Gaze on the queen Zaphira? Yes, 'twas lust,
Lust gave the infernal whisper to his soul,
And bade him murder, if he would enjoy!
O complicated horrors! hell-born treachery!
Then fell our country, when good Selim died!
Yet thou, pernicious traitor, unabashed,
Canst wear the murderer's badge!

Oth. Mistaken man!
Yet hear me, Sadi——

Sadi. What can dishonour plead?

Oth. Yet blame not prudence.

Sadi. Prudence! the stale pretence of every knave!
The traitor's ready mask!

Oth. Yet still I love thee;
Still, unprovoked by thy intemperate zeal:
Could passion prompt me to licentious speech,
Bethink thee!—might I not reproach thy flight
With the foul names of fear and perfidy?
Didst thou not fly, when Barbarossa's sword
Reeked with the blood of thy brave countrymen?
What then did I?—Beneath this hated roof,
In pity to my widowed queen——

Sadi. In pity?

Oth. Yes, Sadi; Heaven is my witness, pity swayed me.

Sadi. Words, words! dissimulation all, and guilt!

Oth. With honest guile I did inroll my name
In the black list of Barbarossa's friends:
In hope, that some propitious hour might rise,
When Heaven would dash the murderer from his throne,
And give young Selim to his orphaned people.

Sadi. Indeed! can'st thou be true?

Oth. By Heaven, I am.

Sadi. Why then dissemble thus?

Oth. Have I not told thee?
I held it vain to stem the tyrant's power
By the weak efforts of an ill-timed rage.

Sadi. Enough: I find thee honest; and with pride
Will join thy counsels. This, my faithful arm,
Wasted with misery, shall gain new nerves
For brave resolves. Can aught, my friend, be done?
Can aught be dared?

Oth. We groan beneath the scourge.
This very morn, on false pretence of vengeance
For the foul murder of our honoured king,
Five guiltless wretches perished on the rack.
Our long-loved friends, and bravest citizens,
Self-banished to the desert, mourn in exile:
While the fell tyrant lords it o'er a crew
Of abject sycophants, the needy tools
Of power usurped, and a degenerate train
Of slaves in arms.

Sadi. O my devoted country!
But say, the widowed queen—my heart bleeds for her.

Oth. If pain be life, she lives: But in such woe,
As want and slavery might view with pity,
And bless their happier lot! Hemmed round by terrors,
Of every joy through seven long years bereft,
She mourns her murdered lord, her exiled son,
Her people fallen: the murderer of her lord,
Returning now from conquest o'er the Moors,
Tempts her to marriage: spurred at once by lust,
And black ambition. But with noble firmness,
Surpassing female, she rejects his vows,
Scorning the horrid union. Meantime he,
With ceaseless hate, pursues her exiled son;
And—O detested monster! [*He weeps.*

Sadi. Yet more deeds
Of cruelty! Just Heaven!

Oth. His rage pursues
The virtuous youth, even into foreign climes.
Ere this, perhaps, he bleeds. A murdering ruffian
Is sent to watch his steps, and plunge the dagger
Into his guiltless breast.

Sadi. Is this thy faith!
Tamely to witness to such deeds of horror!
Give me thy poignard; lead me to the tyrant.
What though surrounding guards——

Oth. Repress thy rage.
Thou wilt alarm the palace, wilt involve
Thyself, thy friend, in ruin. Haste thee hence;
Haste to the remnant of our loyal friends,
And let maturer councils rule thy zeal.

Sadi. Yet let us ne'er forget our prince's wrongs.
Remember, Othman, (and let vengeance rise)
How in the pangs of death, and in his gore
Weltering, we found our prince! The deadly dagger
Deep in his heart was fixed! His royal blood,
The life-blood of his people, o'er the bath
Ran purple! Oh, remember! and revenge!

Oth. Doubt not my zeal. But haste, and seek our friends.
Near to the western port Almanzor dwells,
Yet unseduced by Barbarossa's power.
He will disclose to thee if aught be heard
Of Selim's safety, or (what more I dread)
Of Selim's death. Thence best may our resolves
Be drawn hereafter. But let caution guide thee.
For in these walks, where tyranny and guilt
Usurp the throne, wakeful suspicion dwells,
And squint-eyed jealousy, prone to pervert
Even looks and smiles to treason.

Sadi. I obey thee.
Near to the western port, thou sayest.

Oth. Even there.
Close by the blasted palm-tree, where the mosque
O'erlooks the city. Haste thee hence, my friend.

I would not have thee found within these walls.
[*Flourish.*
And hark! these warlike sounds proclaim the approach
Of the proud Barbarossa, with his train.
Begone——
Sadi. May dire disease and pestilence
Hang o'er his steps! Farewell—remember, Othman,
Thy queen's, thy prince's, and thy country's wrongs. [*Exit Sadi.*
Oth. When I forget them, be contempt my lot!
Yet, for the love I bear them, I must wrap
My deep resentments in the specious guise
Of smiles, and fair deportment.

Enter BARBAROSSA, *Guards, &c.*

Bar. Valiant Othman,
Are these vile slaves impaled?
Oth. My lord, they are.
Bar. Did not the rack extort confession from them?
Oth. They died obdurate: while the melting crowd
Wept at their groans and anguish.
Bar. Curse on their womanish hearts! What, pity slaves,
Whom my supreme decree condemned to torture?
Are ye not all slaves, to whom my nod
Gives life or death?
Oth. To doubt thy will is treason.
Bar. I love thee, faithful Othman: but why sits
That sadness on thy brow: For oft I find thee
Musing and sad, while joy for my return,
My sword victorious, and the Moors o'erthrown,
Resounds through all my palace.
Oth. Mighty warrior!
The soul, intent on offices of love,
Will oft neglect, or scorn, the weaker proof
Which smiles or speech can give.
Bar. Well: be it so.
To guard Algiers from anarchy's misrule,
I sway the regal sceptre. Who deserves,
Shall meet protection: and who merits not,
Shall meet my wrath in thunder. But 'tis strange,
That when, with open arms, I would receive
Young Selim; would restore the crown, which death
Reft from his father's head——He scorns my bounty,
Shuns me with sullen and obdurate hate,
And proudly kindles war in foreign climes,
Against my power, who saved his bleeding country.
Oth. 'Tis strange indeed——

Enter ALADIN.

Ala. Brave prince, I bring thee tidings
Of high concern to Algiers and thee.
Young Selim is no more.
Oth. Selim no more! Indeed!
Bar. Indeed! why that astonishment?
He was our bitterest foe.
Oth. So perish all thy causeless enemies!
Bar. What says the rumour?
How died the prince, and where?
Ala. The rumour tells,
That flying to Oran, he there begged succours
From Ferdinand of Spain, to invade Algiers.
Bar. From Christian dogs!
Oth. How! league with infidels!
Ala. And there held council with the haughty Spaniard,
To conquer and dethrone thee: but in vain:
For in a dark encounter with two slaves,
Wherein the one fell by his youthful arm,
Selim at length was slain.
Bar. Ungrateful boy!
Oft have I courted him to meet my kindness;
But still in vain; he shunned me like a pestilence:
Nor could I e'er behold him, since the down
Covered his manly cheek. How many years
Numbered he?
Oth. I think, scarce thirteen, when his father died;
And now, some twenty.
Bar. Othman, now for proof
Of undissembled service. Well I know,
Thy long experienced faith hath placed thee high
In the queen's confidence: the crown I wear
Yet totters on my head, till marriage-rites
Have made her mine. Othman, she must be won.
Plead thou my cause of love: bid her dry up
Her fruitless tears: paint forth her long delays;
Wake all thy eloquence: Make her but mine,
And such unsought reward shall crown thy zeal,
As shall out-soar thy wishes.
Oth. Mighty king,
Where duty bids, I go.
Bar. Then haste thee, Othman,
Ere yet the rumour of her son's decease
Hath reached her ear; ere yet the mournful tale
Hath whelmed her in a new abyss of woe,
And quenched all soft affection, save for him.
Tell her, I come, borne on the wings of love!
Haste——fly——I follow thee. [*Exit Othman.*
Now, Aladin,
Now fortune bears us to the wished-for port:
We ride secure on her most prosperous billow.
This was the rock I dreaded. Dost not think
The attempt was greatly daring?
Ala. Bold as needful.
What booted it, to cut the old serpent off,
While the young adder nested in his place?
Bar. True: We have conquered now. Algiers is mine,
Without a rival. Thus, great souls aspire;
And boldly snatch at crowns, beyond the reach
Of coward conscience. Yet I wonder much,

Omar returns not: Omar, whom I sent
On this high trust. I fear, 'tis he hath fallen.
Didst thou not say two slaves encountered Selim?
Ala. Ay, two; 'tis rumoured so.
Bar. And that one fell?
Ala. Even so: by Selim's hand; while his companion
Planted his happier steel in Selim's heart.
Bar. Omar, I fear, is fallen. From my right hand
I gave my signet to the trusty slave:
And bade him send it, as the certain pledge
Of Selim's death, if sickness or captivity,
Or wayward fate, should thwart his quick return.
Ala. The rumour yet is young; perhaps forerruns
The trusty slave's approach.
Bar. We'll wait the event.
Mean time give out, that now the widowed queen
Hath dried her tears, prepared to crown my love
By marriage-rites: spread wide the flattering tale:
For if persuasion win not her consent,
Power shall compel.
Ala. It is, indeed, a thought
Which prudence whispers.
Bar. Thou, brave Aladin,
Hast been the firm companion of my deeds:
Soon shall my friendship's warmth reward thy faith.
This night my will devotes to feast and joy,
For conquest o'er the Moor. Hence, Aladin;
And see the night-watch close the palace round.
[*Exit Aladin.*
Now to the queen. My hear expands with hope.
Let high ambition flourish: in Selim's blood
Its root is struck: from this, the rising stem
Proudly shall branch o'er Afric's continent,
And stretch from shore to shore. My wayward daughter!

Enter IRENE.

What, drowned in tears? Still will thy folly thwart
Each purpose of my soul? When pleasures spring
Beneath our feet, thou spurn'st the proffered boon,
To dwell with sorrow. Why these sullen tears?
Irene. Let not these tears offend my father's eye;
They are the tears of pity. From the queen
I come, thy suppliant.
Bar. On some rude request.
What wouldst thou urge?
Irene. Thy dread return from war,
And proffered love, have opened every wound
The soft and lenient hand of time had closed.
If ever gentle pity touched thy heart,
Now, let it melt! urge not thy harsh command
To see her! her distracted soul is bent
To mourn in solitude. She asks no more.
Bar. She mocks my love. How many tedious years
Have I endured her coyness? Had not war,
And great ambition, called me from Algiers,
Ere this, my power had reaped what she denies.
But there's a cause, which touches on my peace,
And bids me brook no more her false delays.
Irene. Oh, frown not thus! Sure pity ne'er deserved
A parent's frown! but look more kindly on me.
Let thy consenting pity mix with mine,
And heal the woes of weeping majesty!
Unhappy queen!
Bar. What means that gushing tear?
Irene. Oh, never shall Irene taste of peace,
While poor Zaphira mourns!
Bar. Is this my child?
Perverse and stubborn!—As thou lovest thy peace,
Dry up thy tears. What! damp the general triumph
That echoes through Algiers! which now shall pierce
The vaulted Heaven, as soon as fame shall spread
Young Selim's death, my empire's bitterest foe
Irene. O generous Selim! [*Weeps.*
Bar. Ah! there's more in this!
Tell me, Irene, on thy duty, tell me,
As thou dost wish, I would not cast thee off,
With an incensed father's curses on thee,
Now, tell me why, at this detested name of Selim,
Afresh thy sorrow streams?
Irene. Yes, I will tell thee,
For he is gone, and dreads thy hate no more!
My father knows, that scarce five moons are past,
Since the Moors seized, and sold me at Oran,
A hopeless captive in a foreign clime.
Bar. Too well I know, and rue the fatal day.
But what of this?
Irene. Why should I tell, what horrors
Did then beset my soul? Oft have I told thee,
How midst the throng, a youth appeared: his eye
Bright as the morning star!
Bar. And was it Selim?
Did he redeem thee?
Irene. With unsparing hand
He paid the allotted ransom: And o'erbade
Avarice and appetite. At his feet I wept,
Dissolved in tears of gratitude and joy.
But, when I told my quality and birth,
He started at the name of Barbarossa;
And thrice turned pale. Yet, with recovery mild,
'Go to Algiers,' he cried; 'protect my mother,
'And be to her, what Selim is to thee.'
Even such, my father, was the generous youth,
Who, by the hands of bloody, bloody men,
Lies numbered with the dead.
Bar. Amazement chills me!
Was this thy unknown friend concealed from me?
False, faithless child!
Irene. Could gratitude do less?
He said thy wrath pursued him; thence conjured me

Not to reveal his name.
Bar. Thou treacherous maid!
To stoop to freedom from thy father's foe!
Irene. Alas, my father!
He never was thy foe.
Bar. What! plead for Selim!
Away. He merited the death he found!
O coward! traitress to thy father's glory!
Thou shouldst have lived a slave, been sold to shame,
Been banished to the depth of howling deserts,
Been aught but what thou art, rather than blot
A father's honour by a deed so vile:
Hence, from my sight! Hence, thou unthankful child!
Beware thee: shun the queen: nor taint her ear
With Selim's fate. Yes, she shall crown my love;
Or, by our prophet, she shall dread my power!
[*Exit Barbarous.*
Irene. Unhappy queen!
To what new scenes of horror art thou doomed!
O cruel father! hapless child! whom pity
Compels to call him cruel! Generous Selim!
Poor injured queen! She but intreats to die
In her dear father's tents! thither, good queen,
My care shall speed thee, while suspicion sleeps.
What though my frowning father pour his rage
On my defenceless head? Yet innocence
Shall yield her firm support; and conscious virtue
Gild all my days. Could I but save Zaphira,
Let the storm beat, I'll weep and pray, till she,
(Bereft of her loved lord, of every joy bereft!)
And heaven, forget my father e'er was cruel.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ZAPHIRA, *and female slaves, discovered.*

Zaph. WHEN shall I be at peace! O righteous heaven,
Strengthen my fainting soul, which fain would rise
To confidence in thee! But woes on woes
O'erwhelm me! first my husband, now my son,
Both dead! both slaughtered by the bloody hand
Of Barbarossa! Sweet content, farewell!
Farewell, sweet hope! grief is my portion here.
O dire ambition! what infernal power
Unchained thee from thy native depth of hell,
To stalk the earth with thy destructive train,
Murder and lust! to waste domestic peace,
And every heart-felt joy!

Enter OTHMAN.

O faithful Othman!
Our fears were true! my Selim is no more!
Oth. Has, then, the fatal secret reached thine ear?
Inhuman tyrant!
Zaph. Strike him, heaven, with thunder,
Nor let Zaphira doubt thy providence!
Oth. 'Twas what we feared. Oppose not heaven's high will,
Nor struggle with the ten-fold chain of fate,
That links thee to thy woes! Oh, rather yield,
And wait the happier hour, when innocence
Shall weep no more. Rest in that pleasing hope,
And yield thyself to heaven. My honoured queen,
The king——
Zaph. Whom stil'st thou king?
Oth. 'Tis Barbarossa.
He means to see thee——
Zaph. Curses blast the tyrant!
Does he assume the name of king?
Oth. He does.
Zaph. O title vilely purchased! by the blood
Of innocence! by treachery and murder!
May heaven incensed pour down its vengeance on him;
Blast all his joys, and turn them into horror;
Till phrenzy rise, and bid him curse the hour
That gave his crimes their birth! my faithful Othman,
My sole surviving prop! canst thou devise
No secret means, by which I may escape
This hated palace! with undaunted step
I'd roam the waste, to reach my father's vales
Of dear Mutija! Can no means be found,
To fly these blackening horrors that surround me?
Oth. That hope is vain. The tyrant knows thy hate;
Hence, day and night, his watchful guards environ thee,
Impenetrable as walls of adamant.
Curb, then, thy mighty griefs: justice and truth
He mocks as shadows. Rouse not then his anger;
Let soft persuasion and mild eloquence
Redeem that liberty, which stern rebuke
Would rob thee of for ever.
Zaph. Cruel task!
For royalty to bow, an injured queen
To kneel for liberty! and oh! to whom?
Even to the murderer of her lord and son!
O perish first, Zaphira! yes, I'll die!
For what is life to me! my dear, dear lord!
My hapless child! yes, I will follow you.
Oth. Wilt thou not see him, then?
Zaph. I will not, Othman.
Or if I do, with bitter imprecation,
More keen than poison shot from serpents' tongues,

I'll pour my curses on him!
Oth. Will Zaphira
Thus meanly sink in woman's fruitless rage,
When she should wake revenge?
Zaph. Revenge? O tell me—
Tell me but how! what can a helpless woman?
Oth. Gain but the tyrant's leave, and reach thy father:
Pour thy complaints before him: let thy wrongs
Kindle his indignation to pursue
This vile usurper, till unceasing war
Blast his ill-gotten power.
Zaph. Ah! sayst thou, Othman? [*Rising.*
Thy words have shot like lightning through my frame,
And all my soul's on fire. Thou faithful friend!
Yes; with more gentle speech I will soothe his pride;
Regain my freedom; reach my father's tents;
There paint my countless woes. His kindling rage
Shall wake the vallies into honest vengeance:
The sudden storm shall pour on Barbarossa;
And every glowing warrior steep his shaft
In deadlier poison, to revenge my wrongs.
Oth. There spoke the queen. But as thou lov'st thy freedom,
Touch not on Selim's death. Thy soul will kindle,
And passion mount in flames that will consume thee.
Zaph. My murdered son! Yes, to revenge thy death,
I'll speak a language which my heart disdains.
Oth. Peace, peace! the tyrant comes: now, injured queen,
Plead for thy freedom, hope for just revenge,
And check each rising passion! [*Exit Othman.*

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. Hail, sovereign fair! Thrice honoured queen! in whom
Beauty and majesty conspire to charm!
Behold the conqueror, whose deciding voice
Can speak the fate of kingdoms, at thy feet
Lies vanquished by thy power!
Zaph. O Barbarossa!
No more the pride of conquest e'er can charm
My widowed heart! With my departed lord
My love lies buried! I should meet thy flame
With sullen tears and cold indifference.
Then turn thee to some happier fair, whose heart
May crown thy growing love, with love sincere!
For I have none to give.
Bar. Love ne'er should die:
'Tis the soul's cordial: 'tis the fount of life;
Therefore should spring eternal in the breast.
One object lost, another should succeed;
And all our life be love.
Zaph. Urge me no more: thou might'st with equal hope
Woo the cold marble weeping o'er a tomb,
To meet thy wishes. But if generous love
Dwell in thy breast, vouchsafe me proof sincere:
Give me safe convoy to the native vales
Of dear Mutija, where my father reigns.
Bar. O blind to proffered bliss! what! fondly quit
This lofty palace, and the envied pomp
Of empire, for an Arab's wandering tent,
Where the mock chieftain leads his vagrant tribes
From plain to plain, as thirst or famine sways;
Obscurely vain, and faintly shadows out
The majesty of kings! Far other joys
Here shall attend thy call: the winged bark
For thee shall traverse seas; and every clime
Be tributary to Zaphira's charms.
To thee, exalted fair, submissive realms
Shall bow the neck; and swarthy kings and queens,
From the far distant Niger and the Nile,
Drawn captive at my conquering chariot wheels,
Shall kneel before thee.
Zaph. Pomp and power are toys,
Which even the mind at ease may well disdain;
But, ah! what mockery is the tinsel pride
Of splendour, when by wasting woes the mind
Lies desolate within! Such, such, is mine!
O'erwhelmed with ills, and dead to every joy;
Envy me not this last request, to die
In my dear father's tents.
Bar. Thy suit is vain——
Zaph. Thus kneeling at thy feet——I do beseech thee.
Bar. Thou thankless fair!
Thus to repay the labours of my love?
Had I not seized the throne when Selim died,
Ere this thy foes had laid Algiers in ruin:
I checked the warring powers, and gave you peace.
Zaph. Peace dost thou call it! what can worse be feared
From the war's rage, than violence and blood?
Have not unceasing horrors marked thy reign?
Through seven long years thy slaughtering sword hath reeked
With guiltless blood.
Bar. With guiltless blood? Take heed——
Rouse not my slumbering rage, nor vindicate
Thy country's guilt and treason!
Zaph. Where violence reigns, there innocence is guilt,
And virtue, treason. Know, Zaphira scorns
Thy menace. Yes; thy slaughtering sword hath reeked
With guiltless blood. Through thee exile and death
Have thinned Algiers. Is this thy boasted peace?
So might the tyger boast the peace he brings,
When he o'erleaps by stealth, and wastes the fold.
Bar. Ungrateful queen! I will give thee proof of love,

Beyond thy sex's pride! Make thee but mine,
I will descend the throne, and call thy son
From banishment to empire.
Zaph. Oh, my heart!
Can I bear this!
Inhuman tyrant! Curses on thy head!
May dire remorse and anguish haunt thy throne,
And 'gender in thy bosom fell despair!
Despair as deep as mine!
Bar. What means Zaphira?
What means this burst of grief?
Zaph. Thou fell destroyer!
Had not guilt steeled thy heart, awakening conscience
Would flash conviction on thee, and each look,
Shot from these eyes, be armed with serpent horrors,
To turn thee into stone! Relentless man!
Who did the bloody deed? Oh, tremble guilt,
Where'er thou art! Look on me! Tell me, tyrant,
Who slew my blameless son?
Bar. What envious tongue,
My foe, hath dared to taint my name with slander?
This is the rumour of some cozening slave,
Who thwarts my peace. Believe it not, Zaphira;
Thy Selim lives: nay, more, he soon shall reign,
If thou consent to bless me.
Zaph. Never, Oh, never——Sooner would I roam
An unknown exile through the torrid climes
Of Afric, sooner dwell with wolves and tygers,
Than mount with thee my murdered Selim's throne!
Bar. Rash queen, forbear; think on thy captive state:
Remember, that within these palace walls,
I am omnipotent: that every knee
Bends at my dread approach: that shame and honour,
Reward and punishment, await my nod,
The vassals of my pleasure. Yield thee, then:
Avert the gathering horrors that surround thee,
And dread my power incensed.
Zaph. Dares thy licentious tongue pollute mine ear
With that foul menace! Tyrant! Dreadst thou not
The all-seeing eye of Heaven, its lifted thunder,
And all the reddening vengeance which it stores
For crimes like thine? Yet, know, Zaphira scorns thee!
Though robbed by thee of every dear support,
No tyrant's threat can awe the free-born soul,
That greatly dares to die. [*Exit Zaphira.*
Bar. Where should she learn the tale of Selim's death!
Could Othman dare to tell it? If he did,
My rage shall sweep him, swifter than the whirlwind,
To instant death! Curse on her steadiness!
She lords it o'er my heart. There is a charm
Of majesty in virtue, that disarms
Reluctant power, and bends the struggling will
From her most firm resolve.

Enter ALADIN.

O Aladin!
Timely thou com'st, to ease my labouring thought,
That swells with indignation and despair.
This stubborn woman——
Ala. What, unconquered still?
Bar. The news of Selim's fate hath reached her ear.
Whence could this come?
Ala. I can resolve the doubt.
A female slave, attendant on Zaphira,
O'erheard the messenger who brought the tale,
And gave it to her ear.
Bar. Perdition seize her!
Nor threats can move, nor promise now allure
Her haughty soul: nay, she defies my power,
And talks of death, as if her female form
Inshrined some hero's spirit.
Ala. Let her rage foam.
I bring thee tidings that will ease thy pain.
Bar. Say'st thou? Speak on——Oh, give me quick relief!
Ala. The gallant youth is come, who slew her son.
Bar. Who? Omar?
Ala. No; Unhappy Omar fell
By Selim's hand. But Achmet, whom he joined
His brave associate, so the youth bids tell thee,
Revenged his death by Selim's.
Bar. Gallant youth!
Bears he the signet?
Ala. Ay.
Bar. That speaks him true.——Conduct him, Aladin. [*Exit Aladin.*
This is beyond my hope. The secret pledge
Restored, prevents suspicion of the deed,
While it confirms it done.

Enter SELIM *disguised as* ACHMET, *and* ALADIN

Selim. Hail, mighty Barbarossa! As the pledge [*Kneels.*
Of Selim's death, behold thy ring restored:
That pledge will speak the rest.
Bar. Rise, valiant youth!
But first, no more a slave—I give thee freedom.
Thou art the youth whom Omar (now no more)
Joined his companion in this brave attempt?
Selim. I am.
Bar. Then tell me how you sped.——Where found ye
That insolent!
Selim. We found him at Oran,
Plotting deep mischief to thy throne and people
Bar. Well ye repaid the traitor.——
Selim. As we ought.
While night drew on, we leapt upon our prey.
Full at his heart brave Omar aimed the poignard:

Which Selim shunning, wrenched it from his hand,
Then plunged it in his breast. I hasted on,
Too late to save, yet I revenged my friend:
My thirsty dagger, with repeated blows,
Searched every artery: They fell together,
Gasping in folds of mortal enmity;
And thus in frowns expired.
Bar. Well hast thou sped.
Thy dagger did its office, faithful Achmet;
And high reward shall wait thee.—One thing more——
Be the thought fortunate!—Go, see the queen.
For know, the rumour of her Selim's death
Hath reached her ear: Hence dark suspicions rise,
Glancing at me. Go, tell her, that thou saw'st
Her son expire; that, with his dying breath,
He did conjure her to receive my vows,
And give her country peace.—That, sure will lull
Suspicion. Aladin, that sure will win her.
Ala. 'Tis wisely thought.—It must.

Enter OTHMAN.

Bar. Most welcome, Othman.
Behold this gallant stranger. He hath done
The state good service. Let some high reward
Await him, such as may o'erpay his zeal.
Conduct him to the queen; for he hath news
Worthy her ear, from her departed son;
Such as may win her love—Come, Aladin;
The banquet waits our presence: festal joy
Laughs in the mantling goblet; and the night,
Illumined by the taper's dazzling beam,
Rivals departed day. [*Exeunt Bar. and Ala.*
Selim. What anxious thought
Rolls in thine eye, and heaves thy labouring breast?
Why joinest thou not the loud excess of joy,
That riots through the palace?
Oth. Darest thou tell me,
On what dark errand thou art here?
Selim. I dare.
Dost not perceive the savage lines of blood
Deform my visage? Read'st not in mine eye
Remorseless fury?—I am Selim's murderer.
Oth. Selim's murderer!
Selim. Start not from me.
My dagger thirsts not but for regal blood——
Why this amazement?
Oth. Amazement?—No—'Tis well—'Tis as it should be——
He was, indeed, a foe to Barbarossa.
Selim. And therefore to Algiers:—Was it not so?
Why dost thou pause? What passion shakes thy frame?
Oth. Fate, do thy worst! I can no more dissemble!——
Can I, unmoved, behold the murdering ruffian,
Smeared with my prince's blood!—Go, tell the tyrant,
Othman defies his power; that, tired with life,
He dares his bloody hand, and pleads to die.
Selim. What! didst thou love this Selim?
Oth. All men loved him.
He was of such unmixed and blameless quality,
That envy, at his praise, stood mute, nor dared
To sully his fair name! Remorseless tyrant!
Selim. I do commend thy faith. And since thou lovest him,
I have deceived this tyrant Barbarossa:
Selim is yet alive.
Oth. Alive!
Selim. Nay, more——
Selim is in Algiers.
Oth. Impossible!
Selim. Nay, if thou doubt'st, I'll bring him hither straight.
Oth. Not for an empire!
Thou might'st as well bring the devoted lamb
Into the tiger's den.
Selim. But I'll bring him
Hid in such deep disguise as shall deride
Suspicion, though she wear the lynx's eyes.
Not even thyself could'st know him.
Oth. Yes, sure: too sure to hazard such an awful
Trial!
Selim. Yet seven revolving years, worn out
In tedious exile, may have wrought such change
Of voice and feature in the state of youth,
As might elude thine eye.
Oth. No time can blot
The memory of his sweet majestic mein,
The lustre of his eye! besides, he wears
A mark indelible, a beauteous scar,
Made on his forehead by a furious pard,
Which, rushing on his mother, Selim slew.
Selim. A scar!
Oth. Aye, on his forehead.
Selim. What! like this? [*Lifting his turban.*
Oth. Whom do I see!—am I awake?—my prince! [*Kneels.*
My honoured, honoured king!
Selim. Rise, faithful Othman.
Thus let me thank thy truth! [*Embraces him.*
Oth. O happy hour!
Selim. Why dost thou tremble thus? Why grasp my hand?
And why that ardent gaze? Thou can'st not doubt me!
Oth. Ah, no! I see thy sire in every line.——
How did my prince escape the murderer's hand?
Selim. I wrenched the dagger from him, and gave back
That death he meant to bring. The ruffian wore
The tyrant's signet:—'Take this ring,' he cried,
'The sole return my dying hand can make thee
'For its accursed attempt: this pledge restored,
'Will prove thee slain: Safe may'st thou see 'Algiers,
'Unknown to all.' This said, the assassin died.
Oth. But how to gain admittance, thus unknown?

Selim. Disguised as Selim's murderer I come:
The accomplice of the deed: the ring restored,
Gained credence to my words.
Oth. Yet ere thou cam'st, thy death was rumoured here.
Selim. I spread the flattering tale, and sent it hither,
That babbling rumour, like a lying dream,
Might make belief more easy. Tell me, Othman,
And yet I tremble to approach the theme——
How fares my mother? does she still retain
Her native greatness?
Oth. Still: in vain the tyrant
Tempts her to marriage, though with impious threats
Of death or violation.
Selim. May kind Heaven
Strengthen her virtue, and by me reward it!
When shall I see her, Othman?
Oth. Yet, my prince,
I tremble for thy presence.
Selim. Let not fear
Sully thy virtue: 'tis the lot of guilt
To tremble. What hath innocence to do with fear?
Oth. Yet think—should Barbarossa———
Selim. Dread him not—
Thou know'st, by his command I see Zaphira;
And, wrapt in this disguise, I walk secure,
As if from Heaven some guarding power attending,
Threw ten-fold night around me.
Oth. Still my heart
Forbodes some dire event!—O quit these walls!
Selim. Not till a deed be done, which every tyrant
Shall tremble when he hears.
Oth. What means my prince?
Selim. To take just vengeance for a father's blood,
A mother's sufferings, and a people's groans.
Oth. Alas, my prince! thy single arm is weak
To combat multitudes!
Selim. Therefore I come,
Clad in this murderer's guise—Ere morning shines,
This, Othman—this—shall drink the tyrant's blood. [*Shews a dagger.*
Oth. Heaven shield thy precious life—let caution rule
Thy headlong zeal!
Selim. Nay, think not that I come
Blindly impelled by fury or despair:
For I have seen our friends, and parted now
From Sadi and Almanzor.
Oth. Say——what hope?
My soul is all attention.——
Selim. Mark me, then;
A chosen band of citizens this night
Will storm the palace: while the glutted troops
Lie drenched in surfeit, the confederate city,
Bold through despair, have sworn to break their chain,
By one wide slaughter. I, mean time, have gained
The palace, and will wait the appointed hour,
To guard Zaphira from the tyrant's rage,
Amid the dreadful uproar.
Oth. Heaven protect thee——
'Tis dreadful——What's the hour?
Selim. I left our friends
In secret council. Ere the dead of night
Brave Sadi will report their last resolves.—
Now lead me to the queen.——
Oth. Brave prince, beware!
Her joy's or fear's excess would sure betray thee.
Thou shalt not see her till the tyrant perish!
Selim. I must.—I feel some secret impulse urge me.
Who knows that 'tis not the last parting interview,
We ever shall obtain?
Oth. Then, on thy life,
Do not reveal thyself.——Assume the name
Of Selim's friend; sent to confirm her virtue,
And warn her that he lives.
Selim. It shall be so; I yield me to thy will.
Oth. Thou greatly daring youth! May angels watch,
And guard thy upright purpose, that Algiers
May reap the blessings of thy virtuous reign,
And all thy godlike father shine in thee!
Selim. Oh, thou hast roused a thought, on which revenge
Mounts with redoubled fire!—Yes, here, even here,—
Beneath this very roof, my honoured father
Shed round his blessings, till accursed treachery
Stole on his peaceful hour! O blessed shade!
If yet thou hoverest o'er thy once-loved clime,
Now aid me to redress thy bleeding wrongs!
Infuse thy mighty spirit into my breast,
Thy firm and dauntless fortitude, unawed
By peril, pain, or death! that, undismayed,
I may pursue the just intent, and dare
Or bravely to revenge, or bravely die. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter IRENE.

Irene. CAN air-drawn visions mock the waking eye?
Sure 'twas his image!—Yet, his presence here—
After full rumour had confirmed him dead!
Beneath this hostile roof to court destruction!
It staggers all belief! Silent he shot
Athwart my view, amid the glimmering lamps,
With swift and ghost-like step, that seemed to shun
All human converse. This way, sure, he moved.
But, oh, how changed! He wears no gentle smiles,
But terror in his frown. He comes.—'Tis he:—
For Othman points him hither, and departs.
Disguised, he seeks the queen: secure, perhaps,
And heedless of the ruin that surrounds him.
O generous Selim! can I see thee thus,
And not forewarn such virtue of its fate!
Forbid it gratitude!

Enter SELIM.

Selim. Be still, ye sighs!
Ye struggling tears of filial love, be still.
Down, down, fond heart!
Irene. Why, stranger, dost thou wander here?
Selim. Oh, ruin! [*Shunning her.*
Irene. Blest is Irene! blest, if Selim lives!
Selim. Am I betrayed!
Irene. Betrayed to whom? To her
Whose grateful heart would rush to death to save thee!
Selim. It was my hope
That time had veiled all semblance of my youth,
And thrown the mask of manhood o'er my visage.—
Am *I* then known?
Irene. To none, but love and me.—
To me, who late beheld thee at Oran;
Who saw thee here, beset with unseen peril,
And flew to save the guardian of my honour.
Selim. Thou sum of every worth! Thou heaven of sweetness!
How could I pour forth all my soul before thee,
In vows of endless truth!—It must not be!—
This is my destined goal!—The mansion drear,
Where grief and anguish dwell! where bitter tears,
And sighs, and lamentations, choak the voice,
And quench the flame of love!
Irene. Yet, virtuous prince,
Though love be silent, gratitude may speak.
Hear, then, her voice, which warns thee from these walls.
Mine be the grateful task, to tell the queen,
Her Selim lives. Ruin and death inclose thee.
Speed thee hence, while yet destruction sleeps!
Selim. Too generous maid! O Heaven! that Barbarossa
Should be Irene's father!
Irene. Injured prince,
Lose not a thought on me! I know thy wrongs,
And merit not thy love. No, learn to hate me.
Or, if Irene e'er can hope such kindness,
First pity, then forget me!
Selim. When I do,
May Heaven pour down its righteous vengeance on me!
Irene. Hence! haste thee, hence!
Selim. Would it were possible!
Irene. What can prevent it?
Selim. Justice! fate, and justice!
A murdered father's wrongs!
Irene. Ah, prince, take heed!
I have a father too!
Selim. What did I say!—my father!—not my father.—
Can I depart till I have seen Zaphira?——
Irene. Justice, saidst thou?
That word hath struck me, like a peal of thunder!
Thine eye, which wont to melt with gentle love,
Now glares with terror! Thy approach by night,
Thy dark disguise, thy looks and fierce demeanour,
Yes, all conspire to tell me, I am lost!
Ah! prince, take heed! I have a father too!
Think, Selim, what Irene must endure,
Should she be guilty of a father's blood!
Selim. A father's blood!
Irene. Too sure. In vain thou hid'st
Thy dire intent! Forbid it, Heaven, Irene
Should see destruction hovering o'er her father,
And not prevent the blow!
Selim. Is this thy love,
Thy gratitude to him who saved thy honour?
Irene. 'Tis gratitude to him who gave me life:
He who preserved me claims the second place.
Selim. Is he not a tyrant, murderer?
Irene. O spare my shame! I am his daughter still!
Selim. Wouldst thou become the partner of his crimes?
Irene. Forbid it, Heaven!—Yet I must save a father!
Selim. Come on, then. Lead me to him. Glut thine eyes
With Selim's blood———
Irene. Was e'er distress like mine!
O Selim, can I see my father perish?
Would I had ne'er been born! [*Weeps.*
Selim. Thou virtuous maid!
My heart bleeds for thee!
Irene. Quit, O quit these walls!
Heaven will ordain some gentler, happier means,
To heal thy woes! Thy dark attempt is big

With horror and destruction! Generous prince!
Resign thy dreadful purpose, and depart!
Selim. May not I see Zaphira, ere I go?
Thy gentle pity will not, sure, deny us
The mournful pleasure of a parting tear?
Irene. Go, then, and give her peace. But fly these walls,
As soon as morning shines:—Else, though despair
Drives me to madness—yet—to save a father!
O Selim! spare my tongue the horrid sentence!
Fly! ere destruction seize thee! [*Exit Irene.*
Selim. Death and ruin!
Must I then fly? what!—coward-like, betray
My father, mother, friends! Vain terrors, hence!
Danger looks big to fear's deluded eye:
But courage, on the heights and steeps of fate,
Dares snatch her glorious purpose from the edge
Of peril: And while sickening caution shrinks,
Or, self betrayed, falls headlong down the steep,
Calm resolution, unappalled, can walk
The giddy brink, secure—Now to the queen.—
How shall I dare to meet her thus unknown!
How stifle the warm transports of my heart,
That pants at her approach!—Who waits the queen?
Who waits Zaphira?

Enter a female Slave.

Slave. Whence this intrusion, stranger, at an hour
Destined to rest?
Selim. I come, to seek the queen,
On matter of such import, as may claim
Her speedy audience.
Slave. Thy request is vain.
Even now the queen hath heard the mournful tale
Of her son's death, and drowned in grief she lies.
Thou canst not see her.
Selim. Tell the queen, I come
On message from her dear, departed son;
And bring his last request.
Slave. I'll haste to tell her.
With all a mother's tenderest love she'll fly,
To meet that name. [*Exit Slave.*
Selim. O ill-dissembling heart!—My ev'ry limb
Trembles with grateful terror!—Would to Heaven
I had not come! Some look, or starting tear,
Will sure betray me—Honest guile assist
My faltering tongue!

Enter ZAPHIRA.

Zaph. Where is this pious stranger?
Say, generous youth, whose pity leads thee thus
To seek the weeping mansions of distress,
Didst thou behold in death my hapless son!
Didst thou receive my Selim's parting breath?
Did he remember me?
Selim. Most honoured queen!
Thy son—Forgive these gushing tears that flow
To see distress like thine!
Zaph. I thank thy pity!
'Tis generous thus to feel for others woe.—
What of my son? Say, didst thou see him die?
Selim. By Barbarossa's dread command I come,
To tell thee, that these eyes alone beheld
Thy son expire.
Zaph. O Heaven!—my child! my child!
Selim. That even in death, the pious youth remembered
His royal mother's woes,
Zaph. Where, where was I!
Relentless fate!—that I should be denied
The mournful privilege to see him die!
To clasp him in the agony of death,
And catch his parting soul! Oh tell me all,
All that he said and looked! Deep in my heart
That I may treasure every parting word,
Each dying whisper of my dear, dear son!
Selim. Let not my words offend.—What if he said,
Go, tell my hapless mother, that her tears
Have streamed too long: Then bid her weep no more:
Bid her forget the husband and the son,
In Barbarossa's arms!
Zaph. O basely false!
Thou art some creeping slave to Barbarossa,
Sent to surprise my unsuspecting heart!
Vile slave, begone!—My son betray me thus!—
Could he have e'er conceived so base a purpose,
My griefs for him should end in great disdain!—
But he was brave; and scorned a thought so vile!
Wretched Zaphira! How art thou become
The sport of slaves!—O griefs incurable!
Selim. Yet hope for peace, unhappy queen; Thy woes
May yet have end.
Zaph. Why weepest thou, crocodile?
Thy treacherous tears are vain.
Selim. My tears are honest.
I am not what thou think'st.
Zaph. Who art thou then?
Selim. Oh, my full heart—I am—thy friend, and Selim's.
I come not to insult, but heal thy woes.——
Now check thy heart's wild tumult, while I tell thee—
Perhaps—thy son yet lives.
Zaph. Lives! O gracious Heaven!
Do I not dream? say, stranger,—didst thou tell me,
Perhaps my Selim lives?—What do I ask?
Wild, wild, and fruitless hope!—What mortal power
Can e'er reanimate his mangled corse,
Shoot life into the cold and silent tomb,
Or bid the ruthless grave give up its dead!
Selim. O powerful Nature, thou wilt sure betray me! [*Aside.*

Thy Selim lives: For since his rumoured death,
I saw him at Oran.
Zaph. Ye heavenly powers!—
Didst thou not say, thou saw'st my son expire?
Didst not even now relate his dying words?
Selim. It was an honest falsehood, meant to prove
Zaphira's unstained virtue.
Zaph. Why—but Othman—
Othman affirmed, that my poor son was dead:
And I have heard, the murderer is come,
In triumph o'er his dear and innocent blood.
Selim. I am that murderer.—Beneath this guise,
I spread the abortive tale of Selim's death,
And haply won the tyrant's confidence.
Hence gained access: and from thy Selim tell thee,
Selim yet lives, and honours all thy virtues.
Zaph. O generous youth! who art thou?—From what clime
Comes such exalted virtue, as dares give
A pause to griefs like mine?—As dares approach,
And prop the ruin tottering on its base,
Which selfish caution shuns?—Oh say—who art thou?
Selim. A friendless youth, self-banished with thy son;
Long his companion in distress and danger:
One who revered thy worth in prosperous days,
And more reveres thy virtue in distress.
Zaph. O gentle stranger—Mock not my woes,
But tell me truly,—does my Selim live?
Selim. He does, by Heaven!
Zaph. O generous Heaven! thou at length o'erpayest
My bitterest pangs, if my dear Selim lives!
And does he still remember
His father's wrongs, and mine?
Selim. He bade me tell thee,
That, in his heart, indelibly are stamped
His father's wrongs, and thine: that he but waits
Till awful justice may unsheath her sword,
And lust and murder tremble at her frown!
That, till the arrival of that happy hour,
Deep in his soul the hidden fire shall glow,
And his breast labour with the great revenge!
Zaph. Eternal blessings crown my virtuous son!
I feel my heart revive. Here, peace once more
Begins to dawn.
Selim. Much honoured queen, farewell,
Zaph. Not yet—not yet—indulge a mother's love!
To thee, the kind companion of his griefs,
Methinks I see my Selim stand before me.
Depart not yet. A thousand fond requests
Crowd on my mind. Wishes, and prayers, and tears,
Are all I have to give. O bear him these!
Selim. Take comfort then; for know, thy son, o'erjoyed
To rescue thee, would bleed at every vein!—
Bid her, he said, yet hope we may be blest!
Bid her remember, that the ways of Heaven,
Though dark, are just: that oft some guardian power
Attends, unseen, to save the innocent!
But if high Heaven decrees our fall, Oh bid her
Firmly to wait the stroke, prepared alike
To live or die! and then he wept as I do.
Zaph. Eternal blessings crown my virtuous son!
O righteous Heaven! thou hast at length o'erpayed
My bitterest pangs; if my dear Selim lives,
And lives for me!—hear my departing prayer:
[*Kneels.*
O spare my son!—Protect his tender years!
Be thou his guide through dangers and distress!
Soften the rigours of his cruel exile,
And lead him to his throne!—When I am gone,
Bless thou his peaceful reign! Oh, early bless him
With the sweet pledges of connubial love;
That he may win his virtue's just reward,
And taste the raptures which a parent's heart
Reaps from a child like him! not for myself—
But my dear son—accept my parting tears!
[*Exit Zaphira.*
Selim. Now, swelling heart,
Indulge the luxury of grief! flow tears!
And rain down transport in the shape of sorrow!
Yes, I have soothed her woes; have found her noble:
And to have given this respite to her pangs,
O'erpays all pain and peril.—Powerful virtue!
How infinite thy joys, when even thy griefs
Are pleasing!—Thou, superior to the frowns
Of fate, can'st pour thy sunshine o'er the soul,
And brighten woe to rapture!

Enter OTHMAN *and* SADI.

Honoured friends!
How goes the night?
Sadi. 'Tis well-nigh midnight.
Oth. What—In tears, my prince?
Selim. But tears of joy: for I have seen Zaphira,
And poured the balm of peace into her breast:
Think not these tears unnerve me, valiant friends;
They have but harmonized my soul; and waked
All that is man within me, to disdain
Peril, or death.—What tidings from the city?
Sadi. All, all is ready. Our confederate friends
Burn with impatience, till the hour arrive.
Selim. What is the signal of the appointed hour?
Sadi. The midnight watch gives signal of our meeting;
And when the second watch of night is rung,
The work of death begins.
Selim. Speed, speed ye minutes!
Now let the rising whirlwind shake Algiers,

And justice guide the storm! Scarce two hours hence——
Sadi. Scarce more than one.
Selim. Oh, as ye love my life,
Let your zeal hasten on the great event!
The tyrant's daughter found, and knew me here,
And half suspects the cause.
Oth. Too daring prince,
Retire with us! her fears will sure betray thee!
Selim. What! leave my helpless mother here, a prey
To cruelty and lust—I'll perish first:
This very night the tyrant threatens violence:
I'll watch his steps; I'll haunt him through the palace;
And should he meditate a deed so vile,
I'll hover o'er him, like an unseen pestilence,
And blast him in his guilt!
Sadi. Intrepid prince!
Worthy of empire!—Yet accept my life,
My worthless life: do thou retire with Othman;
I will protect Zaphira.
Selim. Think'st thou, Sadi,
That, when the trying hour of peril comes,
Selim will shrink into a common man!
Worthless were he to rule, who dares not claim
Pre-eminence in danger. Urge no more;
Here shall my station be: and if I fall,
O friends, let me have vengeance!—Tell me, now,
Where is the tyrant?
Oth. Revelling at the banquet.
Selim. 'Tis good. Now, tell me how our powers are destined?
Sadi. Near every port, a secret band is posted:
By these the watchful centinels must perish:
The rest is easy: for the glutted troops
Lie drowned in sleep; the dagger's cheapest prey.
Almanzor, with his friends, will circle round
The avenues of the palace. Othman and I
Will join our brave confederates (all sworn
To conquer or to die), and burst the gates
Of this foul den. Then tremble, Barbarossa!
Selim. Oh, how the approach of this great hour
Fires all my soul! but, valiant friends, I charge you,
Reserve the murderer to my just revenge!
My poignard claims his blood.
Oth. Forgive me, prince!
Forgive my doubts!——Think—should the fair Irene——
Selim. Thy doubts are vain. I would not spare the tyrant,
Though the sweet maid lay weeping at my feet;
Nay, should he fall by any hand but mine,
By Heaven, I'd think my honoured father's blood
Scarce half revenged! My love, indeed, is strong!
But love shall yield to justice.
Sadi. Gallant prince!
Bravely resolved!
Selim. But is the city quiet?
Sadi. All, all is hushed. Throughout the empty streets,
Nor voice, nor sound. As if the inhabitants,
Like the presaging herds, that seek the covert
Ere the loud thunder rolls, had inly felt
And shunned the impending uproar.
Oth. There is a solemn horror in the night, too,
That pleases me: a general pause through nature:
The winds are hushed——
Sadi. And, as I passed the beach,
The lazy billow scarce could lash the shore:
No star peeps through the firmament of heaven—
Selim. And, lo! where eastward, o'er the sullen wave,
The waning moon, deprived of half her orb,
Rises in blood: her beam, well-nigh extinct,
Faintly contends with darkness—— [*Bell tolls.*
Hark!—what meant
That tolling bell?
Oth. It rings the midnight watch.
Sadi. This was the signal——
Come, Othman, we are called: the passing minutes
Chide our delay; brave Othman, let us hence.
Selim. One last embrace!—nor doubt, but, crowned with glory,
We soon shall meet again. But, oh, remember,
Amid the tumult's rage, remember mercy!
Stain not a righteous cause with guiltless blood!
Warn our brave friends, that we unsheath the sword,
Not to destroy, but save! nor let blind zeal,
Or wanton cruelty, e'er turn its edge
On age or innocence! or bid us strike
Where the most pitying angel in the skies,
That now looks on us from his blest abode,
Would wish that we should spare.
Oth. So may we prosper,
As mercy shall direct us!
Selim. Farewell, friends!
Sadi. Intrepid prince, farewell!
[*Exeunt Othman and Sadi.*
Selim. Now sleep and silence
Brood o'er the city.—The devoted centinel
Now takes his lonely stand; and idly dreams
Of that to-morrow he shall never see!
In this dread interval, O busy thought,
From outward things descend into thyself!
Search deep my heart! bring with thee awful conscience,
And firm resolve! that, in the approaching hour
Of blood and horror, I may stand unmoved;
Nor fear to strike where justice calls, nor dare
To strike where she forbids!—Why bear I, then,
This dark, insidious dagger?—'Tis the badge
Of vile assassins; of the coward hand
That dares not meet its foe.—Detested though!
Yet—as foul lust and murder, though on thrones
Triumphant, still retain their hell-born quality;
So justice, groaning beneath countless wrongs,
Quits not her spotless and celestial nature;
But, in the unhallowed murderer's disguise,
Can sanctify this steel!
Then be it so:—Witness, ye powers of Heaven,

That not from you, but from the murderer's eye,
I wrap myself in night!—To you I stand
Revealed in noon-tide day!—Oh, could I arm
My hand with power! then, like to you, arrayed
In storm and fire, my swift avenging thunder
Should blast this tyrant. But since fate denies
That privilege, I'll seize on what it gives:
Like the deep-caverned earthquake, burst beneath him,
And whelm his throne, his empire, and himself,
In one prodigious ruin! [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter IRENE *and* ALADIN.

Irene. But didst thou tell him, Aladin, my fears
Brook no delay?
Ala. I did.
Irene. Why comes he not?
Oh, what a dreadful dream!—'Twas surely more
Than troubled fancy: never was my soul
Shook with such hideous phantoms!—Still he lingers!
Return, return: and tell him that his daughter
Dies, till she warn him of his threatening ruin!
Ala. Behold, he comes! [*Exit Aladin.*

Enter BARBAROSSA *and Guards.*

Bar. Thou bane of all my joys!
Some gloomy planet surely ruled thy birth!
Even now thy ill-timed fear suspends the banquet,
And damps the festal hour.
Irene. Forgive my fear!
Bar. What fear, what phantom hath possessed thy brain?
Irene. Oh, guard thee from the terrors of this night;
For terrors lurk unseen!——
Bar. What terror?—speak!
Wouldst thou unman me into female weakness?
Say what thou dread'st, and why! I have a soul
To meet the blackest dangers undismayed.
Irene. Let not my father check, with stern rebuke,
The warning voice of nature. For even now,
Retired to rest, soon as I closed mine eyes,
A horrid vision rose—Methought I saw
Young Selim rising from the silent tomb:
Mangled and bloody was his corse; his hair
Clotted with gore; his glaring eyes on fire!
Dreadful he shook a dagger in his hand!
By some mysterious power he rose in air.
When, lo! at his command, this yawning roof
Was cleft in twain, and gave the phantom entrance!
Swift he descended, with terrific brow,
Rushed on my guardless father at the banquet,
And plunged his furious dagger in thy breast!
Bar. Wouldst thou appal me by a brain-sick vision?
Get thee to rest!—Sleep but as sound till morn,
As Selim in his grave shall sleep for ever,
And then no haggard dreams shall ride thy fancy!
Irene. Yet hear me, dearest father!
Bar. To the couch!
Provoke me not.——
Irene. What shall I say to move him?
Merciful Heaven, instruct me what to do!

Enter ALADIN.

Bar. What mean thy looks?—Why dost thou gaze so wildly?
Ala. I hasted to inform thee, that even now,
Rounding the watch, I met the brave Abdalla,
Breathless, with tidings of a rumour dark,
Which runs throughout the city, that young Selim
Is yet alive——
Bar. May plagues consume the tongue
That broached the falsehood!—'Tis not possible——
——What did he tell thee further?
Ala. More he said not;
Save only, that the spreading rumour waked
A spirit of revolt.
Irene. O, gracious father!
Bar. The rumour's false——And yet your coward fears
Infect me!—What!—shall I be terrified
By midnight visions?—Can the troubled brain
Of sleep out-stretch the reason's waking eye?
I'll not believe it.
Ala. But this gathering rumour——
Think but on that, my lord!
Bar. Infernal darkness
Swallow the slave that raised it!—Yet I'll do
What caution dictates.—Hark thee, Aladin—
Slave, hear my will.——See that the watch be doubled——
Find out this stranger Achmet, and forthwith
Let him be brought before me.
Irene. O my father!
I do conjure thee, as thou lov'st thy life,
Retire, and trust thee to thy faithful guards——
See not this Achmet!
Bar. Not see him?—Death and torment!—
Think'st thou I fear a single arm that's mortal?
Not see him!—Forthwith bring the slave before me.——
If he prove false—If hated Selim live,
I'll heap such vengeance on him——
Irene. Mercy! mercy!
Bar. Mercy!—To whom?
Irene. To me—and to thyself——
To him—to all.—Thou think'st I rave; yet true
My visions are, as ever prophet uttered,
When Heaven inspires his tongue!

Bar. Ne'er did the moon-struck madman rave with dreams
More wild than thine!—Get thee to rest, e'er yet
Thy folly wakes my rage!—Call Achmet hither.
Irene. Thus prostrate on my knees——O see him not!
Selim is dead.—Indeed the rumour's false;
There is no danger near:—Or, if there be,
Achmet is innocent!
Bar. Off, frantic wretch!
This ideot-dream hath turned her brain to madness!
Hence to thy chamber, till returning reason
Hath calmed this tempest.—On thy duty hence!
Irene. Yet hear the voice of caution!—Cruel fate!
What have I done!—Heaven shield my dearest father!
Heaven shield the innocent!—Undone Irene!
Whate'er the event, thy doom is misery!
[*Exit Irene.*
Bar. Her words are wrapt in darkness. Aladin,
Forthwith send Achmet hither. Mark him well,
His countenance and gesture—Then, with speed,
Double the centinels. [*Exit Aladin.*
Infernal guilt!
How dost thou rise in every hideous shape,
Of rage and doubt, suspicion, and despair,
To rend my soul! more wretched far than they
Made wretched by my crimes! Why did I not
Repent, while yet my crimes were delible!
Ere they had struck their colours through my soul,
As black as night or hell! 'Tis now too late!—
Hence, then, ye vain repinings! Take me all,
Unfeeling guilt! O banish, if thou canst,
This fell remorse, and every fruitless fear!
Be this my glory—to be great in evil!
To combat my own heart, and, scorning conscience,
Rise to exalted crimes!

Enter Selim.

Come hither, slave:
Hear me, and tremble: Art thou what thou seem'st?
Selim. Ha!
Bar. Dost thou pause! By hell, the slave's confounded!
Selim. That Barbarossa should suspect my truth!
Bar. Take heed! for, by the hovering powers of vengeance,
If I do find thee treacherous, I will doom thee
To death and torment, such as human thought
Ne'er yet conceived! Thou comest beneath the guise
Of Selim's murderer. Now, tell me: Is not
That Selim yet alive?
Selim. Selim alive!
Bar. Perdition on thee! dost thou echo me!
Answer me quick, or die! [*Draws his dagger.*
Selim. Yes, freely strike—
Already hast thou given the fatal wound,
And pierced my heart with thy unkind suspicion!
Oh, could my dagger find a tongue, to tell
How deep it drank his blood!—But since thy doubt
Thus wrongs my zeal,—Behold my breast—strike here——
For bold is innocence.
Bar. I scorn the task. [*Puts up his dagger.*
Time shall decide thy doom. Guards! mark me well.
See that ye watch the motions of the slave:
And if he meditates to escape your eye,
Let your good sabres cleave him to the chine.
Selim. I yield me to thy will, and when thou knowest
That Selim lives, or seest his hated face,
Then wreak thy vengeance on me.
Bar. Bear him hence.
Yet, on your lives, await me within call.
I will have deeper inquisition made;
Haply some witness may confront the slave,
And drag to light his falsehood.
[*Exeunt Selim and guards.*
Call Zaphira. [*Exit a Slave.*
If Selim lives—then what is Barbarossa?
My throne's a bubble, that but floats in air,
Till marriage-rites declare Zaphira mine.
Fool that I am! to wait the weak effects
Of slow persuasion, when unbounded power
Can give me all I wish! Slave, hear my will;
Fly! bid the priest prepare the marriage-rites:
Let incense rise to Heaven; and choral songs
Attend Zaphira to the nuptial. [*Exit Slave.*
I will not brook delay. By love and vengeance,
This hour decides her fate!

Enter Zaphira.

Well, haughty fair!
Hath reason yet subdued thee? Wilt thou hear
The voice of love?
Zaph. Why dost thou vainly urge me!
Thou know'st my fixed resolve.
Bar. Can aught but frenzy
Rush on perdition?
Zaph. Therefore, shall no power
Ere make me thine.
Bar. Nay, sport not with my rage:
Though yon suspected slave affirms him dead,
Yet rumour whispers, that young Selim lives.
Zaph. Could I but think him so! my earnest prayer
Should rise to heaven, to keep him far from thee!
Bar. Therefore, lest treachery undermine my power,
Know, that thy final hour of choice is come!
Zaph. I have no choice. Think'st thou I e'er will wed
The murderer of my lord?
Bar. Take heed, rash queen!

Tell me thy last resolve.
Zaph. Then hear me, Heaven!
Hear all ye powers that watch o'er innocence!
Angels of light! And thou, dear honoured shade
Of my departed lord! attend, while here
I ratify, with vows, my last resolve.
If e'er I wed this tyrant murderer,
If I pollute me with this horrid union,
Black as adultery or damned incest,
May ye, the ministers of Heaven, depart,
Nor shed your influence on the guilty scene!
May horror blacken all our days and nights!
May discord light the nuptial torch! and rising
From hell, may swarming fiends, in triumph, howl
Around the accursed bed!
Bar. Begone, remorse!
Guards do your office: Drag her to the altar:
Heed not her tears or cries. What!——dare ye doubt?
Instant obey my bidding; or, by hell,
Torment and death shall overtake you all.
[*Guards go to seize Zaphira.*
Zaph. O spare me! Heaven protect me! O my son,
Were thou but here, to save thy helpless mother!
What shall I do! Undone, undone Zaphira!

Enter SELIM.

Selim. Who called on Achmet? Did not Barbarossa
Require me here?
Bar. Officious slave, retire!
I called thee not.
Zaph. O kind and generous stranger, lend thy aid!
O rescue me from these impending horrors!
Heaven will reward thy pity!
Bar. Drag her hence!
Selim. Pity her woes, O mighty Barbarossa!
Bar. Rouze not my vengeance, slave!
Selim. O hear me, hear me! [*Kneels.*
Bar. Curse on thy forward zeal!
Selim. Yet, yet have mercy.
[*Lays hold of Barbarossa's garment.*
Bar. Presuming slave, begone! [*Strikes Selim.*
Selim. Nay, then, die, tyrant!
[*Rises, and aims to strike Barbarossa, who wrests his dagger from him.*
Bar. Ah, traitor, have I caught thee! Hold! forbear!
[*To guards, who offer to kill Selim.*
Kill him not yet. I will have greater vengeance.
Perfidious wretch! who art thou? Bring the rack:
Let that extort the secrets of his heart.
Selim. Thy impious threats are lost! I know that death
And torments are my doom. Yet, ere I die,
I'll strike thy soul with horror. Off, vile habit!
Let me emerge from this dark cloud that hides me,
And make my setting glorious! If thou dar'st,
Now view me! Hear me, tyrant! while with voice
More terrible than thunder, I proclaim,
That he, who aimed the dagger at thy heart,
Is Selim!
Zaph. O Heaven! my son! my son!
[*She faints.*
Selim. Unhappy mother! [*Runs to embrace her.*
Bar. Tear them asunder!
[*Guards separate them.*
Selim. Barbarous, barbarous ruffians!
Bar. Slaves, seize the traitor!
[*They offer to seize him.*
Selim. Off, ye vile slaves! I am your king!—Retire,
And tremble at my frown! That is the traitor;
That is the murderer, tyrant, ravisher! Seize him,
And do your country right!
Bar. Ah, coward dogs!
Start ye at words! or seize him, or by hell,
This dagger ends you all. [*They seize him.*
Selim. 'Tis done! Dost thou revive, unhappy queen!
Now arm my soul with patience!
Zaph. My dear son!
Do I then live, once more to see my Selim!
But Oh—to see thee thus!—— [*Weeping.*
Selim. Canst thou behold
Her speechless agonies, and not relent!
Bar. At length revenge is mine! slaves, force her hence!
This hour shall crown my love.
Zaph. O mercy, mercy!
Selim. *Lo!* Barbarossa! thou, at length, hast conquered!
Behold a hapless prince, o'erwhelmed with woes,
[*Kneels.*
Prostrate before thy feet! Not for myself
I plead! Yes, plunge the dagger in my breast!
Tear, tear me piecemeal! But, O spare Zaphira!
Yet, yet relent! force not her matron honour!
Reproach not Heaven.
Bar. Have I then beat thy pride?
Why, this is conquest even beyond my hope!
Lie there, thou slave? lie, till Zaphira's cries
Arouse thee from thy posture.
Selim. Dost thou insult my grief? unmanly wretch!
Curse on the fear that could betray my limbs,
[*Rising.*
My coward limbs, to this dishonest posture!
Long have I scorned, I now defy thy power.
Bar. I'll put thy boasted virtue to the trial.
Slaves, bear him to the rack.
Zaph. O spare my son!
Sure filial virtue never was a crime!
Save but my son! I yield me to thy wish!
What do I say? The marriage vow! O horror!
This hour shall make me thine.
Selim. What! doom thyself
The guilty partner of a murderer's bed,

Whose hands yet reek with thy dear husband's blood!
To be the mother of destructive tyrants,
The curses of mankind! By Heaven, I swear,
The guilty hour that gives thee to the arms
Of that detested murderer, shall end
This hated life!
Bar. Or yield thee, or he dies!
Zaph. The conflict's past—I will resume my greatness;
We'll bravely die, as we have lived, with honour! [*Embracing.*
Selim. Now, tyrant, pour thy fiercest fury on us:
Now, see, despairing guilt! that virtue still
Shall conquer, though in ruin.
Bar. Drag them hence!
Her to the altar: Selim to his fate.
Zaph. O Selim! O my son! Thy doom is death!
Would it were mine!
Selim. Would I could give it thee!
Is there no means to save her! lend, ye guards,
Ye ministers of death, in pity lend
Your swords, or some kind weapon of destruction!
Sure the most mournful boon, that ever son
Asked for the best of mothers!
Zaph. Dearest Selim!
Bar. I'll hear no more. Guards, bear them to their fate! [*Guards seize them.*
Selim. One last embrace!
Farewell! Farewell for ever!
[*Guards struggle with them.*
Zaph. One moment yet! Pity a mother's pangs!
O Selim!
Selim. O my mother!
[*Exeunt Selim and Zaphira.*

Bar. My dearest hopes are blasted! What is power,
If stubborn virtue thus outsoar its flight!
Yet he shall die—and she—

Enter ALADIN.

Ala. Heaven guard my lord!
Bar. What mean'st thou, Aladin?
Ala. A slave arrived,
Says that young Selim lives: nay, somewhere lurks
Within these walls.
Bar. The lurking traitor's found,
Convicted, and disarmed. Even now he aimed
This dagger at my heart.
Ala. Audacious traitor!
The slave says, farther, that he brings the tidings
Of dark conspiracy, now hovering o'er us,
And claims thy private ear.
Bar. Of dark conspiracy!
Where? Among whom?
Ala. The secret friends of Selim,
Who nightly haunt the city.
Bar. Curse the traitors!
Now speed thee, Aladin. Send forth our spies:
Explore their haunts: for, by the infernal powers,
I will let loose my rage. The furious lion
Now foams indignant, scorning tears and cries.
Let Selim forthwith die. Come, mighty vengeance!
Stir me, grim cruelty! The rack shall groan
With new-born horrors! I will issue forth,
Like midnight-pestilence: my breath shall strew
The streets with dead; and havock stalk in gore.
Hence, pity! Feed the milky thought of babes;
Mine is of bloodier hue. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter BARBAROSSA, ALADIN, *and Guards.*

Bar. Is the watch doubled? Are the gates secured
Against surprise?
Ala. They are; and mock the attempt
Of force or treachery.
Bar. This whispered rumour
Of dark conspiracy, on farther inquest,
Seems but a false alarm. Our spies, sent out,
And now returned from search, affirm that sleep
Has wrapped the city.
Ala. But while Selim lives,
Destruction lurks within the palace walls;
Nor bars, nor centinels, can give us safety.
Bar. Right, Aladin. His hour of fate approaches.
How goes the night?
Ala. The second watch is near.
Bar. 'Tis well! Whene'er it rings, the traitor dies;
So hath my will ordained. I'll seize the occasion,
While I may fairly plead my life's defence.
Ala. True: for he aimed his dagger at thy heart.
Bar. He did. Hence, justice, uncompelled, shall seem
To lend her sword, and do ambition's work.
Ala. His bold resolves have steeled Zaphira's breast
Against thy love: thence he deserves to die.
Bar. And death's his doom—yet first the rack shall rend
Each secret from his heart; unless he give
Zaphira to my arms, by marriage vows,
With full consent; ere yet the second watch
Toll for his death. Curse on this woman's weakness!

I yet would win her love! Haste! seek out Othman:
Go, tell him, that destruction and the sword
Hang o'er young Selim's head, if swift compliance
Plead not his pardon. [*Exit Aladin.*
Stubborn fortitude!
Had he not interposed, success had crowned
My love, now hopeless. Then let vengeance seize him!

Enter IRENE.

Irene. O night of horror! Hear me, honoured father!
If e'er Irene's peace was dear to thee,
Now hear me!
Bar. Impious! Dar'st thou disobey?
Did not my sacred will ordain thee hence?
Get thee to rest; for death is stirring here.
Irene. O fatal words! By every sacred tye,
Recall the dire decree!
Bar. What would'st thou say?
Whom plead for?
Irene. For a brave unhappy prince,
Sentenced to die.
Bar. And justly! But this hour
The traitor half fulfilled thy dream, and aimed
His dagger at my heart.
Irene. Might pity plead!
Bar. What! plead for treachery?
Irene. Yet pity might bestow a milder name.
Wouldst thou not love the child, whose fortitude
Should hazard life for thee? Oh, think on that:
The noble mind hates not a virtuous foe:
His generous purpose was to save a mother!
Bar. Damned was his purpose: and accurst art thou,
Whose perfidy would save the dark assassin,
Who sought thy father's life! Hence, from my sight!
Irene. Oh, never, till thy mercy spare my Selim!
Bar. Thy Selim! Thine!
Irene. Thou knowst——by gratitude
He's mine——Had not his generous hand redeemed me,
What then had been Irene? Oh!
Bar. Faithless wretch!
Unhappy father! whose perfidious child
Leagues with his deadliest foe, and guides the dagger
Even to his heart! Perdition catch thy falsehood!
And is it thus, a thankless child repays me,
For all the guilt in which I plunged my soul,
To raise her to a throne!
Irene. O spare these words,
More keen than daggers to my bleeding heart!
Let me not live suspected! Dearest father!
Behold my breast! write thy suspicion here:
Write them in blood; but spare the generous youth,
Who saved me from dishonour!
Bar. By the powers
Of great revenge, thy fond intreaties seal
His instant death! In him I'll punish thee.
Away!
Irene. Yet hear me, ere my tortured soul
Rush on some deed of horror!
Bar. Seize her, guards!
Convey the frantic ideot from my presence:
See that she do no violence on herself.
Irene. O Selim! generous youth! how have my fears
Betrayed thee to destruction! Slaves, unhand me!
Think ye, I'll live to bear these pangs of grief,
These horrors that oppress my tortured soul!
Inhuman father! generous, injured prince!
Methinks I see thee stretched upon the rack,
Hear thy expiring groans: O horror! horror!
What shall I do to save him! Vain, alas!
Vain are my tears and prayers—at least, I'll die.
Death shall unite us yet!
[*Exit Irene and guards.*
Bar. O torment! torment!
Even in the midst of power! the vilest slave
More happy far than I! the very child,
Whom my love cherished from her infant years,
Conspires to blast my peace! O false ambition,
Thou lying phantom! whither hast thou lured me!
Even to this giddy height, where now I stand,
Forsaken, comfortless! with not a friend
In whom my soul can trust!

Enter ALADIN.

Now, Aladin?
Hast thou seen Othman?
He will not, sure, conspire against my peace
Ala. He's fled, my lord. I dread some lurking ruin.
The centinel on watch says, that he passed
The gate, since midnight, with an unknown friend:
And as they passed, Othman in whispers said,
Now farewell, bloody tyrant.
Bar. Slave, thou liest.
He did not dare to say it; or, if he did,
Pernicious slave, why dost thou wound my ear
By the foul repetition?—Gracious powers,
Let me be calm!—O my distructed soul!
How am I rent in pieces! Othman fled!
Why then may all hell's curses follow him!
What's to be done? some mischief lurks unseen.
Ala. Prevent it then—
Bar. By Selim's instant death—
Ala. Ay, doubtless.
Bar. Is the rack prepared?
Ala. 'Tis ready.
Along the ground he lies o'erwhelmed with chains.
The ministers of death stand round, and wait
Thy last command.
Bar. Once more I'll try to bend

His stubborn soul.—Conduct me forthwith to him:
And if he now refuse my proffered kindness,
Destruction swallows him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

SELIM *discovered in chains, Executioners, Officer, &c. and the rack.*

Selim. I pray you, friends,
When I am dead, let not indignity
Insult these poor remains; see them interred
Close by my father's tomb; I ask no more.
Officer. They shall.
Selim. How goes the night?
Offi. Thy hour of fate,
The second watch, is near,
Selim. Let it come on;
I am prepared.

Enter BARBAROSSA *and Guards.*

Bar. So—raise him from the ground.—
[*They raise him.*
Perfidious boy! behold the just rewards
Of guilt and treachery! Didst thou not give
Thy forfeit life, whene'er I should behold
Selim's detested face?
Selim. Then take it, tyrant.
Bar. Didst thou not aim a dagger at my heart?
Selim. I did.
Bar. Yet Heaven defeated thy intent,
And saved me from the dagger.
Selim. 'Tis not ours
To question Heaven. The intent, and not the deed,
Is in our power: and therefore, who dares greatly,
Does greatly.
Bar. Yet bethink thee, stubborn boy,
What horrors now surround thee—
Selim. Thinkest thou, tyrant,
I came so ill prepared?—Thy rage is weak,
Thy torments powerless o'er the steady mind:
He who can bravely dare, can bravely suffer.
Bar. Yet, lo! I come, by pity led, to spare thee.
Relent, and save Zaphira!—For the bell
Even now expects the centinel, to toll
The signal of thy death.
Selim. Let guilt like thine
Tremble at death: I scorn his darkest frown.
Hence, tyrant, nor profane my dying hour!
Bar. Then take thy wish. [*Bell tolls.*
There goes the fatal knell.
Thy fate is sealed.—Not all thy mother's tears,
Nor prayers, nor eloquence of grief, shall save thee
From instant death. Yet ere the assassin die,
Let torment wring each secret from his heart.
The traitor Othman's fled;—Conspiracy
Lurks in the womb of night, and threatens ruin.
Spare not the rack, nor cease, till it extort
The lurking treason; and this murderer call
On death, to end his woes. [*Exit Barbarossa.*

Selim. Come on, then. [*They bind him.*
Begin the work of death—what! bound with cords,
Like a vile criminal!—O valiant friends,
When will ye give me vengeance!

Enter IRENE.

Irene. Stop, O stop!
Hold your accursed hands!—On me, on me
Pour all your torments!—How shall I approach thee!
Selim. These are thy father's gifts!—Yet thou art guiltless;
Then let me take thee to my heart, thou best,
Most amiable of women!
Irene. Rather curse me,
As the betrayer of thy virtue!
Selim. Ah!
Irene. 'Twas I—my fears, my frantic fears betrayed thee!
Thus falling at thy feet, may I but hope
For pardon ere I die!
Selim. Hence to thy father!
Irene. Never, O never!—Crawling in the dust,
I'll clasp thy feet, and bathe them with my tears!
Tread me to earth, I never will complain;
But my last breath shall bless thee!
Selim. Loved Irene!
What hath my fury done?
Irene. Indeed, 'twas hard;
But I was born to sorrow!
Selim. Melt me not.
I cannot bear thy tears;—they quite unman me.
Forgive the transports of my rage.
Irene. Alas!
The guilt is mine: Canst thou forgive those fears
That first awaked suspicion in my father?
Those fears that have undone thee!—Heaven is witness,
They meant not ill to thee!
Selim. None, none, Irene!
No; 'twas the generous voice of filial love:
That, only, prompted thee to save a father.
Yes; from my inmost soul I do approve
That virtue which destroys me.
Irene. Canst thou, then,
Forgive and pity me?
Selim. I do—I do.
Irene. On my knees,
Thus let me thank thee, generous, injured prince!
O earth and Heaven! that such unequalled worth
Should meet so hard a fate!—That I—that I—
Whom his love rescued from the depth of woe,
Should be the accurst destroyer!—Strike, in pity,
And end this hated life!
Selim. Cease, dear Irene.
Submit to Heaven's high will.—I charge thee, live;
And to thy utmost power, protect from wrong
My helpless, friendless mother!

Irene. With my life.
I'll shield her from each wrong.—That hope alone
Can tempt me to prolong a life of woe.
Selim. O my ungoverned rage!—To frown on thee!
Thus let me expiate the cruel wrong, [*Embracing.*
And mingle rapture with the pains of death!
Offi. No more.—Prepare the rack.
Irene. Stand off, ye fiends!
Here will I cling. No power on earth shall part us,
Till I have saved my Selim! [*A shout.*
Offi. Hark! what noise
Strikes on mine ear?
Selim. Again! [*A shout.*
Ala. Arm, arm!—Treachery and murder!
[*Without.*
[*Executioners go to seize Selim.*
Selim. Off, slaves!—Or I will turn my chains to arms,
And dash you piece-meal!—for I have heard a sound
Which lifts my towering soul to Atlas' height,
That I could prop the skies!
Ala. Where is the king?
The foe pours in. The palace gates are burst:
The centinels are murdered! Save the king!
They seek him through the palace!
Offi. Death and ruin!
Follow me, slaves, and save him.
[*Exeunt Officer and Executioners.*
Selim. Now, bloody tyrant! Now, thy hour is come!
Irene. What means you maddening tumult!—O my fears!
Selim. Vengeance at length hath pierced these guilty walls,
And walks her deadly round!
Irene. Whom dost thou mean? my father!
Selim. Yes: thy father;
Who murdered mine!
Irene. Is there no room for mercy?
O Selim! by our love!—
Selim. Thy tears are vain!
Vain were thy eloquence, though thou didst plead
With an archangel's tongue!
Irene. Spare but his life!
Selim. Heaven knows I pity thee. But he must bleed;
Though my own life-blood, nay, though thine, more dear,
Should issue at the wound.
Irene. Must he then die?
Let me but see my father, ere he perish!
Let me but pay my parting duty to him!—
[*Clash of swords.*
Hark!—'twas the clash of swords! Heaven save my father?
O cruel, cruel Selim! [*Exit Irene.*
Selim. Curse on this servile chain, that binds me fast,
In powerless ignominy; while my sword
Should haunt its prey, and cleave the tyrant down! [*Without.*
Oth. Where is the prince?
Selim. Here, Othman, bound to earth!
Set me but free!—O cursed, cursed chains!

Enter OTHMAN *and party, who free* SELIM.

Oth. O my brave prince!—Heaven favours our design. [*Embraces him.*
Take that:—I need not bid thee use it nobly.
[*Giving him a sword.*
Selim. Now, Barbarossa, let my arm meet thine:
'Tis all I ask of Heaven! [*Exit Selim.*
Oth. Guard ye the prince— [*Part go out.*
Pursue his steps.—Now this way let us turn,
And seek the tyrant. [*Exeunt Othman, &c.*

SCENE III. *changes to the open palace.*

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. Empire is lost and life: Yet brave revenge
Shall close my life in glory.

Enter OTHMAN.

Have I found thee,
Dissembling traitor?—Die!—
Oth. Long hath my wish,
Pent in my struggling breast, been robbed of utterance.
Now valour scorns the mask.—I dare thee, tyrant!
And, armed with justice, thus would meet thy rage,
Though thy red right hand grasped the pointed thunder!
Now, Heaven decide between us! [*They fight.*
Bar. Coward!
Oth. Tyrant!
Bar. Traitor!
Oth. Infernal fiend, thy words are fraught with falsehood:
To combat crimes like thine, by force or wiles,
Is equal glory. [*Barbarossa falls.*
Bar. I faint! I die!—O horror!

Enter SELIM *and* SADI.

Selim. The foe gives way: sure this way went the storm.
Where is the tyger fled!—What do I see!
Sadi. Algiers is free!
Oth. This sabre did the deed!
Selim. I envy thee the blow.—Yet valour scorns
To wound the fallen.—But if life remain,
I will speak daggers to his guilty soul.
Hoa! Barbarossa! Tyrant! Murderer!
'Tis Selim, Selim calls thee!
Bar. Off, ye fiends!
Torment me not!—O Selim, art thou there?—
Swallow me, earth! Bury me deep, ye mountains!

Accursed be the day that gave me birth!
Oh, that I ne'er had wronged thee!
Selim. Dost thou, then,
Repent thee of thy crimes?—He does! He does!
He grasps my hand! See, the repentant tear
Starts from his eye!—Dost thou indeed repent?
Why then I do forgive thee: From my soul
I freely do forgive thee!—And if crimes,
Abhorred as thine, dare plead to Heaven for mercy,—
May Heaven have mercy on thee!
Bar. Generous Selim!
Too good—I have a daughter! Oh, protect her!
Let not my crimes— [*Dies.*
Oth. There fled the guilty soul!
Selim. Haste to the city—stop the rage of slaughter.
Tell my brave people that Algiers is free,
And tyranny no more. [*Exeunt slaves.*
Sadi. And to confirm
The glorious tidings, soon as morning shines,
Be his dead carcase dragged throughout the city,
A spectacle of horror!
Selim. Curb thy zeal.
Let us be brave, not cruel: nor disgrace
Valour, by barbarous and inhuman deeds.
Black was his guilt: and he hath paid his life,
The forfeit of his crimes. Then sheath the sword:
Let vengeance die.—Justice is satisfied.

Enter ZAPHIRA.

Zaph. What mean these horrors! wheresoe'er I turn
My trembling steps, I find some dying wretch,
Weltering in gore! And dost thou live, my Selim?
Selim. Lo, there he lies!
Zaph. The bloody tyrant slain!
O righteous Heaven!
Selim. Behold thy valiant friends,
Whose faith and courage have o'erwhelmed the power
Of Barbarossa. Here, once more, thy virtues
Shall dignify the throne, and bless the people.
Zaph. Just are thy ways, O Heaven!—Vain terrors, hence!
Once more Zaphira's blest!—My virtuous son,
How shall I e'er repay thy boundless love!
Thus let me snatch thee to my longing arms,
And on thy bosom weep my griefs away!
Selim. O happy hour!—happy, beyond the flight
Even of any ardent hope!—Look down, blest shade,
From the bright realms of bliss!—Behold thy queen
Unspotted, unseduced, unmoved in virtue!
Behold the tyrant prostrate at my feet!
And to the memory of thy bleeding wrongs,
Accept this sacrifice!
Zaph. My generous Selim!
Selim. Where is Irene?
Sadi. With looks of wildness, and distracted mien,
She sought her father where the tumult raged;
She passed me, while the coward Aladin
Fled from my sword: and as I cleft him down,
She fainted at the sight.
Oth. But soon recovered;
Zamor, our trusty friend, at my command,
Conveyed the weeping fair one to her chamber.
Selim. Thanks to thy generous care:—Come, let us seek
The afflicted maid.
Zaph. Her virtues might atone
For all her father's guilt. Thy throne be her's:
She merits all thy love.
Selim. Then haste and find her.—O'er her father's crimes
Pity shall draw her veil; nay, half absolve them,
When she beholds the virtues of his child!——
Now, let us thank the Eternal Power, convinced
That Heaven but tries our virtue by affliction:
That oft the cloud which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

DOUGLAS.

BY

HOME.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
LORD RANDOLPH, *a Scottish baron.*	LADY RANDOLPH.
GLENALVON, *his pretended friend.*	ANNA, *her confidante.*
NORVAL, *an aged peasant.*	
DOUGLAS, *supposed his son.*	*Officers, Attendants, &c.*

Scene—Lord Randolph's domains.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The court of a castle, surrounded with woods.*

Enter LADY RANDOLPH.

Lady R. Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart,
Farewell awhile; I will not leave you long;
For in your shades I deem some spirit dwells,
Who, from the chiding stream, or groaning oak,
Still hears and answers to Matilda's moan.
Oh, Douglas! Douglas! if departed ghosts
Are e'er permitted to review this world,
Within the circle of that wood thou art,
And, with the passion of immortals, hear'st
My lamentation: hear'st thy wretched wife
Weep for her husband slain, her infant lost.
My brother's timeless death I seem to mourn,
Who perished with thee on this fatal day.
To thee I lift my voice; to thee address
The plaint which mortal ear has never heard.
O disregard me not! though I am called
Another's now, my heart is wholly thine.
Incapable of change, affection lies
Buried, my Douglas, in thy bloody grave.—
But Randolph comes, whom fate has made my lord,
To chide my anguish, and defraud the dead.

Enter LORD RANDOLPH.

Lord R. Again these weeds of woe! say, dost thou well
To feed a passion which consumes thy life?
The living claim some duty; vainly thou
Bestow'st thy cares upon the silent dead.

Lady R. Silent, alas! is he for whom I mourn:
Childless, without memorial of his name,
He only now in my remembrance lives.
This fatal day stirs my time-settled sorrow,
Troubles afresh the fountain of my heart.

Lord R. When was it pure of sadness! These black weeds
Express the wonted colour of thy mind,
For ever dark and dismal. Seven long years
Are passed, since we were joined by sacred ties:
Clouds all the while have hung upon thy brow,
Nor broke, nor parted by one gleam of joy.
Time, that wears out the trace of deepest anguish,
As the sea smooths the prints made in the sand,
Has passed o'er thee in vain.

Lady R. If time to come
Should prove as ineffectual, yet, my lord,
Thou can'st not blame me. When our Scottish youth
Vyed with each other for my luckless love,
Oft I besought them, I implored them all,
Not to assail me with my father's aid,
Nor blend their better destiny with mine.
For melancholy had congealed my blood,
And froze affection in my chilly breast.
At last my sire, roused with the base attempt
To force me from him, which thou rendered'st vain,
To his own daughter bowed his hoary head,
Besought me to commiserate his age,
And vowed he should not, could not, die in peace,
Unless he saw me wedded, and secured
From violence and outrage. Then, my lord!
In my extreme distress I called on thee,
Thee I bespake, professed my strong desire
To lead a single, solitary life,
And begged thy nobleness, not to demand
Her for a wife, whose heart was dead to love.
How thou persisted'st after this, thou knowest,
And must confess that I am not unjust,
Nor more to thee than to myself injurious.

Lord R. That I confess; yet ever must regret
The grief I cannot cure. Would thou wert not
Composed of grief and tenderness alone,
But had'st a spark of other passions in thee,
Pride, anger, vanity, the strong desire
Of admiration, dear to woman-kind;
These might contend with, and allay thy grief,
As meeting tides and currents smooth our firth.

Lady R. To such a cause the human mind oft owes
Its transient calm; a calm I envy not.

Lord R. Sure thou art not the daughter of Sir Malcolm!
Strong was his rage, eternal his resentment:
For when thy brother fell, he smiled to hear
That Douglas' son in the same field was slain.

Lady R. Oh! rake not up the ashes of my fathers!
Implacable resentment was their crime,
And grievous has the expiation been.
Contending with the Douglas, gallant lives
Of either house were lost; my ancestors
Compelled, at last, to leave their ancient seat
On Tiviot's pleasant banks; and now, of them
No heir is left. Had they not been so stern,
I had not been the last of all my race.

Lord R. Thy grief wrests to its purposes my words.
I never asked of thee that ardent love
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns.
Decent affection and complacent kindness
Were all I wished for; but I wished in vain.
Hence with the less regret my eyes behold
The storm of war that gathers o'er this land:
If I should perish by the Danish sword,
Matilda would not shed one tear the more.

Lady R. Thou dost not think so: woeful as I am,
I love thy merit, and esteem thy virtues.
But whither goest thou now?

Lord R. Straight to the camp,
Where every warrior on the tip-toe stands
Of expectation, and impatient asks
Each who arrives, if he is come to tell
The Danes are landed.

Lady R. O, may adverse winds
Far from the coast of Scotland drive their fleet:
And every soldier of both hosts return
In peace and safety to his pleasant home!

Lord R. Thou speakest a woman's, hear a warrior's wish:
Right from their native land, the stormy north,
May the wind blow, till every keel is fixed
Immoveable in Caledonia's strand!
Then shall our foes repent their bold invasion,
And roving armies shun the fatal shore.

Lady R. War I detest: but war with foreign foes,
Whose manners, language, and whose looks are strange,
Is not so horrid, nor to me so hateful,
As that which with our neighbours oft we wage.
A river here, there an ideal line,
By fancy drawn, divide the sister kingdoms.
On each side dwells a people similar,
As twins are, to each other; valiant both;
Both for their valour famous through the world.
Yet will they not unite their kindred arms,
And, if they must have war, wage distant war,
But with each other fight in cruel conflict.
Gallant in strife, and noble in their ire,
The battle is their pastime. They go forth
Gay in the morning, as to summer sport;
When evening comes, the glory of the morn,
The youthful warrior, is a clod of clay.
Thus fall the prime of either hapless land,
And such the fruit of Scotch and English wars!

Lord R. I'll hear no more: this melody would make
A soldier drop his sword, and doff his arms,
Sit down and weep the conquests he has made;
Yea, (like a monk) sing rest and peace in heaven
To souls of warriors in his battles slain.
Lady, farewell: I leave thee not alone;
Yonder comes one whose love makes duty light.
[*Exit.*

Enter Anna.

Anna. Forgive the rashness of your Anna's love:
Urged by affection, I have thus presumed
To interrupt your solitary thoughts;
And warn you of the hours that you neglect,
And lose in sadness.

Lady R. So to lose my hours
Is all the use I wish to make of time.

Anna. To blame thee, lady, suits not with my state:
But sure I am, since death first preyed on man,
Never did sister thus a brother mourn.
What had your sorrows been if you had lost,
In early youth, the husband of your heart?
Lady R. Oh!
Anna. Have I distressed you with officious love,
And ill-timed mention of your brother's fate?
Forgive me, lady: humble though I am,
The mind I bear partakes not of my fortune:
So fervently I love you, that to dry
Those piteous tears, I'd throw my life away.
Lady R. What power directed thy unconscious tongue
To speak as thou hast done? to name———
Anna. I know not:
But since my words have made my mistress tremble,
I will speak so no more; but silent mix
My tears with hers.
Lady R. No, thou shalt not be silent.
I'll trust thy faithful love, and thou shalt be
Henceforth the instructed partner of my woes.
But what avails it? Can thy feeble pity
Roll back the flood of never-ebbing time?
Compel the earth and ocean to give up
Their dead alive?
Anna. What means my noble mistress?
Lady R. Did'st thou not ask what had my sorrows been,
If I in early youth had lost a husband?—
In the cold bosom of the earth is lodged,
Mangled with wounds, the husband of my youth;
And in some cavern of the ocean lies
My child and his.——
Anna. Oh! lady most revered!
The tale, wrapt up in your amazing words,
Deign to unfold!
Lady R. Alas! an ancient feud,
Hereditary evil, was the source
Of my misfortunes. Ruling fate decreed,
That my brave brother should in battle save
The life of Douglas' son, our house's foe:
The youthful warriors vowed eternal friendship.
To see the vaunted sister of his friend,
Impatient, Douglas to Balarmo came,
Under a borrowed name.—My heart he gained;
Nor did I long refuse the hand he begged:
My brother's presence authorized our marriage.
Three weeks, three little weeks, with wings of down,
Had o'er us flown, when my loved lord was called
To fight his father's battles; and with him,
In spite of all my tears, did Malcolm go.
Scarce were they gone, when my stern sire was told
That the false stranger was lord Douglas' son.
Frantic with rage, the baron drew his sword
And questioned me. Alone, forsaken, faint,
Kneeling beneath his sword, faultering I took
An oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
Wed one of Douglas' name. Sincerity!
Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way!
Anna. Alas! how few of woman's fearful kind
Durst own a truth so hardy!
Lady R. The first truth
Is easiest to avow. This moral learn,
This precious moral from my tragic tale.——
In a few days the dreadful tidings came,
That Douglas and my brother both were slain.
My lord! my life! my husband!—mighty God!
What had I done to merit such affliction?
Anna. My dearest lady! many a tale of tears
I've listened to; but never did I hear
A tale so sad as this.
Lady R. In the first days
Of my distracting grief, I found myself—
As women wish to be who love their lords.
But who durst tell my father? The good priest,
Who joined our hands, my brother's ancient tutor,
With his loved Malcolm, in the battle fell:
They two alone were privy to the marriage.
On silence and concealment I resolved,
Till time should make my father's fortune mine.
That very night on which my son was born,
My nurse, the only confident I had,
Set out with him to reach her sister's house:
But nurse, nor infant have I ever seen,
Or heard of, Anna, since that fatal hour.
My murdered child!—had thy fond mother feared
The loss of thee, she had loud fame defied,
Despised her father's rage, her father's grief,
And wandered with thee through the scorning world.
Anna. Not seen nor heard of! then perhaps he lives.
Lady R. No. It was dark December; wind and rain
Had beat all night. Across the Carron lay
The destined road; and in its swelling flood
My faithful servant perished with my child.
Oh! hapless son of a most hapless sire!
But they are both at rest; and I, alone,
Dwell in this world of woe, condemned to walk,
Like a guilt-troubled ghost, my painful rounds;
Nor has despiteful fate permitted me
The comfort of a solitary sorrow.
Though dead to love, I was compelled to wed
Randolph, who snatched me from a villain's arms;
And Randolph now possesses the domains,
That by Sir Malcolm's death on me devolved;
Domains, that should to Douglas' son have given
A baron's title and a baron's power.
Such were my soothing thoughts, while I bewailed
The slaughtered father of a son unborn.
And when that son came, like a ray from heaven,
Which shines and disappears—alas, my child!

How long did thy fond mother grasp the hope
Of having thee, she knew not how, restored!
Year after year hath worn her hope away;
But left, still undiminished, her desire.
Anna. The hand, that spins the uneven thread of life,
May smooth the length that's yet to come of yours.
Lady R. Not in this world; I have considered well
Its various evils, and on whom they fall.
Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!
Oh! had I died when my loved husband fell!
Had some good angel oped to me the book
Of Providence, and let me read my life,
My heart had broke, when I beheld the sum
Of ills, which one by one I have endured.
Anna. That God, whose ministers good angels are,
Hath shut the book, in mercy to mankind.
But we must leave this theme: Glenalvon comes:
I saw him bend on you his thoughtful eyes,
And hitherward he slowly stalks his way.
Lady R. I will avoid him. An ungracious person
Is doubly irksome in an hour like this.
Anna. Why speaks my lady thus of Randolph's heir?
Lady R. Because he's not the heir of Randolph's virtues.
Subtle and shrewd, he offers to mankind
An artificial image of himself:
And he with ease can vary, to the taste
Of different men, its features. Self-denied,
And master of his appetites, he seems:
But his fierce nature, like a fox chained up,
Watches to seize unseen the wished-for prey.
Never were vice and virtue poised so ill,
As in Glenalvon's unrelenting mind.
Yet is he brave and politic in war,
And stands aloft in these unruly times.
Why I describe him thus I'll tell hereafter.
Stay and detain him till I reach the castle.
[*Exit Lady Randolph.*
Anna. Oh happiness! Where art thou to be found?
I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
Though graced with grandeur, and in wealth arrayed:
Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell;
Else had this gentle lady missed thee not.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glen. What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
Like some entranced and visionary seer,
On earth thou stand'st! thy thoughts ascend to Heaven.
Anna. Would that I were, even as thou say'st, a seer,
To have my doubts by heavenly vision cleared!
Glen. What dost thou doubt of? What hast thou to do
With subjects intricate? Thy youth, thy beauty,
Cannot be questioned: Think of these good gifts,
And then thy contemplations will be pleasing.
Anna. Let women view you monument of woe,
Then boast of beauty: who so fair as she!
But I must follow; this revolving day
Awakes the memory of her antient woes.
[*Exit Anna.*
Glen. [*Solus.*] So! Lady Randolph shuns me; by and by
I'll woo her as the lion woos his brides.
The deed's a doing now, that makes me lord
Of these rich valleys, and a chief of power.
The season is most apt; my sounding steps
Will not be heard amidst the din of arms.
Randolph has lived too long: his better fate
Had the ascendant once, and kept me down:
When I had seized the dame, by chance he came,
Rescued, and had the lady for his labour;
I escaped unknown; a slender consolation!
Heaven is my witness that I do not love
To sow in peril, and let others reap
The jocund harvest. Yet I am not safe:
By love, or something like it, stung, inflamed,
Madly I blabbed my passion to his wife,
And she has threatened to acquaint him of it.
The way of woman's will I do not know:
But well I know the baron's wrath is deadly.
I will not live in fear: the man I dread
Is as a Dane to me: ay, and the man
Who stands betwixt me and my chief desire.
No bar but he; she has no kinsman near;
No brother in his sister's quarrel bold;
And for the righteous cause, a stranger's cause,
I know no chief that will defy Glenalvon. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Court, &c.*

Enter servants and a stranger at one door, and Lady Randolph *and* Anna *at another.*

Lady R. What means this clamour? Stranger, speak secure;
Hast thou been wronged? Have these proud men presumed
To vex the weary traveller on his way?
Ser. By us no stranger ever suffered wrong:
This man with outcry wild has called us forth;
So sore afraid he cannot speak his fears.

Enter LORD RANDOLPH *and a young man, with their swords drawn and bloody.*

Lady R. Not vain the stranger's fears! how fares my lord?

Lord R. That it fares well, thanks to this gallant youth,
Whose valour saved me from a wretched death!
As down the winding dale I walked alone,
At the cross-way four armed men attacked me:
Rovers, I judge, from the licentious camp,
Who would have quickly laid lord Randolph low,
Had not this brave and generous stranger come,
Like my good angel, in the hour of fate,
And, mocking danger, made my foes his own.
They turned upon him, but his active arm
Struck to the ground, from whence they rose no more,
The fiercest two; the others fled amain,
And left him master of the bloody field.
Speak, lady Randolph; upon beauty's tongue
Dwell accents pleasing to the brave and bold.
Speak, noble dame, and thank him for thy lord.

Lady R. My lord, I cannot speak what now I feel.
My heart o'erflows with gratitude to heaven,
And to this noble youth, who, all unknown
To you and yours, deliberated not,
Nor paused at peril, but, humanely brave,
Fought on your side against such fearful odds.
Have you not learned of him, whom we should thank?
Whom call the saviour of lord Randolph's life?

Lord R. I asked that question, and he answered not:
But I must know, who my deliverer is.
[*To the Stranger.*

Stran. A low-born man, of parentage obscure,
Who nought can boast but his desire to be
A soldier, and to gain a name in arms.

Lord R. Whoe'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled
By the great King of kings! thou art ordained
And stamped a hero, by the sovereign hand
Of Nature! blush not, flower of modesty,
As well as valour, to declare thy birth.

Stran. My name is Norval: on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks; a frugal swain,
Whose constant cares were to increase his store,
And keep his only son, myself, at home.
For I had heard of battles, and I longed
To follow to the field some warlike lord:
And Heaven soon granted what my sire denied.
This moon, which rose last night, round as my shield,
Had not yet filled her horns, when, by her light,
A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
Rushed, like a torrent, down upon the vale,
Sweeping our flocks and herds. The shepherds fled
For safety and for succour. I alone,
With bended bow, and quiver full of arrows,
Hovered about the enemy, and marked
The road he took; then hastened to my friends,
Whom, with a troop of fifty chosen men,
I met advancing. The pursuit I led,
Till we o'ertook the spoil encumbered foe.
We fought and conquered. Ere a sword was drawn,
An arrow from my bow had pierced their chief,
Who wore that day the arms which now I wear.
Returning home in triumph, I disdained
The shepherd's slothful life; and having heard
That our good king had summoned his bold peers
To lead their warriors to the Carron's side,
I left my father's house, and took with me
A chosen servant to conduct my steps:
You trembling coward, who forsook his master.
Journeying with this intent, I passed these towers,
And, heaven directed, came this day to do
The happy deed that gilds my humble name.

Lord R. He is as wise as brave. Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehearsed?
My brave deliverer! thou shalt enter now
A nobler list, and, in a monarch's sight,
Contend with princes for the prize of fame.
I will present thee to the Scottish king,
Whose valiant spirit ever valour loved.
Ah! my Matilda, wherefore starts that tear?

Lady R. I cannot say: for various affections,
And strangely mingled, in my bosom swell;
Yet each of them may well command a tear.
I joy that thou art safe; and I admire
Him and his fortunes, who hath wrought thy safety;
Yea, as my mind predicts, with thine his own.
Obscure and friendless, he the army sought,
Bent upon peril, in the range of death
Resolved to hunt for fame, and with his sword
To gain distinction, which his birth denied.
In this attempt, unknown, he might have perished,
And gained, with all his valour, but oblivion.
Now, graced by thee, his virtues serve no more
Beneath despair. The soldier now of hope
He stands conspicuous; fame and great renown
Are brought within the compass of his sword.
On this my mind reflected, whilst you spoke,
And blessed the wonder-working lord of heaven.

Lord R. Pious and grateful ever are thy thoughts!
My deeds shall follow where thou point'st the way.
Next to myself, and equal to Glenalvon,
In honour and command shall Norval be.

Nor. I know not how to thank you. Rude I am
In speech and manners: never till this hour
Stood I in such a presence: yet, my lord,
There's something in my breast, which makes me bold
To say, that Norval ne'er will shame thy favour.

Lady R. I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be
My knight: and ever, as thou didst to day,
With happy valour guard the life of Randolph.
Lord R. Well hast thou spoke. Let me forbid reply. [*To Norval.*
We are thy debtors still. Thy high desert
O'ertops our gratitude. I must proceed,
As was at first intended, to the camp.
Some of my train, I see, are speeding hither,
Impatient, doubtless, of their lord's delay.
Go with me, Norval, and thine eyes shall see
The chosen warriors of thy native land,
Who languish for the fight, and beat the air
With brandished swords.
Nor. Let us begone, my lord.
Lord R. [*To Lady Randolph.*] About the time that the declining sun
Shall his broad orbit o'er yon hills suspend,
Expect us to return. This night once more
Within these walls I rest; my tent I pitch
To-morrow in the field. Prepare the feast.
Free is his heart, who for his country fights:
He, in the eve of battle, may resign
Himself to social pleasure: sweetest then,
When danger to a soldier's soul endears
The human joy, that never may return.
[*Exeunt Randolph and Norval.*
Lady R. His parting words have struck a fatal truth.
Oh, Douglas! Douglas! tender was the time
When we two parted, ne'er to meet again!
How many years, of anguish and despair,
Has Heaven annexed to those swift passing hours
Of love and fondness! Then my bosom's flame
Oft, as blown back by the rude breath of fear,
Returned, and with redoubled ardour blazed.
Anna. May gracious Heaven pour the sweet balm of peace
Into the wounds that fester in your breast!
For earthly consolation cannot cure them.
Lady R. One only cure can Heaven itself bestow——
A grave—that bed in which the weary rest.
Wretch that I am! Alas! why am I so?
At every happy parent I repine!
How blest the mother of yon gallant Norval!
She for a living husband bore her pains,
And heard him bless her when a man was born:
She nursed her smiling infant on her breast,
Tended the child, and reared the pleasing boy;
She, with affection's triumph, saw the youth,
In grace and comeliness, surpass his peers:
Whilst I to a dead husband bore a son,
And to the roaring waters gave my child.
Anne. Alas! alas! why will you thus resume
Your grief afresh? I thought that gallant youth
Would, for a while, have won you from your woe.
On him intent you gazed, with a look
Much more delighted, than your pensive eye
Had deigned on other objects to bestow.
Lady R. Delighted, say'st thou? Oh! even there mine eye
Found fuel for my life-consuming sorrow;
I thought, that had the son of Douglas lived,
He might have been like this young gallant stranger,
And paired with him in features and in shape.
In all endowments, as in years, I deem,
My boy with blooming Norval might have numbered.
While thus I mused, a spark from fancy fell
On my sad heart, and kindled up a fondness
For this young stranger, wandering from his home,
And like an orphan cast upon my care.
I will protect thee, said I to myself,
With all my power, and grace with all my favour.
Anna. Sure Heaven will bless so generous a resolve,
You must, my noble dame, exert your power:
You must awake; devices will be framed,
And arrows pointed at the breast of Norval.
Lady R. Glenalvon's false and crafty head will work
Against a rival in his kinsman's love,
If I deter him not; I only can.
Bold as he is, Glenalvon will beware
How he pulls down the fabric that I raise.
I'll be the artist of young Norval's fortune.
'Tis pleasing to admire! most apt was I
To this affection in my better days;
Though now I seem to you shrunk up, retired
Within the narrow compass of my woe.
Have you not sometimes seen an early flower
Open its bud, and spread its silken leaves,
To catch sweet airs, and odours to bestow;
Then, by the keen blast nipt, pull in its leaves,
And, though still living, die to scent and beauty?
Emblem of me; affliction, like a storm,
Hath killed the forward blossom of my heart.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glen. Where is my dearest kinsman, noble Randolph?
Lady R. Have you not heard, Glenalvon, of the base—
Glen. I have; and that the villains may not 'scape,
With a strong band I have begirt the wood.
If they lurk there, alive they shall be taken,
And torture force from them the important secret,
Whether some foe of Randolph hired their swords,
Or if——
Lady R. That care becomes a kinsman's love.
I have a counsel for Glenalvon's ear. [*Exit Anna.*
Glen. To him your counsels always are commands.
Lady R. I have not found so; thou art known to me.
Glen. Known!

Lady R. And most certain is my cause of knowledge.
Glen. What do you know? By the most blessed cross,
You much amaze me. No created being,
Yourself except, durst thus accost Glenalvon.
Lady R. Is guilt so bold? and dost thou make a merit
Of thy pretended meekness? This to me,
Who, with a gentleness which duty blames,
Have hitherto concealed what, if divulged,
Would make thee nothing; or, what's worse than that,
An outcast beggar, and unpitied too!
For mortals shudder at a crime like thine.
Glen. Thy virtue awes me. First of womankind!
Permit me yet to say, that the fond man,
Whom love transports beyond strict virtue's bounds,
If he is brought by love to misery,
In fortune ruined, as in mind forlorn,
Unpitied cannot be. Pity's the alms
Which on such beggars freely is bestowed;
For mortals know that love is still their lord,
And o'er their vain resolves advances still:
As fire, when kindled by our shepherds, moves
Through the dry heath, before the fanning wind.
Lady R. Reserve these accents for some other ear.
To love's apology I listen not.
Mark thou my words; for it is meet thou shouldst.
His brave deliverer Randolph here retains.
Perhaps his presence may not please thee well;
But, at thy peril, practise aught against him!
Let not thy jealousy attempt to shake
And loosen the good root he has in Randolph;
Whose favourites I know thou hast supplanted.
Thou look'st at me, as if thou fain would'st pry
Into my heart. 'Tis open as my speech.
I give this early caution, and put on
The curb, before thy temper breaks away.
The friendless stranger my protection claims:
His friend I am, and be not thou his foe. [*Exit.*
Glen. Child that I was, to start at my own shadow,
And be the shallow fool of coward conscience!
I am not what I have been; what I should be.
The darts of destiny have almost pierced
My marble heart. Had I one grain of faith
In holy legends and religious tales,
I should conclude there was an arm above,
That fought against me, and malignant turned,
To catch myself, the subtle snare I set.
Why, rape and murder are not simple means!
The imperfect rape to Randolph gave a spouse,
And the intended murder introduced
A favourite to hide the sun from me;
And, worst of all, a rival. Burning hell!
This were thy centre, if I thought she loved him!
'Tis certain she contemns me; nay, commands me,
And waves the flag of her displeasure o'er me,
In his behalf. And shall I thus be braved?
Curbed, as she calls it, by dame chastity?
Infernal fiends, if any fiends there are
More fierce than hate, ambition, or revenge,
Rise up, and fill my bosom with your fires,
And policy remorseless! Chance may spoil
A single aim; but perseverance must
Prosper at last. For chance and fate are words:
Persistive wisdom is the fate of man.
Darkly a project peers upon my mind,
Like the red moon when rising in the east,
Crossed and divided by strange-coloured clouds.
I'll seek the slave who came with Norval hither,
And for his cowardice was spurned from him.
I've known a follower's rankled bosom breed
Venom most fatal to his heedless lord. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Court, &c. as before.*

Enter ANNA.

Anna. THY vassals, grief, great nature's order break,
And change the noon-tide to the midnight hour.
Whilst lady Randolph sleeps, I will walk forth,
And taste the air that breathes on yonder bank.
Sweet may her slumbers be! Ye ministers
Of gracious Heaven, who love the human race,
Angels and seraphs, who delight in goodness,
Forsake your skies, and to her couch descend!
There from her fancy chase those dismal forms,
That haunt her waking; her sad spirit charm
With images celestial, such as please
The blest above upon their golden beds.

Enter Servant.

Ser. One of the vile assassins is secured.
We found the villain lurking in the wood:
With dreadful imprecations he denies
All knowledge of the crime. But this is not
His first essay: these jewels were concealed
In the most secret places of his garment;
Belike the spoils of some that he has murdered.
Anna. Let me look on them. Ha! here is a heart,
The chosen crest of Douglas' valiant name!
These are no vulgar jewels. Guard the wretch.
[*Exit Anna.*

Enter Servants with a Prisoner.

Pris. I know no more than does the child unborn

Of what you charge me with.
1st Ser. You say so, sir!
But torture soon shall make you speak the truth.
Behold, the lady of lord Randolph comes:
Prepare yourself to meet her just revenge.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH *and* ANNA.

Anna. Summon your utmost fortitude, before
You speak with him. Your dignity, your fame,
Are now at stake. Think of the fatal secret,
Which in a moment from your lips may fly.
Lady R. Thou shalt behold me, with a desperate heart,
Hear how my infant perished. See, he kneels.
[*The prisoner kneels.*
Pris. Heaven bless that countenance so sweet and mild!
A judge like thee makes innocence more bold.
Oh, save me, lady, from these cruel men,
Who have attacked and seized me; who accuse
Me of intended murder. As I hope
For mercy at the judgment-seat of Heaven,
The tender lamb, that never nipt the grass,
Is not more innocent than I of murder.
Lady R. Of this man's guilt what proof can ye produce?
1st Ser. We found him lurking in the hollow glynn.
When viewed and called upon, amazed he fled.
We overtook him, and enquired from whence
And what he was: he said he came from far,
And was upon his journey to the camp.
Not satisfied with this, we searched his clothes,
And found these jewels, whose rich value plead
Most powerfully against him. Hard he seems,
And old in villainy. Permit us try
His stubbornness against the torture's force.
Pris. Oh, gentle lady! by your lord's dear life,
Which these weak hands, I swear, did ne'er assail;
And by your children's welfare, spare my age!
Let not the iron tear my ancient joints,
And my grey hairs bring to the grave with pain!
Lady R. Account for these; thine own they cannot be:
For these, I say: be stedfast to the truth;
Detected falshood is most certain death.
[*Anna removes the servants, and returns.*]
Pris. Alas! I'm sore beset! let never man,
For sake of lucre, sin against his soul!
Eternal justice is in this most just!
I, guiltless now, must former guilt reveal.
Lady R. Oh! Anna, hear!—once more I charge thee speak
The truth direct; for these to me foretell
And certify a part of thy narration;
With which, if the remainder tallies not,
An instant and a dreadful death abides thee.
Pris. Then, thus adjured, I'll speak to you as just
As if you were the minister of heaven,
Sent down to search the secret sins of men:—
Some eighteen years ago I rented land
Of brave sir Malcolm, then Balarmo's lord;
But falling to decay, his servants seized
All that I had, and then turned me and mine,
(Four helpless infants and their weeping mother)
Out to the mercy of the winter winds.
A little hovel by the river's side
Received us: there hard labour, and the skill
In fishing, which was formerly my sport,
Supported life. Whilst thus we poorly lived,
One stormy night, as I remember well,
The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof;
Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shrieked.
At the dead hour of night was heard the cry
Of one in jeopardy. I rose, and ran
To where the circling eddy of a pool,
Beneath the ford, used oft to bring within
My reach, whatever floating thing the stream
Had caught. The voice was ceased; the person lost;
But looking sad and earnest on the waters,
By the moon's light I saw, whirled round and round,
A basket: soon I drew it to the bank,
And nestled curious there an infant lay.
Lady R. Was he alive?
Pris. He was.
Lady R. Inhuman that thou art!
How couldst thou kill what waves and tempests spared?
Pris. I am not so inhuman.
Lady R. Didst thou not?
Anna. My noble mistress, you are moved too much:
This man has not the aspect of stern murder;
Let him go on, and you, I hope, will hear
Good tidings of your kinsman's long-lost child.
Pris. The needy man, who has known better days,
One whom distress has spited at the world,
Is he whom tempting fiends would pitch upon
To do such deeds as make the prosperous men
Lift up their hands, and wonder who could do them.
And such a man was I; a man declined,
Who saw no end of black adversity:
Yet, for the wealth of kingdoms, I would not
Have touched that infant with a hand of harm.
Lady R. Ha! dost thou say so? then perhaps he lives!
Pris. Not many days ago he was alive.
Lady R. O God of Heaven! did he then die so lately?
Pris. I did not say he died; I hope he lives.
Not many days ago these eyes beheld
Him, flourishing in youth, and health, and beauty.
Lady R. Where is he now?
Pris. Alas! I know not where.
Lady R. Oh, fate! I fear thee still. Thou riddler, speak

Direct and clear; else I will reach thy soul.
Anna. Permit me, ever honoured! Keen impatience,
Though hard to be restrained, defeats itself.
Pursue thy story with a faithful tongue,
To the last hour that thou didst keep the child.
Pris. Fear not my faith, though I must speak my shame;
Within the cradle where the infant lay,
Was stowed a mighty store of gold and jewels;
Tempted by which, we did resolve to hide
From all the world this wonderful event,
And, like a peasant, breed the noble child.
That none might mark the change of our estate,
We left the country, travelled to the north,
Bought flocks and herds, and gradually brought forth
Our secret wealth. But God's all-seeing eye
Beheld our avarice, and smote us sore.
For one by one all our own children died,
And he, the stranger, sole remained the heir
Of what indeed was his. Fain then would I,
Who with a father's fondness loved the boy,
Have trusted him, now in the dawn of youth,
With his own secret: but my anxious wife,
Foreboding evil, never would consent.
Meanwhile the stripling grew in years and beauty;
And, as we oft observed, he bore himself,
Not as the offspring of our cottage blood;
For nature will break out: mild with the mild,
But with the froward he was fierce as fire,
And night and day he talked of war and arms.
I set myself against his warlike bent;
But all in vain; for when a desperate band
Of robbers from the savage mountains came—
Lady R. Eternal Providence! What is thy name?
Pris. My name is Norval; and my name he bears.
Lady R. 'Tis he! 'tis he himself! It is my son!
Oh, sovereign mercy! 'Twas my child I saw!
No wonder, Anna, that my bosom burned.
Anna. Just are your transports: ne'er was woman's heart
Proved with such fierce extremes, high fated dame!
But yet remember that you are beheld
By servile eyes; your gestures may be seen
Impassioned, strange; perhaps your words o'erheard.
Lady R. Well dost thou counsel, Anna: heaven bestow
On me that wisdom which my state requires!
Anna. The moments of deliberation pass,
And soon you must resolve. This useful man
Must be dismissed in safety, ere my lord
Shall, with his brave deliverer, return.
Pris. If I, amidst astonishment and fear,
Have of your words and gestures rightly judged,
Thou art the daughter of my ancient master;
The child I rescued from the flood is thine.
Lady R. With thee dissimulation now were vain;
I am indeed the daughter of Sir Malcolm;
The child thou rescued from the flood is mine.
Pris. Blest be the hour that made me a poor man!
My poverty has saved my master's house!
Lady R. Thy words surprise me: sure thou dost not feign!
The tear stands in thine eye; such love from thee
Sir Malcolm's house deserve not; if aright
Thou told'st the story of thy own distress.
Pris. Sir Malcolm of our barons was the flower;
The fastest friend, the best, the kindest master.
But ah! he knew not of my sad estate.
After that battle, where his gallant son,
Your own brave brother, fell, the good old lord
Grew desperate and reckless of the world;
And never, as he erst was wont, went forth
To overlook the conduct of his servants,
By them I was thrust out, and them I blame:
May Heaven so judge me as I judge my master!
And God so love me as I love his race!
Lady R. His race shall yet reward thee.—On thy faith
Depends the fate of thy loved master's house.
Rememb'rest thou a little lonely hut,
That like a holy hermitage appears
Among the cliffs of Carron?
Pris. I remember the cottage of the cliffs.
Lady R. 'Tis that I mean:
There dwells a man of venerable age,
Who in my father's service spent his youth:
Tell him I sent thee, and with him remain,
Till I shall call upon thee to declare,
Before the king and nobles, what thou now
To me hast told. No more but this, and thou
Shalt live in honour all thy future days;
Thy son so long shall call thee father still,
And all the land shall bless the man, who saved
The son of Douglas, and Sir Malcolm's heir.
Remember well my words; if thou should'st meet
Him whom thou call'st thy son, still call him so;
And mention nothing of his nobler father.
Pris. Fear not that I shall mar so fair an harvest,
By putting in my sickle ere 'tis ripe.
Why did I leave my home and ancient dame?
To find the youth, to tell him all I know,
And make him wear these jewels on his arms,
Which might, I thought, be challenged, and so bring
To light the secret of his noble birth.
[*Lady Randolph goes towards the Servants.*
Lady R. This man is not the assassin you suspected,
Though chance combined some likelihoods against him.
He is the faithful bearer of the jewels

To their right owner, whom in haste he seeks.
'Tis meet that you should put him on his way,
Since your mistaken zeal has dragged him hither.

[*Exeunt Stranger and Servants.*

My faithful Anna! dost thou share my joy?
I know thou dost. Unparallelled event!
Reaching from heaven to earth, Jehovah's arm
Snatched from the waves, and brings to me my son!
Judge of the widow, and the orphan's father,
Accept a widow's and a mother's thanks
For such a gift! What does my Anna think
Of the young eaglet of a valiant nest?
How soon he gazed on bright and burning arms,
Spurned the low dunghill where his fate had thrown him,
And towered up to the region of his sire!

Anna. How fondly did your eyes devour the boy!
Mysterious nature, with the unseen cord
Of powerful instinct, drew you to your own.

Lady R. The ready story of his birth believed
Suppress my fancy quite; nor did he owe
To any likeness my so sudden favour:
But now I long to see his face again,
Examine every feature, and find out
The lineaments of Douglas, or my own.
But most of all I long to let him know
Who his true parents are, to clasp his neck,
And tell him all the story of his father.

Anna. With wary caution you must bear yourself
In public, lest your tenderness break forth,
And in observers stir conjectures strange.
For, if a cherub in the shape of woman
Should walk this world, yet defamation would,
Like a vile cur, bark at the angel's train.
To-day the baron started at your tears.

Lady R. He did so, Anna! well thy mistress knows
If the least circumstance, mote of offence,
Should touch the baron's eye, his sight would be
With jealousy disordered. But the more
It does behove me instant to declare
The birth of Douglas, and assert his rights.
This night I purpose with my son to meet,
Reveal the secret, and consult with him:
For wise he is, or my fond judgment errs.
As he does now, so looked his noble father,
Arrayed in Nature's ease: his mein, his speech,
Were sweetly simple, and full oft deceived
Those trivial mortals who seem always wise.
But, when the matter matched his mighty mind,
Up rose the hero; on his piercing eye
Sat observation; on each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash.

Anna. That demon haunts you still:
Behold Glenalvon.

Lady R. Now I shun him not.
This day I braved him in behalf of Norval:
Perhaps too far: at least my nicer fears
For Douglas thus interpret.

Enter GLENALVON.

Glen. Noble dame!
The hovering Dane, at last, his men hath landed:
No band of pirates; but a mighty host,
That come to settle where their valour conquers:
To win a country, or to lose themselves.

Lady R. But whence comes this intelligence, Glenalvon?

Glen. A nimble courier, sent from yonder camp,
To hasten up the chieftains of the north,
Informed me, as he passed, that the fierce Dane
Had on the eastern coast of Lothian landed,
Near to that place where the sea-rock immense,
Amazing Bass, looks o'er a fertile land.

Lady R. Then must this western army march to join
The warlike troops that guard Edina's towers?

Glen. Beyond all question. If impairing time
Has not effaced the image of a place,
Once perfect in my breast, there is a wild
Which lies to westward of that mighty rock,
And seems by nature formed for the camp
Of water-wafted armies, whose chief strength
Lies in firm foot, unflanked with warlike horse:
If martial skill directs the Danish lords,
There inaccessible their army lies
To our swift-scouring horse; the bloody field
Must man to man, and foot to foot be fought.

Lady R. How many mothers shall bewail their sons!
How many widows weep their husbands slain!
Ye dames of Denmark, even for you I feel,
Who, sadly sitting on the sea-beat shore,
Long look for lords that never shall return.

Glen. Oft has the unconquered Caledonian sword
Widowed the north. The children of the slain
Come, as I hope, to meet their fathers' fate.
The monster war, with her infernal brood,
Loud-yelling fury and life-ending pain,
Are objects suited to Glenalvon's soul.
Scorn is mere grievous than the pains of death:
Reproach more piercing than the pointed sword.

Lady R. I scorn thee not but when I ought to scorn;
Nor e'er reproach, but when insulted virtue
Against audacious vice asserts herself.
I own thy worth, Glenalvon; none more apt
Than I to praise thine eminence in arms,
And be the echo of thy martial fame.
No longer vainly feed a guilty passion:
Go and pursue a lawful mistress, Glory.
Upon the Danish crests redeem thy fault,
And let thy valour be the shield of Randolph.

Glen. One instant stay, and hear an altered man.
When beauty pleads for virtue, vice, abashed,
Flies its own colours, and goes o'er to virtue.

I am your convert; time will shew how truly:
Yet one immediate proof I mean to give.
That youth, for whom your ardent zeal, to-day,
Somewhat too haughtily defied your slave,
Amidst the shock of armies I'll defend,
And turn death from him, with a guardian's arm.
Sedate by use, my bosom maddens not
At the tumultuous uproar of the field.

Lady R. Act thus, Glenalvon, and I am thy friend;
But that's thy least reward. Believe me, sir,
The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he, who loves not others, lives unblest.

[*Exit Lady Randolph.*

Glen. [*solus.*] Amen! and virtue is its own reward!
I think that I have hit the very tone
In which she loves to speak. Honeyed assent,
How pleasant art thou to the taste of man,
And woman also! flattery direct
Rarely disgusts. They little know mankind
Who doubt its operation: 'tis my key,
And opes the wicket of the human heart.
How far I have succeeded now I know not.
Yet I incline to think her stormy virtue
Is lulled awhile; 'tis her alone I fear;
Whilst she and Randolph live, and live in faith
And amity, uncertain is my tenure.
Fate o'er my head suspends disgrace and death,
By that weak air, a peevish female's will.
I am not idle; but the ebbs and flows
Of fortune's tide cannot be calculated.
That slave of Norval's I have found most apt:
I shewed him gold, and he has pawned his soul
To say and swear whatever I suggest.
Norval, I'm told, has that alluring look,
'Twixt man and woman, which I have observed
To charm the nicer and fantastic dames,
Who are, like lady Randolph, full of virtue.
In raising Randolph's jealousy, I may
But point him to the truth. He seldom errs,
Who thinks the worst he can of womankind.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter Lord RANDOLPH *attended.*

Lord R. SUMMON an hundred horse, by break of day,
To wait our pleasure at the castle gate.

Enter Lady RANDOLPH.

Lady R. Alas, my lord! I've heard unwelcome news;
The Danes are landed.

Lord R. Ay; no inroad this
Of the Northumbrian, bent to take a spoil:
No sportive war, no tournament essay
Of some young knight resolved to break a spear,
And stain with hostile blood his maiden arms.
The Danes are landed: we must beat them back,
Or live the slaves of Denmark.

Lady R. Dreadful times!

Lord R. The fenceless villages are all forsaken;
The trembling mothers and their children lodged
In wall-girt towers and castles; whilst the men
Retire indignant. Yet, like broken waves,
They but retire more awful to return.

Lady R. Immense, as fame reports, the Danish host!

Lord R. Were it as numerous as loud fame reports,
An army knit like ours would pierce it through:
Brothers, that shrink not from each other's side,
And fond companions, fill our warlike files:
For his dear offspring, and the wife he loves,
The husband and the fearless father arm.
In vulgar breasts heroic ardour burns,
And the poor peasant mates his dying lord.

Lady R. Men's minds are tempered, like their swords, for war;
Lovers of danger, on destruction's brink
They joy to rear erect their daring forms.
Hence, early graves; hence, the lone widow's life;
And the sad mother's grief-embittered age.
Where is our gallant guest?

Lord R. Down in the vale
I left him, managing a fiery steed,
Whose stubbornness had foiled the strength and skill
Of every rider. But behold he comes,
In earnest conversation with Glenalvon.

Enter NORVAL *and* GLENALVON.

Glenalvon! with the lark arise; go forth,
And lead my troops that lie in yonder vale:
Private I travel to the royal camp.
Norval, thou goest with me. But say, young man!
Where didst thou learn so to discourse of war,
And in such terms, as I o'erheard to day?
War is no village science, nor its phrase
A language taught amongst the shepherd swains.

Nor Small is the skill my lord delights to praise
In him he favours. Hear from whence it came.
Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
And inaccessible by shepherds trod,
In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
A hermit lived: a melancholy man,
Who was the wonder of our wandering swains.
Austere and lonely, cruel to himself,
Did they report him; the cold earth his bed,
Water his drink, his food the shepherd's alms,

I went to see him, and my heart was touched
With reverence and with pity. Mild he spake,
And, entering on discourse, such stories told,
As made me oft revisit his sad cell.
For he had been a soldier in his youth;
And fought in famous battles, when the peers
Of Europe, by the bold Godfredo led,
Against the usurping infidel displayed
The blessed cross, and won the Holy Land.
Pleased with my admiration, and the fire
His speech struck from me, the old man would shake
His years away, and act his young encounters:
Then, having shewed his wounds, he would sit him down,
And all the live-long day discourse of war.
To help my fancy, in the smooth green turf
He cut the figures of the marshalled hosts;
Described the motions, and explained the use,
Of the deep column, and the lengthened line,
The square, the crescent, and the phalanx firm.
For all that Saracen or Christian knew
Of war's vast art, was to this hermit known.

Lord R. Why did this soldier in a desert hide
Those qualities, that should have graced a camp?

Nor. That too at last I learned. Unhappy man!
Returning homeward by Messina's port,
Loaded with wealth and honours bravely won,
A rude and boisterous captain of the sea
Fastened a quarrel on him. Fierce they fought;
The stranger fell, and, with his dying breath,
Declared his name and lineage. Mighty power!
The soldier cried, my brother! Oh, my brother!

Lady R. His brother!

Nor. Yes; of the same parents born;
His only brother. They exchanged forgiveness:
And happy, in my mind, was he that died;
For many deaths has the survivor suffered.
In the wild desert on a rock he sits,
Or on some nameless stream's untrodden banks,
And ruminates all day his dreadful fate.
At times, alas! not in his perfect mind,
Holds dialogues with his loved brother's ghost;
And oft each night forsakes his sullen couch,
To make sad orisons for him he slew.

Lady R. To what mysterious woes are mortals born!
In this dire tragedy were there no more
Unhappy persons? Did the parents live?

Nor. No, they were dead; kind Heaven had closed their eyes,
Before their son had shed his brother's blood.

Lord R. Hard is his fate; for he was not to blame.
There is a destiny in this strange world,
Which oft decrees an undeserved doom.
Let schoolmen tell us why—From whence these sounds? [*Trumpets at a distance.*

Enter an Officer.

Offi. My lord, the trumpets of the troops of Lorn:
Their valiant leader hails the noble Randolph.

Lord R. Mine ancient guest! Does he the warriors lead?
Has Denmark roused the brave old knight to arms?

Offi. No; worn with warfare, he resigns the sword.
His eldest hope, the valiant John of Lorn,
Now leads his kindred bands.

Lord R. Glenalvon, go.
With hospitality's most strong request
Entreat the chief. [*Exit Glenalvon.*

Offi. My lord, requests are vain.
He urges on, impatient of delay,
Stung with the tidings of the foes approach.

Lord R. May victory sit on the warrior's plume!
Bravest of men! his flocks and herds are safe;
Remote from war's alarms his pastures lie,
By mountains inaccessible secured:
Yet foremost he into the plain descends,
Eager to bleed in battles not his own.
Such were the heroes of the ancient world;
Contemners they of indolence and gain;
But still, for love of glory and of arms,
Prone to encounter peril, and to lift,
Against each strong antagonist, the spear.
I'll go and press the hero to my breast.
[*Exit with the Officer.*

Lady R. The soldier's loftiness, the pride and pomp
Investing awful war, Norval, I see,
Transport thy youthful mind.

Nor. Ah! should they not?
Blessed be the hour I left my father's house!
I might have been a shepherd all my days,
And stole obscurely to a peasant's grave.
Now, if I live, with mighty chiefs I stand;
And, if I fall, with noble dust I lie.

Lady R. There is a generous spirit in thy breast,
That could have well sustained a prouder fortune.
This way with me; under yon spreading beech,
Unseen, unheard, by human eye or ear,
I will amaze thee with a wond'rous tale.

Nor. Let there be danger, lady, with the secret,
That I may hug it to my grateful heart,
And prove my faith. Command my sword, my life:
These are the sole possessions of poor Norval.

Lady R. Know'st thou these gems?

Nor. Durst I believe mine eyes,
I would say I knew them, and they were my father's.

Lady R. Thy father's, say'st thou? Ah, they were thy father's!

Nor. I saw them once, and curiously enquired
Of both my parents, whence such splendour came?
But I was checked, and more could never learn.
Lady R. Then learn of me, thou art not Norval's son.
Nor. Not Norval's son!
Lady R. Nor of a shepherd sprung.
Nor. Lady, whom am I then?
Lady R. Noble thou art;
For noble was thy sire.
Nor. I will believe——
Oh, tell me farther? Say, who was my father?
Lady R. Douglas!
Nor. Lord Douglas, whom to-day I saw?
Lady R. His younger brother.
Nor. And in yonder camp?
Lady R. Alas!
Nor. You make me tremble—Sighs and tears!
Lives my brave father?
Lady R. Ah! too brave, indeed!
He fell in battle ere thyself was born.
Nor. Ah me, unhappy! Ere I saw the light!
But does my mother live? I may conclude,
From my own fate, her portion has been sorrow.
Lady R. She lives; but wastes her life in constant woe,
Weeping her husband slain, her infant lost.
Nor. You, that are skilled so well in the sad story
Of my unhappy parents, and with tears
Bewail their destiny, now have compassion
Upon the offspring of the friends you loved.
Oh, tell me who, and where, my mother is!
Oppressed by a base world, perhaps she bends
Beneath the weight of other ills than grief;
And, desolate, implores of Heaven the aid
Her son should give. It is, it must be so——
Your countenance confesses that she's wretched.
Oh, tell me her condition! Can the sword——
Who shall resist me in a parent's cause?
Lady R. Thy virtue ends her woes——My son! my son!
I am thy mother, and the wife of Douglas!
[*Falls upon his neck.*
Nor. Oh, heaven and earth! how wond'rous is my fate!
Art thou my mother? Ever let me kneel!
Lady R. Image of Douglas! fruit of fatal love!
All that I owe thy sire, I pay to thee.
Nor. Respect and admiration still possess me,
Checking the love and fondness of a son:
Yet I was filial to my humble parents.
But did my sire surpass the rest of men,
As thou excellest all of womankind?
Lady R. Arise, my son. In me thou dost behold
The poor remains of beauty once admired.
The autumn of my days is come already,
For sorrow made my summer haste away;
Yet in my prime I equalled not thy father:
His eyes were like the eagle's, yet sometimes
Liker the dove's; and, as he pleased, he won
All hearts with softness, or with spirit awed.
Nor. How did he fall? Sure 'twas a bloody field
When Douglas died. Oh, I have much to ask!
Lady R. Hereafter thou shalt hear the lengthened tale
Of all thy father's and thy mother's woes.
At present this—Thou art the rightful heir
Of yonder castle, and the wide domains,
Which now lord Randolph, as my husband, holds.
But thou shalt not be wronged; I have the power
To right thee still. Before the king I'll kneel,
And call lord Douglas to protect his blood.
Nor. The blood of Douglas will protect itself.
Lady R. But we shall need both friends and favour, boy,
To wrest thy lands and lordship from the gripe
Of Randolph and his kinsman. Yet I think
My tale will move each gentle heart to pity,
My life incline the virtuous to believe.
Nor. To be the son of Douglas, is to me
Inheritance enough. Declare my birth,
And in the field I'll seek for fame and fortune.
Lady R. Thou dost not know what perils and injustice
Await the poor man's valour. Oh, my son!
The noblest blood of all the land's abashed,
Having no lacquey but pale poverty.
Too long hast thou been thus attended, Douglas,
Too long hast thou been deemed a peasant's child.
The wanton heir of some inglorious chief,
Perhaps, has scorned thee in the youthful sports,
Whilst thy indignant spirit swelled in vain.
Such contumely thou no more shalt bear:
But how I purpose to redress thy wrongs
Must be hereafter told. Prudence directs
That we should part before yon chiefs return.
Retire, and from thy rustic follower's hand
Receive a billet, which thy mother's care,
Anxious to see thee, dictated before
This casual opportunity arose
Of private conference. Its purport mark;
For, as I there appoint, we meet again.
Leave me, my son; and frame thy manners still
To Norval's, not to noble Douglas' state.
Nor. I will remember. Where is Norval now?
That good old man.
Lady R. At hand concealed he lies,
An useful witness. But beware, my son,
Of yon Glenalvon; in his guilty breast
Resides a villain's shrewdness, ever prone
To false conjecture. He hath grieved my heart.
Nor. Has he, indeed? Then let yon false Glenalvon
Beware of me! [*Exit.*
Lady R. There burst the smothered flame.
Oh, thou all-righteous and eternal King!
Who Father of the fatherless art called,
Protect my son! Thy inspiration, Lord!

Hath filled his bosom with that sacred fire,
Which in the breasts of his forefathers burned!
Set him on high, like them, that he may shine
The star and glory of his native land!
Then let the minister of death descend,
And bear my willing spirit to its place.
Yonder they come. How do bad women find
Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt,
When I, by reason and by justice urged,
Full hardly can dissemble with these men,
In nature's pious cause?

Enter LORD RANDOLPH *and* GLENALVON.

Lord R. Yon gallant chief,
Of arms enamoured, all repose disclaims.
Lady R. Be not, my lord, by his example swayed.
Arrange the business of to-morrow now,
And when you enter, speak of war no more.
[*Exit.*
Lord R. 'Tis so, by Heaven! her mein, her voice, her eye,
And her impatience to be gone, confirm it.
Glen. He parted from her now. Behind the mount,
Amongst the trees, I saw him glide along.
Lord R. For sad sequestered virtue she's renowned.
Glen. Most true, my lord,
Lord R. Yet this distinguished dame
Invites a youth, the acquaintance of a day,
Alone to meet her at the midnight hour.
This assignation, [*Shews a letter.*] the assassin freed,
Her manifest affection for the youth,
Might breed suspicion in a husband's brain,
Whose gentle consort all for love had wedded:
Much more in mine. Matilda never loved me.
Let no man, after me, a woman wed,
Whose heart he knows he has not; though she brings
A mine of gold, a kingdom for her dowry.
For let her seem, like the night's shadowy queen,
Cold and contemplative—he cannot trust her:
She may, she will, bring shame and sorrow on him:
The worst of sorrows, and the worst of shames!
Glen. Yield not, my lord, to such afflicting thoughts;
But let the spirit of an husband sleep,
Till your own senses make a sure conclusion.
This billet must to blooming Norval go:
At the next turn awaits my trusty spy;
I'll give it him refitted for his master.
In the close thicket take your secret stand;
The moon shines bright, and your own eyes may judge
Of their behaviour.
Lord R. Thou dost counsel well.
Glen. Permit me now to make one slight essay.
Of all the trophies which vain mortals boast,
By wit, by valour, or by wisdom won,
The first and fairest, in a young man's eye,
Is woman's captive heart. Successful love
With glorious fumes intoxicates the mind,
And the proud conqueror in triumph moves,
Air-born, exalted above vulgar men.
Lord R. And what avails this maxim?
Glen. Much, my lord.
Withdraw a little; I'll accost young Norval,
And with ironical derisive counsel
Explore his spirit. If he is no more
Than humble Norval, by thy favour raised,
Brave as he is, he'll shrink astonished from me:
But if he be the favourite of the fair,
Loved by the first of Caledonia's dames,
He'll turn upon me, as the lion turns
Upon the hunter's spear.
Lord R. 'Tis shrewdly thought.
Glen. When we grow loud, draw near. But let my lord
His rising wrath restrain. [*Exit Randolph.*
'Tis strange, by Heaven!
That she should run, full tilt, her fond career
To one so little known. She, too, that seemed
Pure as the winter stream, when ice, embossed,
Whitens its course. Even I did think her chaste,
Whose charity exceeds not. Precious sex!
Whose deeds lascivious pass Glenalvon's thoughts!

Enter NORVAL.

His port I love; he's in a proper mood
To chide the thunder, if at him it roared. [*Aside.*
Has Norval seen the troops?
Nor. The setting sun,
With yellow radiance, lightened all the vale:
And, as the warriors moved, each polished helm,
Corslet, or spear, glanced back his gilded beams.
The hill they climbed, and halting at its top,
Of more than mortal size, towering, they seemed
An host angelic, clad in burning arms.
Glen. Thou talk'st it well; no leader of our host,
In sounds more lofty, speaks of glorious war.
Nor. If I shall e'er acquire a leader's name,
My speech will be less ardent. Novelty
Now prompts my tongue, and youthful admiration
Vents itself freely; since no part is mine
Of praise pertaining to the great in arms.
Glen. You wrong yourself, brave sir; your martial deeds
Have ranked you with the great. But mark me, Norval;
Lord Randolph's favour now exalts your youth
Above his veterans of famous service.
Let me, who know these soldiers, counsel you.
Give them all honour; seem not to command;
Else they will scarcely brook your late sprung power,
Which nor alliance props, nor birth adorns.
Nor. Sir, I have been accustomed all my days
To hear and speak the plain and simple truth:
And though I have been told that there are men,

Who borrow friendship's tongue to speak their scorn,
Yet in such language I am little skilled.
Therefore, I thank Glenalvon for his counsel,
Although it sounded harshly. Why remind
Me of my birth obscure? Why slur my power
With such contemptuous terms?
Glen. I did not mean
To gall your pride, which now I see is great.
Nor. My pride!
Glen. Suppress it, as you wish to prosper.
Your pride's excessive. Yet, for Randolph's sake,
I will not leave you to its rash direction.
If thus you swell, and frown at high-born men,
Will high-born men endure a shepherd's scorn?
Nor. A shepherd's scorn!
Glen. Yes; if you presume
To bend on soldiers these disdainful eyes,
What will become of you!
Nor. If this were told!—— [*Aside.*
Hast thou no fears for thy presumptuous self?
Glen. Ha! dost thou threaten me?
Nor. Didst thou not hear?
Glen. Unwillingly I did; a nobler foe
Had not been questioned thus. But such as thee——
Nor. Whom dost thou think me?
Glen. Norval.
Nor. So I am——
And who is Norval in Glenalvon's eyes?
Glen. A peasant's son, a wandering beggar-boy;
At best no more, even if he speaks the truth.
Nor. False as thou art, dost thou suspect my truth?
Glen. Thy truth! thou'rt all a lie: and false as hell
Is the vain-glorious tale thou toldst to Randolph.
Nor. If I were chained, unarmed, and bed-rid old,
Perhaps I should revile; but as I am,
have no tongue to rail. The humble Norval
s of a race who strive not but with deeds.
Did I not fear to freeze thy shallow valour,
And make thee sink too soon beneath my sword,
'd tell thee—what thou art. I know thee well.
Glen. Dost thou not know Glenalvon, born to command
ten thousand slaves like thee——
Nor. Villain, no more!
raw and defend thy life. I did design
n have defied thee in another cause:
ut heaven accelerates its vengeance on thee.
ow for my own and lady Randolph's wrongs!

Enter LORD RANDOLPH.

Lord R. Hold, I command you both. The man that stirs
Makes me his foe.
Nor. Another voice than thine
That threat had vainly sounded, noble Randolph.
Glen. Hear him, my lord; he's wonderous condescending!
Mark the humility of shepherd Norval!
Nor. Now you may scoff in safety.
[*Sheathes his sword.*
Lord R. Speak not thus,
Taunting each other; but unfold to me
The cause of quarrel; then I judge betwixt you.
Nor. Nay, my good lord! though I revere you much,
My cause I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
I blush to speak! I will not, cannot speak
The opprobrious words that I from him have borne.
To the liege-lord of my dear native land
I owe a subject's homage: but even him
And his high arbitration I'd reject.
Within my bosom reigns another lord;
Honour, sole judge, and umpire of itself.
If my free speech offend you, noble Randolph,
Revoke your favours, and let Norval go
Hence as he came, alone, but not dishonoured.
Lord R. Thus far I'll mediate with impartial voice:
The ancient foe of Caledonia's land
Now waves his banners o'er her frighted fields.
Suspend your purpose till your country's arms
Repel the bold invader: then decide
The private quarrel.
Glen. I agree to this.
Nor. And I.

Enter Servant.

Ser. The banquet waits.
Lord R. We come. [*Exit Servant.*
Glen. Norval,
Let not our variance mar the social hour,
Nor wrong the hospitality of Randolph.
Nor frowning anger, nor yet wrinkled hate,
Shall stain my countenance. Smooth thou thy brow;
Nor let our strife disturb the gentle dame.
Nor. Think not so lightly, sir, of my resentment.
When we contend again, our strife is mortal.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Grove.*

Enter DOUGLAS.

Doug. THIS is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
How sweet and solemn is this midnight scene!
The silver moon, unclouded, holds her way
Through skies where I could count each little star.
The fanning west wind scarcely stirs the leaves;
The river, rushing o'er its pebbled bed,
Imposes silence with a stilly sound.
In such a place as this, at such an hour,
If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending spirits have conversed with man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown.

Enter Old NORVAL.

Old Nor. 'Tis he. But what if he should chide me hence?
His just reproach I fear.
[*Douglas turns aside, and sees him.*
Forgive! forgive!
Canst thou forgive the man, the selfish man,
Who bred sir Malcolm's heir a shepherd's son?
Doug. Kneel not to me; thou art my father still:
Thy wished-for presence now completes my joy.
Welcome to me; my fortunes thou shalt share,
And ever honoured with thy Douglas live.
Old Nor. And dost thou call me father? Oh, my son!
I think that I could die to make amends
For the great wrong I did thee. 'Twas my crime
Which in the wilderness so long concealed
The blossom of thy youth.
Doug. Not worse the fruit,
That in the wilderness the blossom blowed.
Amongst the shepherds, in the humble cot,
I learned some lessons, which I'll not forget
When I inhabit yonder lofty towers.
I, who was once a swain, will ever prove
The poor man's friend; and when my vassals bow,
Norval shall smooth the crested pride of Douglas.
Old Nor. Let me but live to see thine exaltation!
Yet grievous are my fears. Oh, leave this place,
And those unfriendly towers!
Doug. Why should I leave them?
Old Nor. Lord Randolph and his kinsman seek your life.
Doug. How knowest thou that?
Old Nor. I will inform you how:
When evening came, I left the secret place
Appointed for me by your mother's care,
And fondly trod in each accustomed path
That to the castle leads. Whilst thus I ranged,
I was alarmed with unexpected sounds
Of earnest voices. On the persons came.
Unseen I lurked, and overheard them name
Each other as they talked; lord Randolph this,
And that Glenalvon. Still of you they spoke,
And of the lady; threatening was their speech,
Though but imperfectly my ear could hear it.
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery:
And ever and anon they vowed revenge,
Doug. Revenge! for what?
Old Nor. For being what you are,
Sir Malcolm's heir: how else have you offended?
When they were gone, I hied me to my cottage,
And there sat musing how I best might find
Means to inform you of their wicked purpose;
But I could think of none. At last, perplexed,
I issued forth, encompassing the tower,
With many a wearied step, and wishful look.
Now Providence hath brought you to my sight,
Let not your too courageous spirit scorn
The caution which I give.
Doug. I scorn it not.
My mother warned me of Glenalvon's baseness;
But I will not suspect the noble Randolph.
In our encounter with the vile assassins,
I marked his brave demeanour; him I'll trust.
Old. Nor. I fear you will, too far.
Doug. Here in this place
I wait my mother's coming: she shall know
What thou hast told: her counsel I will follow.
And cautious ever are a mother's counsels.
You must depart: your presence may prevent
Our interview.
Old Nor. My blessing rest upon thee!
Oh, may Heaven's hand, which saved thee from the wave,
And from the sword of foes, be near thee still:
Turning mischance, if aught hangs o'er thy head,
All upon mine! [*Exit.*
Doug. He loves me like a parent;
And must not, shall not, lose the son he loves,
Although his son has found a nobler father.
Eventful day! How hast thou changed my state!
Once on the cold and winter-shaded side
Of a bleak hill mischance had rooted me,
Never to thrive, child of another soil.
Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
Ye glorious stars! high Heaven's resplendent host!
To whom I oft have of my lot complained,
Hear and record my soul's unaltered wish!
Dead or alive, let me but be renowned!
May heaven inspire some fierce gigantic Dane
To give a bold defiance to our host!
Before he speaks it out I will accept;
Like Douglas conquer, or like Douglas die.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH.

Lady R. My son! I heard a voice——
Doug. The voice was mine.
Lady R. Didst thou complain aloud to Nature's ear,
That thus in dusky shades, at midnight hours,
By stealth the mother and the son should meet?
[*Embracing him.*
Doug. No; on this happy day, this better birth-day,
My thoughts and words are all of hope and joy.
Lady R. Sad fear and melancholy still divide
The empire of my breast with hope and joy.
Now hear what I devise——
Doug. First, let me tell
What may the tenor of your counsel change.
Lady R. My heart forebodes some evil.
Doug. 'Tis not good——
At eve, unseen by Randolph and Glenalvon,
The good old Norval in the grove o'erheard
Their conversation; oft they mentioned me,
With dreadful threatenings; you they sometimes named.
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery;
And ever and anon they vowed revenge.
Lady R. Defend us, gracious God! we are betrayed:
They have found out the secret of thy birth:
It must be so. That is the great discovery.
Sir Malcolm's heir is come to claim his own,
And they will be revenged. Perhaps even now,
Armed and prepared for murder, they but wait
A darker and more silent hour to break
Into the chamber where they think thou sleep'st.
This moment, this, Heaven hath ordained to save thee!
Fly to the camp, my son!
Doug. And leave you here?
No: to the castle let us go together.
Call up the ancient servants of your house,
Who in their youth did eat your father's bread.
Then tell them loudly that I am your son.
If in the breasts of men one spark remains
Of sacred love, fidelity, or pity,
Some in your cause will arm. I ask but few
To drive those spoilers from my father's house.
Lady R. Oh, Nature, Nature! what can check thy force?
Thou genuine offspring of the daring Douglas!
But rush not on destruction: save thyself,
And I am safe. To me they mean no harm.
My stay but risks thy precious life in vain.
That winding path conducts thee to the river.
Cross where thou seest a broad and beaten way,
Which, running eastward, leads thee to the camp.
Instant demand admittance to lord Douglas;
Shew him these jewels which his brother wore.
My look, thy voice, will make him feel the truth,
Which I, by certain proof, will soon confirm.
Doug. I yield me, and obey: but yet my heart
Bleeds at this parting. Something bids me stay,
And guard a mother's life. Oft have I read
Of wondrous deeds by one bold arm atchieved.
Our foes are two; no more: let me go forth,
And see if any shield can guard Glenalvon!
Lady R. If thou regard'st thy mother, or rever'st
Thy father's memory, think of this no more.
One thing I have to say before we part:
Long wert thou lost; and thou art found, my child,
In a most fearful season. War and battle
I have great cause to dread. Too well I see
Which way the current of thy temper sets:
To-day I've found thee. Oh! my long lost hope!
If thou to giddy valour giv'st the rein,
To-morrow I may lose my son for ever.
The love of thee, before thou saw'st the light,
Sustained my life when thy brave father fell.
If thou shalt fall, I have nor love nor hope
In this waste world! My son, remember me!
Doug. What shall I say? How can I give you comfort?
The God of battles of my life dispose
As may be best for you! for whose dear sake
I will not bear myself as I resolved.
But yet consider, as no vulgar name,
That which I boast, sounds amongst martial men,
How will inglorious caution suit my claim?
The post of fate unshrinking I maintain.
My country's foes must witness who I am.
On the invaders' heads I'll prove my birth,
Till friends and foes confess the genuine strain.
If in this strife I fall, blame not your son,
Who, if he lives not honoured, must not live.
Lady R. I will not utter what my bosom feels.
Too well I love that valour which I warn.
Farewell, my son! my counsels are but vain,
[*Embracing.*
And as high Heaven hath willed it, all must be.
[*Separate.*
Gaze not on me, thou wilt mistake the path;
I'll point it out again.
[*Just as they are separating.*

Enter from the wood LORD RANDOLPH *and* GLENALVON.

Lord R. Not in her presence.
Now——
Glen. I am prepared.
Lord R. No: I command thee stay.
I go alone: it never shall be said
That I took odds to combat mortal man.
The noblest vengeance is the most complete.
[*Exit.*
[*Glenalvon makes some steps to the same side of the stage, listens and speaks.*
Glen. Demons of death, come, settle on my sword,
And to a double slaughter guide it home!
The lover and the husband both must die.

Lord R. [*Behind the Scenes.*] Draw, villain! draw!

Doug.]*Without.*] Assail me not, lord Randolph;
Not as thou lovest thyself. [*Clashing of swords.*

Glen. [*Running out.*] Now is the time.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH, *at the other side of the stage, faint and breathless.*

Lady R. Lord Randolph, hear me, all shall be thine own!
But spare! Oh, spare my son!

Enter DOUGLAS, *with a sword in each hand.*

Doug. My mother's voice!
I can protect thee still.

Lady R. He lives, he lives:
For this, for this to Heaven eternal praise!
But sure I saw thee fall.

Doug. It was Glenalvon;
Just as my arm had mastered Randolph's sword,
The villain came behind me; but I slew him.

Lady R. Behind thee! ah! thou art wounded! Oh, my child,
How pale thou look'st! And shall I lose thee now?

Doug. Do not despair: I feel a little faintness,
I hope it will not last. [*Leans upon his sword.*

Lady R. There is no hope!
And we must part! The hand of death is on thee!
Oh! my beloved child! O Douglas, Douglas?
[*Douglas growing more and more faint.*

Doug. Too soon we part: I have not long been Douglas;
O destiny! hardly thou deal'st with me!
Clouded and hid, a stranger to myself,
In low and poor obscurity I've lived.

Lady R. Has Heaven preserved thee for an end like this!

Doug. Oh! had I fallen as my brave fathers fell,
Turning with fatal arm the tide of battle,
Like them I should have smiled and welcomed death:
But thus to perish by a villain's hand!
Cut off from nature's and from glory's course,
Which never mortal was so fond to run.

Lady R. Hear, justice, hear! stretch thy avenging arm! [*Douglas falls.*

Doug. Unknown I die; no tongue shall speak of me.
Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
May yet conjecture what I might have proved,
And think life only wanting to my fame:
But who shall comfort thee?

Lady R. Despair, despair!

Doug. Oh, had it pleased high Heaven to let me live
A little while!——my eyes, that gaze on thee,
Grow dim apace! my mother—O! my mother!
[*Dies.*

Enter Lord RANDOLPH *and* ANNA.

Lord R. Thy words, thy words of truth, have pierced my heart;
I am the stain of knighthood and of arms.
Oh! if my brave deliverer survives
The traitor's sword——

Anna. Alas! look there, my lord.

Lord R. The mother and her son! How curst I am!
Was I the cause? No: I was not the cause.
Yon matchless villain did seduce my soul
To frantic jealousy.

Anna. My lady lives:
The agony of grief hath but suppressed
Awhile her powers.

Lord R. But my deliverer's dead;
The world did once esteem lord Randolph well,
Sincere of heart, for spotless honour famed;
And, in my early days, glory I gained
Beneath the holy banner of the cross.
Now past the noon of life, shame comes upon me;
Reproach and infamy, and public hate,
Are near at hand: for all mankind will think
That Randolph basely stabbed Sir Malcolm's heir.

Lady R. [*recovering.*] Where am I now?—Still in this wretched world!
Grief cannot break a heart so hard as mine.
My youth was worn in anguish: but youth's strength,
With hope's assistance, bore the brunt of sorrow;
And trained me on to be the object now,
On which Omnipotence displays itself,
Making a spectacle, a tale of me,
To awe its vassal, man.

Lord R. Oh, misery!
Amidst thy raging grief I must proclaim
My innocence.

Lady R. Thy innocence!

Lord R. My guilt
Is innocence compared with what thou think'st it.

Lady R. Of thee I think not: what have I to do
With thee, or any thing? My son! my son!
My beautiful! my brave! how proud was I
Of thee and of thy valour! my fond heart
O'erflowed this day with transport, when I thought
Of growing old amidst a race of thine,
Who might make up to me their father's childhood,
And bear my brother's and my husband's name:
Now all my hopes are dead! A little while
Was I a wife! a mother not so long!
What am I now?—I know.—But I shall be
That only whilst I please; for such a son
And such a husband drive me to my fate.
[*Runs out.*

Lord R. Follow her, Anna: I myself would follow,

But in this rage she must abhor my presence.
[*Exit Anna.*

Enter Old NORVAL.

Old Nor. I heard the voice of woe: Heaven guard my child!
Lord R. Already is the idle gaping crowd,
The spiteful vulgar, come to gaze on Randolph.
Begone.
Old Nor. I fear thee not. I will not go.
Here I'll remain. I'm an accomplice, lord,
With thee in murder. Yes, my sins did help
To crush down to the ground this lovely plant.
Oh, noblest youth that ever yet was born!
Sweetest and best, gentlest and bravest spirit,
That ever blest the world! Wretch that I am,
Who saw that noble spirit swell and rise
Above the narrow limits that confined it,
Yet never was by all thy virtues won
To do thee justice, and reveal the secret,
Which, timely known, had raised thee far above
The villain's snare. Oh! I am punished now!
These are the hairs that should have strewed the ground,
And not the locks of Douglas.
[*Tears his hair, and throws himself upon the body of Douglas.*
Lord R. I know thee now: thy boldness I forgive:
My crest is fallen. For thee I will appoint
A place of rest, if grief will let thee rest.
I will reward, although I cannot punish.
Cursed, cursed Glenalvon! he escaped too well,
Though slain and baffled by the hand he hated.
Foaming with rage and fury to the last,
Cursing his conqueror, the felon died.

Enter ANNA.

Anna. My lord! My lord!
Lord R. Speak: I can bear of horror.
Anna. Horror, indeed!
Lord R. Matilda—
Anna. Is no more:
She ran, she flew like lightning up the hill,
Nor halted till the precipice she gained,
Beneath whose lowering top the river falls
Ingulphed in rifted rocks: thither she came,
As fearless as the eagle lights upon it,
And headlong down——
Lord R. 'Twas I, alas! 'twas I
That filled her breast with fury; drove her down
The precipice of death! Wretch that I am!
Anna. Oh, had you seen her last despairing look!
Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes
Down on the deep: then, lifting up her head
And her white hands to Heaven, seeming to say,
Why am I forced to this? she plunged herself
Into the empty air.
Lord R. I will not vent,
In vain complaints, the passion of my soul.
Peace in this world I never can enjoy.
These wounds the gratitude of Randolph gave;
They speak aloud. I am resolved. I'll go
Straight to the battle, where the man that makes
Me turn aside must threaten worse than death.
Thou, faithful to thy mistress, take this ring,
Full warrant of my power. Let every rite
With cost and pomp upon their funerals wait:
For Randolph hopes he never shall return.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ISABELLA;

OR,

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

ALTERED FROM

SOUTHERN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

COUNT BALDWIN, *father to Biron and Carlos.*
BIRON, *married to Isabella, supposed dead.*
CARLOS, *his younger brother.*
VILLEROY, *in love with Isabella, marries her.*
SAMPSON, *porter to count Baldwin.*
A Child of Isabella by Biron.
BELFORD, *a friend of Biron's.*
PEDRO, *a friend to Carlos.*

WOMEN.

ISABELLA, *married to Biron and Villeroy.*
Nurse to Biron.
Officers, Servants, Men, and Women.

Scene—Brussels.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before count* BALDWIN'S *house.*

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS.

Car. THIS constancy of yours will establish an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it would establish me with Isabella—

Car. Follow her, follow her: Troy town was won at last.

Vil. I have followed her these seven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes! Why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting-place; and, for aught you know, but one stage short of the possession of your mistress.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making than her's; and proceed rather from my wishes, than any encouragement she has given me.

Car. That I cannot tell: the sex is very various; there are no certain measures to be prescribed or followed, in making our approaches to the women. All that we have to do, I think, is to attempt them in the weakest part. Press them but hard, and they will all fall under the necessity of a surrender at last. That favour comes at once; and sometimes when we least expect it.

Vil. I shall be glad to find it so.

Car. You will find it so. Every place is to be taken, that is not to be relieved: she must comply.

Vil. I am going to visit her.

Car. What interest a brother-in-law can have with her, depend upon.

Vil. I know your interest, and I thank you.

Car. You are prevented; see, the mourner comes;

She weeps, as seven years were seven hours;
So fresh, unfading, is the memory
Of my poor brother's, Biron's, death:
I leave you to your opportunity. [*Exit Vil.*

Though I have taken care to root her from our house,
I would transplant her into Villeroy's——
There is an evil fate that waits upon her,
To which I wish him wedded—Only him:
His upstart family, with haughty brow,
(Though Villeroy and myself are seeming friends)
Looks down upon our house; his sister, too,
Whose hand I asked, and was with scorn refused,
Lives in my breast, and fires me to revenge.——
They bend this way——
Perhaps, at last, she seeks my father's doors;
They shall be shut, and he prepared to give
The beggar and her brat a cold reception.
That boy's an adder in my path—they come;
I'll stand apart, and watch their motions.
[*Retires.*

Enter VILLEROY, *with* ISABELLA *and her little son.*

Isa. Why do you follow me? you know I am
A bankrupt every way; too far engaged
Ever to make return: I own you have been
More than a brother to me, my friend;
And at a time when friends are found no more,
A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I must be always your friend.

Isa. I have known, and found you
Truly my friend; and would I could be yours;
But the unfortunate cannot be friends:
Fate watches the first motion of the soul,
To disappoint our wishes; if we pray
For blessings, they prove curses in the end,
To ruin all about us. Pray, be gone;
Take warning, and be happy.

Vil. Happiness!
There's none for me without you: Riches, name,
Health, fame, distinction, place, and quality,
Are the incumbrances of groaning life,
To make it but more tedious without you.
What serve the goods of fortune for? To raise
My hopes, that you at last will share them with me.
Long life itself, the universal prayer,
And Heaven's reward of well-deservers here,
Would prove a plague to me; to see you always,
And never see you mine! still to desire,
And never to enjoy!

Isa. I must not hear you.

Vil. Thus, at this awful distance, I have served
A seven years bondage—Do I call it bondage,
When I can never wish to be redeemed?
No, let me rather linger out a life
Of expectation, that you may be mine,
Than be restored to the indifference
Of seeing you, without this pleasing pain:
I've lost myself, and never would be found,
But in these arms.

Isa. Oh, I have heard all this!——
But must no more——the charmer is no more:
My buried husband rises in the face
Of my dear boy, and chides me for my stay:
Canst thou forgive me, child?

Child. Why, have you done a fault? You cry as if you had. Indeed now, I have done nothing to offend you: but if you kiss me, and look so very sad upon me, I shall cry too.

Isa. My little angel, no, you must not cry;
Sorrow will overtake thy steps too soon:
I should not hasten it.

Vil. What can I say!
The arguments that make against my hopes
Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more;
Those pious tears you hourly throw away
Upon the grave, have all their quickening charms,
And more engage my love, to make you mine:
When yet a virgin, free, and undisposed,
I loved, but saw you only with my eyes;
I could not reach the beauties of your soul:
I have since lived in contemplation,
And long experience of your growing goodness:
What then was passion, is my judgment now,
Through all the several stages of your life,
Confirmed and settled in adoring you.

Isa. Nay, then, I must be gone. If you are my friend,
If you regard my little interest,
No more of this; you see, I grant you all
That friendship will allow: be still my friend;
That's all I can receive, or have to give.
I am going to my father; he needs not an excuse
To use me ill: pray leave me to the trial.

Vil. I am only born to be what you would have me,
The creature of your power, and must obey;
In every thing obey you. I am going:
But all good fortune go along with you. [*Exit.*

Isa. I shall need all your wishes—— [*Knocks.*
Locked! and fast!
Where is the charity that used to stand,
In our forefathers' hospitable days,
At great men's doors, ready for our wants,
Like the good angel of the family,
With open arms taking the needy in,
To feed and clothe, to comfort and relieve them?
Now even their gates are shut against their poor.
[*She knocks again.*

Enter SAMPSON *to her.*

Samp. Well, what's to do now, I trow? You knock as loud as if you were invited; and that is more than I heard of; but I can tell you, you may look twice about you for a welcome in a great man's family, before you find it, unless you bring it along with you.

Isa. I hope I bring my welcome along with me: Is your lord at home? Count Baldwin lives here still?

Samp. Ay, ay, Count Baldwin does live here; and I am his porter: but what's that to the purpose, good woman, of my lord's being at home?

Isa. Why, dont you know me, friend?

Samp. Not I, not I, mistress; I may have seen

you before, or so; but men of employment must forget their acquaintance; especially such as we are never to be the better for.

[*Going to shut the door, nurse enters, having overheard him.*

Nurse. Handsomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampson: do you know who you prate to?

Isa. I am glad you know me, nurse.

Nurse. Marry, Heaven forbid, madam, that I should ever forget you, or my little jewel: pray, go in—[*Isabella goes in with her child.*] Now my blessing go along with you wherever you go, or whatever you are about. Fie, Sampson, how couldst thou be such a Saracen! A Turk would have been a better Christian, than to have done so barbarously by a good lady.

Samp. Why look you, nurse, I know you of old: by your good-will you would have a finger in every body's pie: but mark the end of it; if I am called to account about it, I know what I have to say.

Nurse. Marry come up here! say your pleasure, and spare not. Refuse his eldest son's widow, and poor child, the comfort of seeing him? She does not trouble him so often.

Samp. Not that I am against it, nurse: but we are but servants, you know: we must have no likings, but our lord's; and must do as we are ordered.

Nurse. Nay, that's true, Sampson.

Samp. Besides, what I did was all for the best: I have no ill-will to the young lady, as a body may say, upon my own account; only that I hear she is poor; and indeed I naturally hate your decayed gentry: they expect as much waiting upon as when they had money in their pockets, and were able to consider us for the trouble.

Nurse. Why, that is a grievance indeed in great families, where the gifts, at good times, are better than the wages. It would do well to be reformed.

Samp. But what is the business, nurse? You have been in the family before I came into the world: what is the reason, pray, that this daughter-in-law, who has so good a report in every body's mouth, is so little set by, by my lord?

Nurse. Why, I tell you, Sampson, more or less: I will tell the truth, that's my way, you know, without adding or diminishing.

Samp. Ay, marry, nurse.

Nurse. My lord's eldest son, Biron by name, the son of his bosom, and the son that he would have loved best, if he had as many as king Pyramus of Troy——

Samp. How! King Pyramus of Troy! Why, how many had he?

Nurse. Why, the ballad sings he had fifty sons: but no matter for that. This Biron, as I was saying, was a lovely sweet gentleman, and, indeed, nobody could blame his father for loving him: he was a son for the king of Spain; God bless him, for I was his nurse. But now I come to the point, Sampson; this Biron, without asking the advice of his friends, hand over head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as I may say, wilfully marries Isabella.

Samp. How, wilfully! he should have had her consent, methinks.

Nurse. No, wilfully marries her; and, which was worse, after she had settled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which she broke out of to run away with him. They say they had the church's forgiveness, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Samp. Why, in good truth, these nunneries I see no good they do. I think the young lady was in the right to run away from a nunnery: and I think our young master was not in the wrong but in marrying without a portion.

Nurse. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampson: upon this, my old lord would never see him; disinherited him; took his younger brother, Carlos, into favour, whom he never cared for before; and at last forced Biron to go to the siege of Candy, where he was killed.

Samp. Alack-a-day, poor gentleman!

Nurse. For which my old lord hates her, as if she had been the cause of his going thither.

Samp. Alas, alas, poor lady! she has suffered for it: she has lived a great while a widow.

Nurse. A great while indeed, for a young woman, Sampson.

Samp. Gad so! here they come; I will not venture to be seen.

Enter COUNT BALDWIN, *followed by* ISABELLA *and her child.*

C. Bald. Whoever of your friends directed you,
Misguided and abused you—there's your way;
I can afford to shew you out again.
What could you expect from me?

Isa. Oh, I have nothing to expect on earth!
But misery is very apt to talk:
I thought I might be heard.

C. Bald. What can you say?
Is there in eloquence, can there be in words
A recompensing power, a remedy,
A reparation of the injuries,
The great calamities, that you have brought
On me and mine? You have destroyed those hopes
I fondly raised, through my declining life,
To rest my age upon; and most undone me.

Isa. I have undone myself too.

C. Bald. Speak it again!
Say still you are undone, and I will hear you,
With pleasure hear you,

Isa. Would my ruin please you?

C. Bald. Beyond all other pleasures.

Isa. Then you are pleased——for I am most undone.

C. Bald. I prayed but for revenge, and Heaven has heard,
And sent it to my wishes: these grey hairs
Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave,
Which you have dug for me, without the thought,
The thought of leaving you more wretched here.
Isa. Indeed I am most wretched——When I lost
My husband——
C. Bald. Would he had never been,
Or never had been yours!
Isa. I then believed
The measure of my sorrow then was full:
But every moment of my growing days
Makes room for woes, and adds them to the sum.
I lost with Biron all the joys of life:
But now its last supporting means are gone.
All the kind helps that Heaven in pity raised,
In charitable pity to our wants,
At last have left us: now bereft of all,
But this last trial of a cruel father,
To save us both from sinking. Oh, my child!
Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart!
Let the resemblance of a once-loved son
Speak in this little one, who never wronged you,
And plead the fatherless and widow's cause!
Oh, if you ever hope to be forgiven,
As you will need to be forgiven too,
Forget our faults, that Heaven may pardon yours!
C. Bald. How dare you mention Heaven! Call to mind
Your perjured vows; your plighted, broken faith
To Heaven, and all things holy: were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, professed and sworn,
A votary for ever? Can you think
The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
Is thunder proof?
Isa. There, there, began my woes.
Let women all take warning at my fate;
Never resolve, or think they can be safe,
Within the reach and tongue of tempting men.
Oh! had I never seen my Biron's face,
Had he not tempted me, I had not fallen,
But still continued innocent and free
Of a bad world, which only he had power
To reconcile, and make me try again.
C. Bald. Your own inconstancy, your graceless thoughts,
Debauched and reconciled you to the world:
He had no hand to bring you back again,
But what you gave him. Circe, you prevailed
Upon his honest mind, transforming him
From virtue, and himself, into what shapes
You had occasion for; and what he did
Was first inspired by you. A cloister was
Too narrow for the work you had in hand:
Your business was more general; the whole world
To be the scene: therefore you spread your charms
To catch his soul, to be the instrument,
The wicked instrument, of your cursed flight.
Not that you valued him; for any one,
Who could have served the turn, had been as welcome.
Isa. Oh! I have sins to Heaven, but none to him.
C. Bald. Had my wretched son
Married a beggar's bastard; taken her
Out of her rags, and made her of my blood,
The mischief might have ceased, and ended there.
But bringing you into a family,
Entails a curse upon the name and house
That takes you in: the only part of me
That did receive you, perished for his crime.
'Tis a defiance to offended Heaven
Barely to pity you: your sins pursue you:
The heaviest judgments that can fall upon you,
Are your just lot, and but prepare your doom:
Expect them, and despair——Sirrah, rogue,
How durst thou disobey me! [*To the Porter.*
Isa. Not for myself——for I am past the hopes
Of being heard——but for this innocent——
And then I never will disturb you more.
C. Bald. I almost pity the unhappy child:
But being yours——
Isa. Look on him as your son's;
And let his part in him answer for mine.
Oh, save, defend him, save him from the wrongs,
That fall upon the poor!
C. Bald. It touches me——
And I will save him——But to keep him safe,
Never come near him more.
Isa. What! take him from me!
No, we must never part: 'tis the last hold
Of comfort I have left; and, when he fails,
All goes along with him: Oh! could you be
The tyrant to divorce life from my life?
I live but in my child.
No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
Rather than always lose him.
C. Bald. Then have your child, and feed him with your prayers.
You, rascal, slave, what do I keep you for?
How came this woman in?
Samp. Why, indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell her, before, my thoughts upon the matter——
C. Bald. Did you so, sir? Now, then, tell her mine;
Tell her, I sent you to her.
[*Thrusts him towards her.*
Samp. Good my lord, what I did was in perfect obedience to the old nurse there. I told her what it would come to.
C. Bald. What! this was a plot upon me.—And you, too, beldam, were you in the conspiracy? Begone, go altogether: I have provided you an equipage, now set up when you please. She's

old enough to do your service; I have none for her. The wide world lies before you: begone! take any road but this to beg or starve in—I shall be glad to hear of you: but never, never see me more——

[*He drives them off before him.*

Isa. Then Heaven have mercy on me!

[*Exit with her child, followed by Sampson and nurse.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS, *meeting.*

Vil. My friend, I fear to ask——but Isabella——
The lovely widow's tears, her orphan's cries,
Thy father must feel for them——No, I read,
I read their cold reception in thine eyes——
Thou pitiest them—though Baldwin—but I spare him
For Carlos' sake; thou art no son of his.
There needs not this to endear thee more to me.
[*Embrace.*

Car. My Villeroy, the fatherless, the widow,
Are terms not understood within these gates—
You must forgive him, sir; he thinks this woman
Is Birou's fate, that hurried him to death——
I must not think on it, lest my friendship stagger.
My friend's, my sister's mutual advantage
Have reconciled my bosom to its task.

Vil. Advantage! think not I intend to raise
An interest from Isabella's wrongs.
Your father may have interested ends
In her undoing; but my heart has none:
Her happiness must be my interest,
And that I would restore.

Car. Why so I mean.
These hardships that my father lays upon her,
I am sorry for; and I wish I could prevent;
But he will have his way.
Since there's no hope from her prosperity, her change of fortune may alter the condition of her thoughts, and make for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.

Car. Try her again. Women commonly love according to the circumstances they are in.

Vil. Common women may.

Car. Since you are not accessary to the injustice, you may be persuaded to take the advantage of other people's crimes.

Vil. I must despise all those advantages,
That indirectly can advance my love.
No, though I live but in the hopes of her,
And languish for the enjoyment of those hopes;
I'd rather pine in a consuming want
Of what I wish, than have the blessing mine,
From any reason but consenting love.
Oh! let me never have it to remember,
I could betray her coldly to comply!
When a clear generous choice bestows her on me,
I know to value the unequalled gift:
I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way; remember what I offered came from a friend.

Vil. I understand it so. I'll serve her for herself, without the thought of a reward. [*Exit.*

Car. Agree that point between you. If you marry her any way, you do my business.
I know him—What his generous soul intends
Ripens my plots—I'll first to Isabella.——
I must keep up appearances with her too. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *Isabella's house.*

Enter ISABELLA *and Nurse*: ISABELLA's *little son at play upon the floor.*

Isa. Sooner, or later, all things pass away,
And are no more. The beggar and the king,
With equal steps, tread forward to their end:
The reconciling grave swallows distinction first, that made us foes.
Though they appear of different natures now,
They meet at last;
Then all alike lie down in peace together.
When will that hour of peace arrive for me?
In heaven I shall find it——not in heaven,
If my old tyrant father can dispose
Of things above—but, there, his interest
May be poor as mine, and want a friend
As much as I do here. [*Weeping.*

Nurse. Good madam, be comforted.

Isa. Do I deserve to be this outcast wretch;
Abandoned thus, and lost? But 'tis my lot,
The will of Heaven, and I must not complain:
I will not for myself: let me bear all
The violence of your wrath; but spare my child!
Let not my sins be visited on him!
They are, they must; a general ruin falls
On every thing about me: thou art lost,
Poor nurse, by being near me.

Nurse. I can work, or beg, to do you service.

Isa. Could I forget
What I have been, I might the better bear
What I am destined to: I am not the first
That have been wretched: but to think how much
I have been happier! Wild hurrying thoughts
Start every way from my distracted soul,
To find out hope, and only meet despair.
What answer have I?

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Why truly, very little to the purpose: like a Jew as he is, he says you have had more already than the jewels are worth: he wishes

you would rather think of redeeming them, than expect any more money upon them.

[*Exit Sampson.*

Isa. 'Tis very well——
So: poverty at home, and debts abroad!
My present fortune bad; my hopes yet worse!
What will become of me?
This ring is all I have left of value now:
'Twas given me by my husband: his first gift
Upon our marriage: I have always kept it,
With my best care, the treasure next my life:
And now but part with it to support life,
Which only can be dearer. Take it, nurse;
'Twill stop the cries of hunger for a time,
Provide us bread, and bring a short reprieve,
To put off the bad day of beggary,
That will come on too soon. Take care of it:
Manage it as the last remaining friend
That would relieve us. [*Exit Nurse.*] Heaven can only tell
Where we shall find another——My dear boy!
The labour of his birth was lighter to me
Than of my fondness now; my fears for him
Are worse, than in that hour of hovering death,
They could be for myself——He minds me not,
His little sports have taken up his thoughts:
Oh, may they never feel the pangs of mine!
Thinking will make me mad: why must I think,
When no thought brings me comfort?

Nurse returns.

Nurse. Oh, madam! you are utterly ruined and undone; your creditors of all kinds are come in upon you: they have mustered up a regiment of rogues, that are come to plunder your house, and seize upon all you have in the world; they are below. What will you do, madam?

Isa. Do! nothing; no, for I am born to suffer.

Enter CARLOS *to her.*

Car. Oh, sister! can I call you by that name,
And be the son of this inhuman man,
Inveterate to your ruin? Do not think
I am a-kin to his barbarity:
I must abhor my father's usage of you;
And from my bleeding honest heart must pity,
Pity your lost condition. Can you think
Of any way that I may serve you in?
But what enrages most my sense of grief,
Ay sorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father,
Fore-knowing well the storm that was to fall,
Has ordered me not to appear for you.

Isa. I thank your pity; my poor husband fell
For disobeying him; do not you stay
To venture his displeasure too for me.

Car. You must resolve on something——

[*Exit.*

Isa. Let my fate
Determine for me; I shall be prepared.
The worst that can befall me, is to die: [*A noise.*
When once it comes to that, it matters not
Which way 'tis brought about: whether I starve,
Or hang, or drown, the end is still the same;
Plagues, poison, famine, are but several names
Of the same thing, and all conclude in death.
But sudden death! Oh, for a sudden death,
To cheat my persecutors of their hopes,
The expected pleasure of beholding me
Long in my pains, lingering in misery.
It will not be, that is denied me too.
Hark! they are coming; let the torrent roar!
It can but overwhelm me in its fall;
And life and death are now alike to me.

[*Exeunt, the nurse leading the child.*

SCENE III.—*Opens, and shews* CARLOS *and* VILLEROY *with the officers.*

Vil. No farther violence——
The debt in all is but four thousand crowns:
Were it ten times the sum, I think you know
My fortune very well can answer it.
You have my word for this: I will see you paid.

Offi. That's as much as we can desire: so we have the money, no matter whence it comes.

Vil. To-morrow you shall have it.

Car. Thus far all's well——

Enter ISABELLA, *and nurse, with the child.*

And now my sister comes to crown the work.

[*Aside.*

Isa. Where are the raving blood-hounds, that pursue
In a full cry, gaping to swallow me?
I meet your rage, and come to be devoured:
Say, which way are you to dispose of me?
To dungeons, darkness, death!

Car. Have patience.

Isa. Patience!

Offi. You will excuse us, we are but in our office:
Debts must be paid.

Isa. My death will pay you all. [*Distractedly.*

Offi. While there is law to be had, people will have their own.

Vil. 'Tis very fit they should; but pray be gone.
To-morrow certainly—— [*Exeunt officers.*

Isa. What of to-morrow?
Am I then the sport,
The game of fortune, and her laughing fools?
The common spectacle, to be exposed
From day to day, and baited for the mirth
Of the lewd rabble? Must I be reserved
For fresh afflictions?

Vil. For long happiness
Of life, I hope.

Isa. There is no hope for me.
The load glows light, when we resolve to bear:
I am ready for my trial.

Car. Pray be calm,
And know your friends.

Isa. My friends! Have I a friend?

Car. A faithful friend; in your extremest need,
Villeroy came in to save you——
Isa. Save me! How?
Car. By satisfying all your creditors.
Isa. Which way? For what?
Vil. Let me be understood,
And then condemn me: you have given me leave
To be your friend; and in that only name
I now appear before you. I could wish
There had been no occasion for a friend,
Because I know you hate to be obliged;
And still more loth to be obliged by me.
Isa. 'Twas that I would avoid—— [*Aside.*
Vil. I am most unhappy that my services
Can be suspected to design upon you;
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs; to shew myself at last,
What I have long professed to be, your friend:
Allow me that; and to convince you more
That I intend only your interest,
Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any, that can please you)
I will tear myself for ever from my hopes,
Stifle this flaming passion in my soul,
That has so long broke out to trouble you,
And mention my unlucky love no more.
Isa. This generosity will ruin me. [*Aside.*
Vil. Nay, if the blessing of my looking on you
Disturbs your peace, I will do all I can
To keep away, and never see you more.
Car. You must not go.
Vil. Could Isabella speak
Those few short words, I should be rooted here,
And never move but upon her commands.
Car. Speak to him, sister; do not throw away
A fortune that invites you to be happy.
In your extremity he begs your love;
And has deserved it nobly. Think upon
Your lost condition, helpless and alone.
Though now you have a friend, the time must come
That you will want one; him you may secure
To be a friend, a father, husband to you.
Isa. A husband!
Car. You have discharged your duty to the dead,
And to the living; 'tis a wilfulness
Not to give way to your necessities,
That force you to this marriage.
Nurse. What must become of this poor innocence? [*To the child.*
Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,
And rear him up to virtue: you must bear
The future blame, and answer to the world,
When you refuse the easy honest means
Of taking care of him.
Nurse. Of him and me,
And every one that must depend upon you:
Unless you please now to provide for us,
We must all perish.
Car. Nor would I press you——
Isa. Do not think I need
Your reasons, to confirm my gratitude;
I have a soul that's truly sensible
Of your great worth, and busy to contrive,
[*To Villeroy.*
If possible, to make you a return.
Vil. Oh! easily possible!
Isa. It cannot be your way: my pleasures are
Buried, and cold in my dead husband's grave;
And I should wrong the truth, myself, and you,
To say that I can ever love again.
I owe this declaration to myself:
But, as a proof that I owe all to you,
If, after what I have said, you can resolve
To think me worth your love——Where am I going?
You cannot think it; 'tis impossible.
Vil. Impossible!
Isa. You should not ask me now, nor should I grant;
I am so much obliged, that to consent
Would want a name to recommend the gift:
'Twould show me poor, indebted, and compelled,
Designing, mercenary; and I know
You would not wish to think I could be bought.
Vil. Be bought! where is the price that can pretend
To bargain for you! Not in fortune's power.
The joys of Heaven and love must be bestowed:
They are not to be sold, and cannot be deserved.
Isa. Some other time I will hear you on this subject.
Vil. Nay, then, there is no time so fit for me.
[*Following her.*
Since you consent to hear me, hear me now;
That you may grant: you are above
The little forms which circumscribe your sex;
We differ but in time, let that be mine.
Isa. You think fit
To get the better of me, and you shall;
Since you will have it so——I will be yours.
Vil. I take you at your word.
Isa. I give you all——
My hand; and would I had a heart to give!
But if it ever can return again,
'Tis wholly yours.
Vil. Oh, ecstacy of joy!
Leave that to me. If all my services,
If prosperous days, and kind indulging nights,
If all that man can fondly say or do,
Can beget love, love shall be born again.
Oh, Carlos! now my friend, and brother too!
And, nurse, I have eternal thanks for thee.
Send for the priest——
[*Nurse goes out in haste*
This night you must be mine.
Let me command in this, and all my life
Shall be devoted to you.
Isa. On your word,
Never to press me to put off these weeds,
Which best become my melancholy thoughts,
You shall command me,
Vil. Witness Heaven and earth

Against my soul, when I do any thing
To give you a disquiet.
Car. I long to wish you joy.
Vil. You'll be a witness of my happiness?
Car. For once I'll be my sister's father,
And give her to you.
Vil. Next my Isabella,
Be near my heart: I am for ever yours. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Count* BALDWIN'S *house.*

Enter COUNT BALDWIN *and* CARLOS.

C. Bald. MARRIED to Villeroy, say'st thou?
Car. Yes, my lord.
Last night the priest performed his holy office,
And made them one.
C. Bald. Misfortune join them!
And may her violated vows pull down
A lasting curse, a constancy of sorrow,
On both their heads!—I have not yet forgot
Thy slighted passion, the refused alliance;
But having her, we are revenged at full.
Heaven will pursue her still, and Villeroy
Share the judgments she calls down.
Car. Soon he'll hate her,
Though warm and violent in his raptures now.
When full enjoyment palls his sickened sense,
And reason, with satiety, returns,
Her cold constrained acceptance of his hand
Will gall his pride, which (though of late o'erpowered
By stronger passions) will, as they grow weak,
Rise in full force, and pour its vengeance on her.
C. Bald. Now, Carlos, take example to thy aid!
Let Biron's disobedience, and the curse
He took into his bosom, prove a warning,
A monitor to thee, to keep thy duty
Firm and unshaken.
Car. May those rankling wounds,
Which Biron's disobedience gave my father,
Be healed by me!
C. Bald. With tears I thank thee, Carlos——
And may'st thou ever feel those inward joys,
Thy duty gives thy father—but, my son,
We must not let resentment choak our justice;
Tis fit that Villeroy know he has no claim
From me, in right of Isabella——Biron
Whose name brings tears), when wedded to this woman,
By me abandoned, sunk the little fortune
His uncle left, in vanity and fondness:
am possest of those your brother's papers,
Which now are Villeroy's; and should aught remain,
n justice it is his; from me to him
'ou shall convey them——follow me, and take them. [*Exit C. Baldwin.*
Car. Yes, I will take them; but ere I part with them,
will be sure my interest will not suffer
y these his high, refined, fantastic notions
f equity and right.—What a paradox
Is man! My father here, who boasts his honour,
And even but now was warm in praise of justice,
Can steel his heart against the widow's tears,
And infant's wants; the widow and the infant
Of Biron; of his son, his favourite son.
'Tis ever thus weak minds, who court opinion,
And dead to virtuous feeling, hide their wants
In pompous affectation.—Now to Villeroy——
Ere this his friends, for he is much beloved,
Crowd to his house, and with their nuptial songs
Awake the wedded pair: I'll join the throng,
And in my face, at least, bear joy and friendship.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A hall in* VILLEROY'S *house. A band of music, with the friends of* VILLEROY.

Enter a Servant.

1*st F.* Where's your master, my good friend?
Ser. Within, sir,
Preparing for the welcome of his friends.
1*st F.* Acquaint him we are here: yet stay,
The voice of music gently shall surprise him,
And breathe our salutations to his ear.
Strike up the strain to Villeroy's happiness,
To Isabella's—But he's here already.

Enter VILLEROY.

Vil. My friends, let me embrace you:
Welcome all——
What means this preparation? [*Seeing the music.*
1*st F.* A slight token
Of our best wishes for your growing happiness—
You must permit our friendship——
Vil. You oblige me——
1*st F.* But your lovely bride,
That wonder of her sex, she must appear,
And add new brightness to this happy morning.
Vil. She is not yet prepared; and let her will,
My worthiest friend, determine her behaviour;
To win, and not to force, her disposition,
Has been my seven years task. She will, anon,
Speak welcome to you all. The music stays.
[*Villeroy and his Friends seat themselves.*

EPITHALAMIUM.

AIR.

Woman. *Let all, let all be gay,*
Begin the rapturous lay;
Let mirth, let mirth and joy,
Each happy hour employ
Of this fair bridal day.

Man. *Ye love-winged hours, your flight,*
Your downy flight prepare,
Bring every soft delight
To soothe the brave and fair.
Hail, happy pair, thus in each other blest;
Be ever free from care, of every joy possessed!

Vil. I thank you for this proof of your affection:
I am so much transported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My Isabella!—but possessing her,
Who would not lose himself?——You'll pardon me——
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my soul,
But the kind wishes of my loving friends——
But our collation waits: where's Carlos now?
Methinks I am but half myself without him.

2d F. This is wonderful! Married a night and a day, and yet in raptures!

Vil. Oh! when you all get wives, and such as mine
(If such another woman can be found),
You will rave too, dote on the dear content,
And prattle in their praise out of all bounds.
I cannot speak my bliss! 'Tis in my head,
'Tis in my heart, and takes up all my soul——
The labour of my fancy. You'll pardon me;
About some twelve months hence I may begin
To speak plain sense—Walk in, and honour me.

Enter ISABELLA.

My Isabella! Oh, the joy of my heart,
That I have leave, at last, to call you mine!
When I give up that title to the charms
Of any other wish, be nothing mine:
But let me look upon you, view you well.
This is a welcome gallantry indeed!
I durst not ask, but it was kind to grant,
Just at this time; dispensing with your dress
Upon this second day to greet our friends.

Isa. Black might be ominous;
I would not bring ill luck along with me.

Vil. Oh! if your melancholy thoughts could change
With shifting of your dress—Time has done cures
Incredible this way, and may again.

Isa. I could have wished, if you had thought it fit,
Our marriage had not been so public.

Vil. Do not you grudge me my excess of love;
That was a cause it could not be concealed:
Besides, it would injure the opinion
I have of my good fortune, having you,
And lessen it in other peoples' thoughts,
Busy, on such occasions, to enquire,
Had it been private.

Isa. I have no more to say.

Enter CARLOS.

Vil. My Carlos too, who came in to the support
Of our bad fortune, has an honest right,
In better times, to share the good with us.

Car. I come to claim that right, to share your joy;
To wish you joy; and find it in myself:
For a friend's happiness reflects a warmth,
A kindly comfort, into every heart
That is not envious.

Vil. He must be a friend,
Who is not envious of a happiness
So absolute as mine; but if you are
(As I have reason to believe you are)
Concerned for my well-being, there's the cause;
Thank her for what I am, and what must be.
[*Music flourish.*
I see you mean a second entertainment.
My dearest Isabella, you must hear
The raptures of my friends; from thee they spring;
Thy virtues have diffused themselves around,
And made them all as happy as myself.

Isa. I feel their favours with a grateful heart,
And willingly comply.

RECITATIVE.

Take the gifts the gods intend ye;
Grateful meet the proffered joy:
Truth and honour shall attend ye;
Charms that ne'er can change or cloy.

DUETTO.

Man. *Oh, the raptures of possessing,*
Taking beauty to thy arms!
Woman. *Oh, the joy, the lasting blessing,*
When with virtue beauty charms!
Man. *Purer flames shall gently warm ye;*
Woman. *Love and honour both shall charm thee.*
Both. *Oh, the raptures of, &c. &c.*

CHORUS.

Far from hence be care and strife,
Far the pang that tortures life:
May the circling minutes prove
One sweet round of peace and love!

Car. 'Tis fine, indeed!
You'll take my advice another time, sister.

Vil. What have you done? A rising smile
Stole from her thoughts, just red'ning on her cheek,
And you have dashed it.

Car. I'm sorry for it.

Vil. My friends, you will forgive me, when I own,
I must prefer her peace to all the world.
Come, Isabella, let us lead the way:
Within we'll speak our welcome to our friends,
And crown the happy festival with joy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A room.*

Enter SAMPSON *and nurse.*

Samp. Ay, marry, nurse, here's a master indeed! He will double our wages for us! If he

comes on as fast with my lady, as he does with his servants, we are all in the way to be well pleased.

Nurse. He is in a rare humour; if she be in as good a one———

Samp. If she be, marry, we may even say, they have begot it upon one another.

Nurse. Well; why do not you go back again to your old count? You thought your throat cut, I warrant you, to be turned out of a nobleman's service.

Samp. For the future, I will never serve in a house where the master or mistress of it lie single: they are out of humour with every body when they are not pleased themselves. Now, this matrimony makes every thing go well. There's mirth and money stirring about, when those matters go as they should do.

Nurse. Indeed, this matrimony, Sampson——

Samp. Ah, nurse! this matrimony is a very good thing——but, what, now my lady is married, I hope we shall have company come to the house: there's something always coming from one gentleman or other upon those occasions, if my lady loves company. This feasting looks well, Nurse.

Nurse. Odso, my master! we must not be seen. [*Exeunt.*

Enter VILLEROY *with a letter, and* ISABELLA.

Vil. I must away this moment—see his letter,
Signed by himself: alas! he could no more;
My brother's desperate, and cannot die
In peace, but in my arms.
Isa. So suddenly!
Vil. Suddenly taken, on the road to Brussels;
To do us honour, love; unfortunate!
Thus to be torn from thee, and all those charms,
Though cold to me and dead.
Isa. I'm sorry for the cause.
Vil. Oh! could I think,
Could I persuade myself that your concern
For me, or for my absence, were the spring,
The fountain of these melancholy thoughts,
My heart would dance, spite of the sad occasion,
And be a gay companion in my journey;
But———

Enter CARLOS *from supper.*

My good Carlos, why have you left my friends?
Car. They are departed home.
They saw some sudden melancholy news
Had stolen the lively colour from your cheek——
You had withdrawn, the bride, alarmed, had followed:
Mere ceremony had been constraint; and this
Good-natured rudeness——
Vil. Was the more obliging.
There, Carlos, is the cause. [*Gives the letter.*
Car. Unlucky accident!
The Archbishop of Malins, your worthy brother—
With him to-night! Sister, will you permit it?
Vil. It must be so.
Isa. You hear it must be so.
Vil. Oh, that it must!
Car. To leave your bride so soon!
Vil. But having the possession of my love,
I am the better able to support
My absence, in the hopes of my return.
Car. Your stay will be but short?
Vil. It will seem long!
The longer that my Isabella sighs:
I shall be jealous of this rival, grief,
That you indulge and fondle in my absence.
It takes so full possession of thy heart,
There is not room enough for mighty love.

Enter Servant, and bows.

My horses wait: farewell, my love! You, Carlos,
Will act a brother's part, 'till I return,
And be the guardian here. All, all I have,
That's dear to me, I give up to your care.
Car. And I receive her as a friend and brother.
Vil. Nay, stir not, love! for the night air is cold,
And the dews fall—Here be our end of parting;
Carlos will see me to my horse.
[*Exit with Carlos.*
Isa. Oh, may thy brother better all thy hopes!
Adieu.
A sudden melancholy bakes my blood!
Forgive me, Villeroy——I do not find
That cheerful gratitude thy service asks:
Yet, if I know my heart, and sure I do,
'Tis not averse from honest obligation.
I'll to my chamber, and to bed; my mind,
My harassed mind, is weary. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter BIRON *and* BELFORD, *just arrived.*

Bir. THE longest day will have an end; we are got home at last.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty; and liberty is home wherever we go; though mine lies most in England.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours: for what I can command in Brussels, you shall find your own. I have a father here, who, perhaps, after seven years absence, and costing him nothing in my travels, may be glad to see me. You know my story—How does my disguise become me?

Bel. Just as you would have it; 'tis natural, and will conceal you.

Bir. To-morrow you shall be sure to find me here, as early as you please. This is the house; you have observed the street.

Bel. I warrant you; I have not many visits to make before I come to you.

Bir. To-night I have some affairs that will oblige me to be in private.

Bel. A good bed is the privatest affair that I desire to be engaged in to-night; your directions will carry me to my lodgings. [*Exit.*

Bir. Good night, my friend. [*Knocks.*
The long expected moment is arrived!
And if all here is well, my past sorrows
Will only heighten my excess of joy;
And nothing will remain to wish or hope for!
[*Knocks again.*

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Who's there! What would you have?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend?

Samp. Why, truly, friend, it is my employment to answer impertinent questions: but, for my lady's being at home, or no, that's just as my lady pleases.

Bir. But how shall I know whether it pleases her or no?

Samp. Why, if you will take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again; she never pleases to see any body at this time of night that she does not know; and by your dress and appearance I am sure you must be a stranger to her.

Bir. But I have business; and you don't know how that may please her.

Samp. Nay, if you have business, she is the best judge whether your business will please her or no; therefore I will proceed in my office, and know of my lady whether or no she is pleased to be at home, or no—— [*Going.*

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Who's that you are so busy withal? Methinks, you might have found out an answer in fewer words; but, Sampson, you love to hear yourself prate sometimes, as well as your betters that I must say for you. Let me come to him. Who would you speak with, stranger?

Bir. With you, mistress, if you could help me to speak to your lady.

Nurse. Yes, sir, I can help you in a civil way: but can nobody do your business but my lady?

Bir. Not so well; but if you carry her this ring, she will know my business better.

Nurse. There's no love-letter in it, I hope; you look like a civil gentleman. In an honest way, I may bring you an answer. [*Exit.*

Bir. My old nurse, only a little older! They say the tongue grows always: mercy on me! then hers is seven years longer since I left her. Yet there's something in these servants' folly pleases me; the cautious conduct of the family appears, and speaks in their impertinence. Well, mistress——

Nurse returns.

Nurse. I have delivered your ring, sir. Pray Heaven you bring no bad news along with you!

Bir. Quite the contrary, I hope.

Nurse. Nay, I hope so too; but my lady was very much surprised when I gave it her. Sir, I am but a servant, as a body may say; but if you walk in, that I may shut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours, I can shew you into the parlour, and help you to an answer, perhaps as soon as those that are wiser. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A chamber.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. I have heard of witches, magic spells, and charms,
That have made nature start from her old course:
The sun has been eclipsed, the moon drawn down
From her career, still paler, and subdued
To the abuses of this under world!
Now, I believe all possible. This ring,
This little ring, with necromantic force,
Has raised the ghost of pleasure to my fears:
Conjured the sense of honour, and of love,
Into such shapes, they fright me from myself!
I dare not think of them—
I'll call you when I want you. [*Servant goes out.*

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam, the gentleman's below.

Isa. I had forgot, pray let me speak with him. [*Exit Nurse.*
This ring was the first present of my love
To Biron, my first husband; I must blush
To think I have a second. Biron died
(Still to my loss) at Candy; there's my hope.

Oh, do I live to hope that he died there!
It must be so: he's dead, and this ring left
By his last breath to some known faithful friend,
To bring me back again;
[*Biron introduced—Nurse retires.*
That's all I have to trust to—
My fears were woman's—I have viewed him all:
And let me, let me say it to myself,
I live again, and rise but from his tomb.
Bir. Have you forgot me quite?
Isa. Forgot you!
Bir. Then farewell my disguise, and my misfortunes!
My Isabella!
[*He goes to her; she shrieks, and falls in a swoon.*]
Isa. Ha!
Bir. Oh! come again!
Thy Biron summons thee to life and love;
Once I had charms to wake thee:
Thy once loved, ever-loving husband calls—
Thy Biron speaks to thee.
Isa. My husband! Biron?
Bir. Excess of love and joy, for my return,
Has overpowered her. I was to blame
To take thy sex's softness unprepared:
But sinking thus, thus dying in my arms,
This ecstacy has made my welcome more
Than words could say: words may be counterfeit,
False-coined, and current only from the tongue,
Without the mind; but passion's in the soul,
And always speaks the heart.
Isa. Where have I been! Why do you keep him from me?
I know his voice: my life upon the wing,
Here's the soft lure that brings me back again;
'Tis he himself, my Biron, the dear man!
My true-loved husband! Do I hold you fast,
Never to part again? Can I believe it?
Nothing but you could work so great a change;
There's more than life itself in dying here.
If I must fall, death's welcome in these arms.
Bir. Live ever in these arms!
Isa. But pardon me,
Excuse the wild disorder of my soul:
The joy, the strange surprising joy of seeing you,
Of seeing you again, distracted me——
Bir. Thou everlasting goodness!
Isa. Answer me:
What hand of Providence has brought you back
To your own home again? O, satisfy
The impatience of my heart: I long to know
The story of your sufferings. You would think
Your pleasures sufferings, so long removed
From Isabella's love. But tell me all,
For every thought confounds me.
Bir. My best life! at leisure, all.
Isa. We thought you dead; killed at the siege of Candy.
Bir. There I fell among the dead;
But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,
I was preserved but to be made a slave:
I often writ to my hard father, but never had
An answer; I writ to thee too——
Isa. What a world of woe
Had been prevented but in hearing from you!
Bir. Alas! thou couldst not help me!
Isa. You do not know how much I could have done;
At least, I'm sure I could have suffered all:
I would have sold myself to slavery,
Without redemption; given up my child,
The dearest part of me, to basest wants——
Bir. My little boy!
Isa. My life, but to have heard
You were alive—which now, too late, I find.
[*Aside.*
Bir. No more, my love. Complaining of the past,
We lose the present joy. 'Tis over price
Of all my pains, that thus we meet again——
I have a thousand things to say to thee——
Isa. Would I were past the hearing! [*Aside.*
Bir. How does my child, my boy, my father too?
I hear he's living still.
Isa. Well both, both well;
And may he prove a father to your hopes,
Though we have found him none!
Bir. Come, no more tears.
Isa. Seven long years of sorrow for your loss,
Have mourned with me——
Bir. And all my days behind
Shall be employed in a kind recompence
For thy afflictions.—Can't I see my boy?
Isa. He's gone to bed: I'll have him brought to you.
Bir. To-morrow I shall see him; I want rest
Myself, after this weary pilgrimage.
Isa. Alas! what shall I get for you?
Bir. Nothing but rest, my love! To-night I would not
Be known, if possible, to your family:
I see my nurse is with you; her welcome
Would be tedious at this time;
To-morrow will do better.
Isa. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you would have it. [*Exit.*
Bir. Grant me but life, good Heaven, and give the means,
To make this wondrous goodness some amends:
And let me then forget her, if I can!
O! she deserves of me much more than I
Can lose for her, though I again could venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love!
You wretched fathers, blind as fortune all!
Not to perceive that such a woman's worth
Weighs down the portions you provide your sons:
What is your trash, what all your heaps of gold,
Compared to this, my heart-felt happiness?
[*Bursts into tears.*
What has she, in my absence, undergone?

I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fatal cause of all.

ISABELLA *returns.*

Isa. I have obeyed your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.
Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,
All my desires are carried to their aim
Of happiness; there's no room for a wish,
But to continue still this blessing to me:
I know the way, my love; I shall sleep sound.
Isa. Shall I attend you?
Bir. By no means;
I've been so long a slave to others' pride,
To learn, at least, to wait upon myself;
You'll make haste after—— [*Goes in.*
Isa. I'll but say my prayers, and follow you—
My prayers! no, I must never pray again.
Prayers have their blessings to reward our hopes,
But I have nothing left to hope for more.
What Heaven could give, I have enjoyed; but now
The baneful planet rises on my fate,
And what's to come is a long line of woe.
Yet I may shorten it——
I promised him to follow—him!
Is he without a name? Biron, my husband,
To follow him to bed——my husband! ha!
What then is Villeroy? But yesterday
That very bed received him for its lord,
Yet a warm witness of my broken vows.
Oh, Biron, hadst thou come but one day sooner,
I would have followed thee through beggary,
Through all the chances of this weary life:
Wandered the many ways of wretchedness
With thee, to find a hospitable grave;
For that's the only bed that's left me now.
[*Weeping.*
——What's to be done?—for something must be done.
Two husbands! yet not one! By both enjoyed,
And yet a wife to neither! Hold my brain——
This is to live in common! Very beasts,
That welcome all they meet, make just such wives.
My reputation! Oh, 'twas all was left me!
The virtuous pride of an uncensured life;
Which the dividing tongues of Biron's wrongs,
And Villeroy's resentments, tear asunder,
To gorge the throats of the blaspheming rabble.
This is the best of what can come to-morrow,
Besides old Baldwin's triumph in my ruin:
I cannot bear it——
Therefore no morrow: Ha! a lucky thought
Works the right way to rid me of them all;
All the reproaches, infamies, and scorns,
That every tongue and finger will find for me.
Let the just horror of my apprehensions
But keep me warm—no matter what can come.
'Tis but a blow—yet I will see him first—
Have a last look to heighten my despair,
And then to rest for ever.——

BIRON *meets her.*

Bir. Despair and rest for ever! Isabella!
These words are far from thy condition,
And be they ever so! I heard thy voice,
And could not bear thy absence: come, my love!
You have staid long; there's nothing, nothing sure
Now to despair of in succeeding fate.
Isa. I am contented to be miserable,
But not this way: I have been too long abused,
And can believe no more.
Let me sleep on to be deceived no more.
Bir. Look up, my love! I never did deceive thee,
Nor never can; believe thyself, thy eyes,
That first inflamed, and lit me to my love;
Those stars, that still must guide me to my joys——
Isa. And me to my undoing: I look round,
And find no path, but leading to the grave.
Bir. I cannot understand thee.
Isa. My good friends above,
I thank them, have at last found out a way
To make my fortune perfect; having you,
I need no more; my fate is finished here.
Bir. Both our ill fates, I hope.
Isa. Hope is a lying, fawning flatterer,
That shews the fair side only of our fortunes,
To cheat us easier into our fall;
A trusted friend, who only can betray you;
Never believe him more. If marriages
Are made in Heaven, they would be happier:
Why was I made this wretch?
Bir. Has marriage made thee wretched?
Isa. Miserable, beyond the reach of comfort.
Bir. Do I live to hear thee say so?
Isa. Why, what did I say?
Bir. That I have made thee miserable.
Isa. No: you are my only earthly happiness;
And my false tongue belied my honest heart,
If it said otherwise.
Bir. And yet you said,
Your marriage made you miserable.
Isa. I know not what I said:
I have said too much, unless I could speak all.
Bir. Thy words are wild; my eyes, my ears, my heart,
Were all so full of thee, so much employed
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it:
Now I perceive it plain——
Isa. You will tell nobody—— [*Distractedly.*
Bir. Thou art not well.
Isa. Indeed I am not; I knew that before;
But where's the remedy?
Bir. Rest will relieve thy cares: come, come, no more;
I will banish sorrow from thee.
Isa. Banish first the cause.
Bir. Heaven knows how willingly!
Isa. You are the only cause.

Bir. Am I the cause? the cause of thy misfortunes?
Isa. The fatal innocent cause of all my woes.
Bir. Is this my welcome home? This the reward
Of all my miseries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched slavery,
Which I have outlived, only in hopes of thee:
Am I thus paid at last for deathless love,
And called the cause of thy misfortunes now?
Isa. Enquire no more; 'twill be explained too soon. [*She is going off.*
Bir. What! canst thou leave me too?
[*He stays her.*
Isa. Pray, let me go:
For both our sakes, permit me——
Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impossible——Thou canst not mean
What thou hast said——Yet something she must mean.——
'Twas madness all——Compose thyself, my love!
The fit is past; all may be well again:
Let us to bed.
Isa. To bed! You have raised the storm
Will sever us for ever. Oh, Biron!
While I have life, still I must call you mine:
I know I am, and always was, unworthy
To be the happy partner of your love;
And now must never, never share it more.
But oh! if ever I was dear to you,
As sometimes you have thought me, on my knees,
(The last time I shall care to be believed)
I beg you, beg to think me innocent,
Clear of all crimes, that thus can banish me
From this world's comforts, in my losing you.
Bir. Where will this end?
Isa. The rugged hand of fate has got between
Our meeting hearts, and thrusts them from their joys.
Since we must part——
Bir. Nothing shall ever part us.
Isa. Parting's the least that is set down for me:
Heaven has decreed, and we must suffer all.
Bir. I know thee innocent: I know myself so:
Indeed we both have been unfortunate;
But sure misfortunes ne'er were faults in love.
Isa. Oh! there's a fatal story to be told;
Be deaf to that, as Heaven has been to me!
And rot the tongue that shall reveal my shame:
When thou shall hear how much thou hast been wronged,
How wilt thou curse thy fond believing heart,
Tear me from the warm bosom of thy love,
And throw me like a poisonous weed away!
Can I bear that? Bear to be curst and torn,
And thrown out of thy family and name,
Like a disease? Can I bear this from thee?
I never can: no, all things have their end.
When I am dead, forgive and pity me. [*Exit.*
Bir. Stay, my Isabella——
What can she mean? These doubtings will distract me:
Some hidden mischief soon will burst to light;
I cannot bear it——I must be satisfied——
'Tis she, my wife, must clear this darkness to me.
She shall—if the sad tale at last must come!
She is my fate, and best can speak my doom.
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter BIRON. *Nurse following him.*

Bir. I know enough: the important question
Of life or death, fearful to be resolved,
Is cleared to me: I see where it must end;
And need enquire no more——Pray, let me have
Pen, ink, and paper. I must write a-while,
And then I will try to rest——to rest for ever!
[*Exit Nurse.*
Poor Isabella! now I know the cause,
The cause of thy distress, and cannot wonder
That it has turned thy brain. If I look back
Upon thy loss, it will distract me too.
Oh, any curse but this might be removed!
But 'twas the rancorous malignity
Of all ill-stars combined, of heaven and fate—
Hold, hold my impious tongue—Alas! I rave:
Why do I tax the stars, or heaven, or fate?
They are all innocent of driving us
Into despair; they have not urged my doom;
My father and my brother are my fates,
That drive me to my ruin. They knew well
I was alive. Too well they knew how dear
My Isabella—Oh, my wife no more!
How dear her love was to me—Yet they stood,
With a malicious silent joy, stood by,
And saw her give up all my happiness,
The treasure of her beauty to another;
Stood by, and saw her married to another.
Oh, cruel father! and unnatural brother!
Shall I not tell you that you have undone me!
I have but to accuse you of my wrongs,
And then to fall forgotten——Sleep or death
Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains:
Either is welcome; but the hand of death
Works always sure, and best can close my eyes.
[*Exit Biron.*

Enter Nurse and SAMPSON.

Nurse. Here's strange things towards, Sampson: what will be the end of them, do you think?
Samp. Nay, marry, nurse, I cannot see so far;

but the law, I believe, is on Biron, the first husband's side.

Nurse. Yes; no question, he has the law on his side.

Samp. For I have heard, the law says, a woman must be a widow, all out seven years, before she can marry again, according to law.

Nurse. Ay, so it does; and our lady has not been a widow, altogether, seven years.

Samp. Why, then, nurse, mark my words, and say I told you so. The man must have his wife again, and all will do well.

Nurse. But if our master, Villeroy, comes back again——

Samp. Why, if he does, he is not the first man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurse. For fear of the worst, will you go to the old count, and desire him to come as soon as he can; there may be mischief, and he is able to prevent it.

Samp. Now you say something; now I take you, nurse; that will do well, indeed: mischief should be prevented; a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I will about it instantly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Draws, shews* BIRON *asleep on a couch.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Asleep so soon! Oh, happy! happy thou,
Who thus can sleep! I never shall sleep more—
If then to sleep be to be happy, he,
Who sleeps the longest, is the happiest;
Death is the longest sleep—Oh, have a care!
Mischief will thrive apace. Never wake more.
[*To Biron.*
If thou didst ever love thy Isabella,
To-morrow must be doomsday to thy peace.
The sight of him disarms even death itself.
The starting transport of new quickening life
Gives just such hopes: and pleasure grows again
With looking on him—Let me look my last—
But is a look enough for parting love!
Sure I may take a kiss—Where am I going!
Help, help me, Villeroy! Mountains and seas
Divide your love, never to meet my shame!
[*Throws herself upon the floor; after a short pause, she raises herself upon her elbow.*
What will this battle of the brain do with me!
This little ball, this ravaged province, long
Cannot maintain——The globe of earth wants room
And food for such a war—I find I am going—
Famine, plagues, and flames,
Wide waste and desolation, do your work
Upon the world, and then devour yourselves!
The scene shifts fast—[*She rises*]—and now 'tis better with me;
Conflicting passions have at last unhinged
The great machine! the soul itself seems changed!
Oh, 'tis a happy revolution here!
The reasoning faculties are all deposed;
Judgment, and understanding, common-sense,
Driven out as traitors to the public peace.
Now I am revenged upon my memory!
Her seat dug up, where all the images
Of a long mis-spent life were rising still,
To glare a sad reflection of my crimes,
And stab a conscience through them! You are safe,
You monitors of mischief! What a change!
Better and better still! This is the infant state
Of innocence, before the birth of care.
My thoughts are smooth as the Elysian plains,
Without a rub: the drowsy falling streams
Invite me to their slumbers.
Would I were landed there——
[*Sinks into a chair.*
What noise was that? A knocking at the gate!
It may be Villeroy——No matter who.

Bir. Come, Isabella, come.——

Isa. Hark! I am called!

Bir. You stay too long from me.

Isa. A man's voice! in my bed! How came he there?
Nothing but villany in this bad world! [*Rises.*
Coveting neighbours' goods, or neighbours' wives:
Here's physic for your fever.
[*Draws a dagger, and goes backward to the couch.*
Breathing a vein is the old remedy.
If husbands go to heaven,
Where do they go that send them?—This to try——
[*Just going to stab him, he rises; she knows him, and shrieks.*]
What do I see!

Bir. Isabella, armed!

Isa. Against my husband's life!
Who, but the wretch, most reprobate to grace,
Despair e'er hardened for damnation,
Could think of such a deed—Murder my husband!

Bir. Thou didst not think it.

Isa. Madness has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me. Oh, the frightful change
Of my distractions! Or is this interval
Of reason but to aggravate my woes,
To drive the horror back with greater force
Upon my soul, and fix me mad for ever?

Bir. Why dost thou fly me so?

Isa. I cannot bear his sight; distraction, come,
Possess me all, and take me to thyself!
Shake off thy chains, and hasten to my aid;
Thou art my only cure——Like other friends,
He will not come to my necessities;
Then I must go to find the tyrant out—
Which is the nearest way? [*Running out.*

Bir. Poor Isabella! she's not in a condition
To gave me any comfort, if she could:
Lost to herself——as quickly I shall be
To all the world——Horrors come fast around me;

My mind is overcast—the gathering clouds
Darken the prospect—I approach the brink,
And soon must leap the precipice! Oh, Heaven!
While yet my senses are my own; thus kneeling,
Let me implore thy mercies on my wife:
Release her from her pangs; and if my reason,
O'erwhelmed with miseries, sink before the tempest,
Pardon those crimes despair may bring upon me!
[*Rises.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Sir, there is somebody at the door must needs speak with you; he will not tell his name.

Bir. I come to him. [*Exit Nurse.*
'Tis Belford, I suppose; he little knows
Of what has happened here; I wanted him,
Must employ his friendship, and then—— [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The street.*

Enter CARLOS *with three Ruffians.*

Car. A younger brother! I was one too long,
Not to prevent my being so again.
We must be sudden. Younger brothers are
But lawful bastards of another name,
Thrust out of their nobility of birth
And family, and tainted into trades.
Shall I be one of them—Bow, and retire,
To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in? No——
But how shall I prevent it?—Biron comes
To take possession of my father's love—
Would that were all! there's a birth-right too
That he will seize. Besides, if Biron lives,
He will unfold some practices, which I
Cannot well answer—therefore he shall die;
This night must be disposed of: I have means
That will not fail my purpose.—Here he comes.

Enter BIRON.

Bir. Ha! am I beset! I live but to revenge me.
[*They surround him, fighting; Villeroy enters with two servants; they rescue him; Carlos and his party fly.*

Vil. How are you, sir? Mortally hurt, I fear. Take care, and lead him in.

Bir. I thank you for this goodness, sir; though 'tis
Bestowed upon a very wretch; and death,
Though from a villain's hand, had been to me
An act of kindness, and the height of mercy—
But I thank you, sir. [*He is led in.*

SCENE IV.—*The inside of the house.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Murder my husband! Oh! I must not dare
To think of living on; my desperate hand
In a mad rage may offer it again.
Stab me any where but there. Here's room enough
In my own breast, to act the fury in,
The proper scene of mischief. Villeroy comes;
Villeroy and Biron come! Oh! hide me from them—
They rack, they tear; let them carve out my limbs,
Divide my body to their equal claims!
My soul is only Biron's; that is free,
And thus I strike for him and liberty.
[*Going to stab herself, Villeroy runs in and prevents her, by taking the dagger from her.*

Vil. Angels defend and save thee!
Attempt thy precious life! the treasury
Of nature's sweets! life of my little world!
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent self!

Isa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you.
What would you have with me? Pray let me go.
Are you there, sir! You are the very man
Have done all this—You would have made
Me believe you married me; but the fool
Was wiser, I thank you: 'tis not all gospel
You men preach upon that subject.

Vil. Dost thou not know me, love?

Isa. O yes: very well. [*Staring on him.*
You are the widow's comfortor; that marries
Any woman when her husband's out of the way:
But I'll never, never take your word again.

Vil. I am thy loving husband.

Isa. I have none; no husband—— [*Weeping.*
Never had but one, and he died at Candy!
Did he not? I am sure you told me so; you,
Or somebody, with just such a lying look,
As you have now. Speak, did he not die there?

Vil. He did, my life.

Isa. But swear it, quickly swear,

BIRON *enters bloody, and leaning upon his sword.*

Before that screaming evidence appears,
In bloody proof against me——
[*She, seeing Biron, swoons in a chair; Villeroy helps her.*

Vil. Help there! Nurse, where are you?
Ha! I am distracted too!
[*Going to call for help, sees Biron.*
Biron alive!

Bir. The only wretch on earth that must not live.

Vil. Biron or Villeroy must not, that's decreed.

Bir You saved me from the hands of murderers:
Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague!
And then, of all the world, you are the man
I would not be obliged to—Isabella!
I came to fall before thee: I had died
Happy not to have found your Villeroy here:

A long farewell, and a last parting kiss.
[*Kisses her.*
Vil. A kiss! Confusion! It must be your last.
[*Draws.*
Bir. I know it must—Here I give up that death
You but delayed: since what is past has been
The work of fate, thus we must finish it.
Thrust home, be sure. [*Faints.*
Vil. Alas! he faints: some help there!
Bir. 'Tis all in vain, my sorrows soon will end.
Oh, Villeroy! let a dying wretch entreat you
To take this letter to my father. My Isabella!
Couldst thou but hear me, my last words should bless thee.
I cannot, though in death, bequeath her to thee.
[*To Villeroy.*
But I could hope my boy, my little one,
Might find a father in thee—Oh, I faint—
I can no more—Hear me, Heaven! Oh! support
My wife, my Isabella—Bless my child!
And take a poor unhappy— [*Dies.*
Vil. He's gone—Let what will be the consequence,
I'll give it him. I have involved myself,
And would be cleared; that must be thought on now.
My care of her is lost in wild amaze.
[*Going to Isabella.*
Are you all dead within there? Where, where are you? [*Exit.*

ISABELLA *comes to herself.*

Isa. Where have I been? Methinks I stand upon
The brink of life, ready to shoot the gulph,
That lies between me and the realms of rest;
But still, detained, I cannot pass the strait;
Denied to live, and yet I must not die;
Doomed to come back, like a complaining ghost,
To my unburied body—here it lies—
[*Throws herself by Biron's body.*
My body, soul, and life. A little dust,
To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave—
There, there we shall sleep safe and sound together.

Enter VILLEROY, *with servants.*

Vil. Poor wretch! upon the ground! She's not herself:
Remove her from the body.
[*Servants going to raise her.*
Isa. Never, never———
You have divorced us once, but shall no more—
Help, help me, Biron! Ha! bloody and dead!
Oh, murder! murder! you have done this deed;
Vengeance and murder! bury us together—
Do any thing but part us.
Vil. Gently, gently raise her.
She must be forced away.
[*She drags the body after her; they get her into their arms, and carry her off.*
Isa. Oh, they tear me! Cut off my hands—
Let me leave something with him—
They'll clasp him fast—
Oh, cruel, cruel men!
This you must answer one day.
Vil. Good nurse, take care of her.
[*Nurse follows her.*
Send for all helps: all, all that I am worth,
Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.
Be sure you do, [*To a Servant.*
Just as I ordered you. The storm grows louder.
[*Knocking at the door.*
I am prepared for it. Now let them in.

Enter COUNT BALDWIN, CARLOS, BELFORD, *Friends, with Servants.*

C. Bald. Oh, do I live to this unhappy day!
Where is my wretched son?
Car. Where is my brother?
[*They see him, and gather about the body.*
Vil. I hope in heaven.
Car. Canst thou pity!
Wish him in Heaven, when thou hast done a deed,
That must forever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there?
Vil. I do not blame you——
You have a brother's right to be concerned
For his untimely death.
Car. Untimely death, indeed!
Vil. But yet you must not say, I was the cause.
Car. Not you the cause! Why, who should murder him?
We do not ask you to accuse yourself;
But I must say that you have murdered him;
And will say nothing else, till justice draws
Upon our side, at the loud call of blood,
To execute so foul a murderer.
Bel. Poor Biron! Is this thy welcome home!
Fr. Rise, sir; there is a comfort in revenge.
Which is left you. [*To C. Bald.*
Car. Take the body hence. [*Biron carried off.*
C. Bald. What could provoke you?
Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a base murder, which, I find, you think
Me guilty of. I know my innocence;
My servants too can witness that I drew
My sword in his defence, to rescue him.
Bel. Let thy servants be called.
Fr. Let us hear what they can say.
Car. What they can say! Why, what should servants say?
They're his accomplices, his instruments,
And will not charge themselves. If they could do
A murder for his service, they can lie,
Lie nimbly, and swear hard to bring him off.
You say you drew your sword in his defence:
Who were his enemies? Did he need defence?
Had he wronged any one? Could he have cause
To apprehend a danger, but from you?

And yet you rescued him! No, no, he came
Unseasonably (that was all his crime),
Unluckily to interrupt your sport:
You were new married—married to his wife;
And therefore you, and she, and all of you,
(For all of you I must believe concerned)
Combined to murder him out of the way.

Bel. If it is so——

Car. It can be only so.

Fr. Indeed it has a face——

Car. As black as hell.

C. Bald. The law will do me justice: send for the magistrate.

Car. I'll go myself for him—— [*Exit.*

Vil. These strong presumptions, I must own, indeed,
Are violent against me; but I have
A witness, and on this side heaven too.
——Open that door.

[*Door opens, and Pedro is brought forward by Villeroy's servants.*

Here's one can tell you all.

Ped. All, all; save me but from the rack, I'll confess all.

Vil. You and your accomplices designed
To murder Biron?——Speak.

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employed?

Ped. He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were set on, then?

Ped. We were set on.

Vil. What do you know of me?

Ped. Nothing, nothing:
You saved his life, and have discovered me.

Vil. He has acquitted me.
If you would be resolved of any thing,
He stands upon his answer.

Bel. Who set you on to act this horrid deed?

C. Bald. I'll know the villain; give me quick his name,
Or I will tear it from thy bleeding heart!

Ped. I will confess.

C. Bald. Do then.

Ped. It was my master, Carlos, your own son.

C. Bald. Oh, monstrous! monstrous! most unnatural!

Bel. Did he employ you to murder his own brother?

Ped. He did; and he was with us when 'twas done.

C. Bald. If this be true, this horrid, horrid tale,
'Tis but just upon me: Biron's wrongs
Must be revenged: and I the cause of all!

Fr. What will you do with him?

C. Bald. Take him apart——
I know too much. [*Pedro goes in.*

Vil. I had forgot—Your wretched, dying son
Gave me this letter for you.

[*Gives it to Baldwin.*

I dare deliver it. It speaks of me,
I pray to have it read.

C. Bald. You know the hand.

Bel. I know 'tis Biron's hand.

C. Bald. Pray, read it.

[*Belford reads the letter.*

'SIR,

'I find I am come only to lay my death at your door. I am now going out of the world; but cannot forgive you, nor my brother Carlos, for not hindering my poor wife Isabella from marrying with Villeroy; when you knew, from so many letters, that I was alive.

BIRON.'

Vil. How!—Did you know it, then?

C. Bald. Amazement all!

Enter CARLOS, *with Officers.*

Oh, Carlos! are you come? Your brother here,
Here, in a wretched letter, lays his death
To you and me—Have you done any thing
To hasten his sad end?

Car. Bless me, sir, I do any thing! Who, I?

C. Bald. He talks of letters that were sent to us.
I never heard of any.—Did you know
He was alive?

Car. Alive! Heaven knows, not I.

C. Bald. Had you no news of him, from a report,
Or letter, never?

Car. Never, never I.

Bel. That's strange, indeed: I know he often writ
To lay before you the conditions [*To C. Bald.*
Of his hard slavery: and more I know,
That he had several answers to his letters.
He said they came from you; you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.
The letters, I believe, are still about him;
For some of them I saw but yesterday.

C. Bald. What did those answers say?

Bel. I cannot speak to the particulars;
But I remember well, the sum of them
Was much the same, and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hoped from you:
That 'twas your barbarous resolution
To let him perish there.——

C. Bald. Oh, Carlos! Carlos! hadst thou been a brother——

Car. This is a plot upon me. I never knew
He was in slavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.

Bel. There, sir, I must confront you.
He sent you a letter, to my knowledge, last night;
And you sent him word you would come to him.
I fear you came too soon.

C. Bald. 'Tis all too plain.——
Bring out that wretch before him.

[*Pedro produced.*

Car. Ha! Pedro there!—Then I am caught indeed!

Bel. You start at sight of him;
He has confessed the bloody deed.

Car. Well, then, he has confessed,
And I must answer it.
Bel. Is there no more?
Car. Why!—what would you have more? I know the worst,
And I expect it.
C. Bald. Why hast thou done all this?
Car. Why, that which damns most men has ruined me;
The making of my fortune. Biron stood
Between me and your favour; while he lived,
I had not that; hardly was thought a son,
And not at all a-kin to your estate.
I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending upon courtesy——
Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been still a brother.
Car. 'Tis too true!
I never loved thee, as I should have done:
It was my sin, and I am punished for it.
Oh! never may distinction rise again
In families; let parents be the same
To all their children; common in their care,
And in their love of them—I am unhappy,
For loving one too well.
Vil. You knew your brother lived; why did you take
Such pains to marry me to Isabella?
Car. I had my reasons for't——
Vil. More than I thought you had.
Car. But one was this——
I knew my brother loved his wife so well,
That if he ever should come home again,
He could not long outlive the loss of her.
Bel. If you relied on that, why did you kill him?
Car. To make all sure. Now, you are answered all.
Where must I go? I am tired of your questions.
C. Bald. I leave the judge to tell thee what thou art;
A father cannot find a name for thee.
But parricide is highest treason, sure,
To sacred nature's law; and must be so,
So sentenced in thy crimes. Take him away—
The violent remedy is found at last,
That drives thee out, thou poison of my blood,
Infected long, and only foul in thee.
[*Carlos led off.*
Grant me, sweet Heaven! the patience to go through
The torment of my cure—Here, here begins
The operation—Alas! she's mad.

Enter ISABELLA *distracted, held by her Women; hair dishevelled; her little Son running in before, being afraid of her.*

Vil. My Isabella! poor unhappy wretch!
What can I say to her?
Isa. Nothing, nothing; 'tis a babbling world—
I'll hear no more on't. When does the court sit?
I'll not be bought——What! to sell innocent blood!
You look like one of the pale judges here;
Minos, or Radamanth, or Æacus—
I have heard of you.
I have a cause to try, an honest one;
Will you not hear it? Then I must appeal
To the bright throne—Call down the heavenly powers
To witness how you use me.
Wom. Help, help, we cannot hold her.
Vil. You but enrage her more.
C. Bald. Pray, give her way; she'll hurt nobody.
Isa. What have you done with him? He was here but now;
I saw him here. Oh, Biron, Biron! where,
Where have they hid thee from me? He is gone——
But here's a little flying cherubim——
Child. Oh, save me, save me!
[*Running to Baldwin.*
Isa. The Mercury of Heaven, with silver wings,
Impt for the flight, to overtake his ghost,
And bring him back again!
Child. I fear she'll kill me.
C. Bald. She will not hurt thee.
[*She flings away.*
Isa. Will nothing do? I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in heaven neither.
Biron has watched his opportunity——
Softly; he steals it from the sleeping gods,
And sends it thus—— [*Stabs herself.*
Now, I laugh at you, defy you all,
You tyrant murderers!
Vil. Call, call for help——Oh, Heaven! this was too much.
C. Bald. Oh, thou most injured innocence!
Yet live,
Live but to witness for me to the world,
How much I do repent me of the wrongs,
The unnatural wrongs, which I have heaped on thee,
And have pulled down this judgment on us all!
Vil. Oh, speak, speak but a word of comfort to me!
C. Bald. If the most tender father's care and love
Of thee, and thy poor child, can make amends—
Oh, yet look up and live!
Isa. Where is that little wretch?
[*They raise her.*
I die in peace, to leave him to your care.
I have a wretched mother's legacy,
A dying kiss——pray let me give it him—
My blessing; that, that's all I have to leave thee.
Oh, may thy father's virtues live in thee,
And all his wrongs be buried in my grave!
[*Dies.*
Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.
Where are your officers of justice now?

Seize, bind me, drag me to the bloody bar!
Accuse, condemn me; let the sentence reach
My hated life———No matter how it comes;
I'll think it just, and thank you as it falls.
Self-murder is denied me; else how soon
Could I be past the pain of my remembrance!
But I must live, grow grey with lingering grief,
To die at last in telling this sad tale.

C. Bald. Poor wretched orphan of most wretched parents!
'Scaping the storm, thou'rt thrown upon a rock,
To perish there. The very rocks would melt,
Soften their nature, sure, to foster thee;
I find it by myself: my flinty heart,
That barren rock, on which thy father starved,
Opens its springs of nourishment to thee.
There's not a vein but shall run milk for thee.
Oh, had I pardoned my poor Biron's fault,
His first, his only fault—this had not been!
To erring youth there's some compassion due;
But while with rigour you their crimes pursue,
What's their misfortune, is a crime for you.
Hence, learn offending children to forgive:
Leave punishment to Heaven—'tis Heaven's prerogative.

THE

ORPHAN OF CHINA.

BY

MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

TIMURKAN, *emperor of the Tartars.*
OCTAR, *a Tartar general.*
ZAMTI, *a Mandarin.*
ETAN, *educated as his son.*
HAMET, *a youthful captive, son to Zamti.*
MORAT, *a faithful friend of Zamti.*
MIRVAN, *a Chinese in the Tartar's service, secretly a friend of Zamti.*
ORASMING, ZIMVENTI, } *two conspirators.*

WOMEN.

MANDANE, *Zamti's wife.*

Messenger, Guards, &c.

Scene,—Pekin, capital of China.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter MANDANE *and* MIRVAN.

Man. No, never; Mirvan, never—still this heart
Must throb with ceaseless woe——All-gracious Heaven!
Will not this palace, drenched in gore; the crown
Of China's kings fixed on the Tartar's brow;
Will not a tract of twenty years in bondage;
Ah! will not these suffice, without a fresh cause
Of bitter anguish in Mandane's breast?—
Mir. Better suppress these unavailing tears,
This fruitless flood of grief.
Man. It will not be———
Even 'midst the horrors of this dismal hour,
When fate has all transferred from lost Cathai
To vile barbarian hands;—in such an hour,
This heart, revolting from the public cause,
Bleeds from a private source; bleeds for the woes
That hang o'er Zamti's house.———
Mir. Alas! Mandane,
Amidst the general wreck, who does not feel
The keen domestic pang?
Man. Yes, all.—We all
Must feel the kindred-touch; daily the cries
Of widows, orphans, father, son, and brother,
In vain are sent to heaven;—the wasteful rage
Of these barbarians—these accursed invaders
Burns with increasing fire;—the thunder still
Rolls o'er our heads, threatening with hideous crash
To fall at once, and bury us in ruin.
Mir. And quickly fall it must!—the hand of heaven
Weighs this great empire down.
Man. Nay, tax not Heaven!

Almighty Justice never bares its arm
'Gainst innocence and truth. 'Tis Timurkan,
That fell barbarian—that insatiate waster——
May curses blast the Tartar!—he—'Tis he
Has bore down all, and still his slaughtering sword,
In yonder field of death, where Corea's troops
Made their last stand for liberty and China,
Crimsons the land with blood. This battle lost,
Oh! then farewell to all!—But, Mirvan, say,
How came the tidings?

Mir. From yon lofty tower,
As my eyes, straining toward the distant plain,
Sent forth an anxious look, through clouds of dust
The savage bands appeared; the western sun
Gleamed on their burnished helms; and soon a shout
From the glad multitude proclaimed the approach
Of Timurkan:—elated with new conquest,
The tyrant comes, and where his wrath will stop
Heav'n only knows!———

Man. Oh! there—there lies the thought
At which imagination starts, appalled
With horror at the scene her busy workings
Have coloured to my sight——there lies the thought
That wakens all a mother's fears—alas!
I tremble for my son!

Mir. Your son—kind Heaven!
Have you not checked his ardour?—with your tears,
Your soft authority, restrained the hero
From the alarms of war?———

Man. Alas, good Mirvan,
Thou little know'st his danger!—but that truth
Must never pass these lips.

Mir. I hope, Mandane
Doubts not my honest zeal—full well you know
I bear this tyrant deep and mortal hate;
That under him I list, and wear this garb,
In hopes that some occasion may arrive,
When I may strike an unexpected blow,
And do my country right.

Man. Thy loyalty,
Thy truth and honour have been ever spotless.
Besides thy wrongs, thy countless wrongs, the wounds
He gave your injured family and name———

Mir. Alas! those wounds must still lie bleeding here,
Untented by the hand of time—Not all
His lenient arts, his favours heaped upon me,
Shall cool the burning anguish of my soul.
What! he that slew my father!—dragged my sister,
Blooming in years, to his detested bed!—
Yes, tyrant, yes:—thy unextinguished foe
Dwells in this bosom. Surely, then, to me
Mandane may reveal her griefs—her wrongs
Will add new fuel to my hidden fires,
And make them burn more fiercely.

Man. Urge no more—
My woes must rest concealed. Yet should the tyrant
Learn from the captives of yon vanquished host,
That China's orphan breathes the vital air,
And, to himself unknown, within his breast
Unconscious bears the generous glowing flame
Of all the virtues of his royal line;
Oh! should they know that the dear youth survives,
That for his righteous cause this war began,
Their fury then would kindle to a blaze,
Might wrap the world in flames, and in the ruin
My blameless son must perish!

Mir. Seek not thus
To multiply the ills that hover round you;
Nor from the stores of busy fancy add
New shafts to fortune's quiver. Zamti's care
Hath still deceived suspicion's wakeful eye;
And o'er the Mandarin his manners pure,
And sacred function, have diffused an air
Of venerable awe, which e'en can teach
These northern foes to soften into men.

Man. Yes, Mirvan, yes—Religion wears a mien
In Zamti's person so severely mild,
That the fierce Scythian rests upon his spear,
And wonders what he feels! Such is the charm
Of heart-felt virtue; such is nature's force
That speaks abroad, and in rude northern hearts
Can stamp the image of an awful God.
From that source springs some hope:—Wretch that I am!
Hope idly flutters on my trembling tongue,
While melancholy, brooding o'er her wrongs,
Lays waste the mind with horror and despair.
—What noise is that?——

Mir. Compose this storm of grief;
In every sound your fancy hears the Tartar——
Your husband this way bends——

Man. Celestial Powers!
What labouring sighs heave in his breast?—what terror
Rolls in the patriot's eye?—haste, Mirvan, hence;
Again look out; gather the flying news,
And let me know each circumstance of ruin.
[*Exit Mirvan.*

Enter ZAMTI.

Man. Zamti!

Zamti. Mandane!

Man. Ah! what hast thou seen?
What hast thou heard?—Tell me—has fate decreed
The doom of China?

Zamti. China is no more!———
The eastern world is lost—this mighty empire
Falls with the universe beneath the stroke
Of savage force—falls from it's towering hopes;
For ever, ever fallen!

Man. Yet, why, ye Powers!

Why should a tyrant, trained to lust and murder,
A lawless ravager from savage wilds,
Where cheerful day ne'er dawns, but lowering heaven
For ever rolls a turbulence of clouds;
Why should a monster thus usurp the world,
And trample fair simplicity from ill
Beneath his ruffian feet?———
Zamti. Far hence, Mandane,
Those happy days, alas! are fled, when peace
Here nursed her blooming olives, and shed round
Her fostering influence.—In vain the plan
Of sacred laws, by hoary elders taught,
Laws founded on the base of public weal,
Gave lessons to the world. In vain Confucius
Unlocked his radiant stores of moral truth;
In vain bright science, and each tender muse,
Beamed every elegance on polished life——
Barbarian power prevails. Whate'er our sages taught,
Or genius could inspire, must fade away,
And each fair virtue wither at the blast
Of northern domination.
Man. Fatal day!
More fatal e'en than that, which first beheld
This race accursed within these palace walls.
Since hope, that balm of wretched minds, is now
Irrevocably lost.
Zamti. Name not the day,
Which saw this city sacked—fresh stream my eyes,
Fresh bleeds my heart, whene'er the sad idea
Comes o'er my tortured mind. Why, cruel Powers!
Why in that moment could not Zamti fall?
Man. Thy sanctity, the symbol of thy God,
Made even the conqueror suspend his blow,
And murmur soft humanity. High Heaven
Protected thee for its own great designs;
To save the royal child, the new-born babe,
From the dire slaughter of his ancient line.
Zamti. Yes, my Mandane, in that hour of carnage,
For purposes yet in the womb of time,
I was reserved. I was ordained to save
The infant boy; the dear, the precious charge,
The last of all my kings:—full twenty years
I've hid him from the world, and from himself;
And now I swear——Kneel we together here;
While in this dreadful pause our souls renew
Their solemn purpose.——— [*Both kneel.*
Thou all-gracious Being,
Whose tutelary care hath watched the fate
Of China's Orphan, who hast taught his steps
The paths of safety, still envelop him
In sevenfold night, till your own hour is come;
Till your slow justice see the dread occasion
To rouse his soul, and bid him walk abroad,
Vicegerent of your power;—and if thy servant,
Or this his soft associate, e'er defeat
By any word or deed the great design,
Then straight may all your horrible displeasure
Be launched upon us from your red right arm,
And in one ruin dash us both together,
The blasted monuments of wrath!
Man. That here
Mandane vows ne'er to betray his cause,
Be it enrolled in the records of Heaven!
[*Both rise.*
Zamti. And now my heart more lightly beats; methinks,
With strength redoubled I can meet the shock
Of adverse fate.
Man. And lo! the trial comes——
For see where Etan mourns——See where the youth,
Unknowing of the storm that gathers o'er him,
Brings some new tale of woe.——

Enter ETAN.

Etan. My honoured father,
And you, my helpless mother,—ah! where now,
Illustrious wretched pair, where will ye fly?
Where will your miseries now find a shelter?
Zamti. In virtue—I and this dear faithful woman—
We ask no more.
Man. Ah! quickly, Etan, say
What means that pallid look? What new event
Brings on the work of fate?
Zamti. Say, does the tyrant
Return, unglutted yet with blood?
Etan. He does.
Even now his triumph moves within the gates,
In dread barbaric pomp:—the iron swarms
Of Hyperboreans troop along the streets,
Reeking from slaughter; while from gazing crowds
Of their dire countrymen, an uproar wild
Of joy ferocious through the astonished air
Howls like a northern tempest:—O'er the rest,
Proud in superior eminence of guilt,
The tyrant rides sublime. Behind his car
The refuse of his sword, a captive train
Display their honest scars, and gnash their teeth
With rage and desperation.——
Man. Cruel fate!
Etan. With these a youth, distinguished from the rest,
Proceeds in sullen march. Heroic fire
Glows in his cheek, and from his ardent eye
Beams amiable horror.
Man. What of this youth?
Zamti. Be not alarmed, Mandane—What of him?
Etan. On him all eyes were fixed with eager gaze,
As if their spirits, struggling to come forth,
Would strain each visual nerve—while through the crowd
A busy murmur ran—'If fame say right,
'Beneath that habit lurks a prince; the last
'Of China's race.' The rumour spreads abroad
From man to man; and all with loud acclaim
Denounce their vengeance on him.

Man. Ha! what say'st thou, Etan?
Heavens, how each blackening hour, in deeper horror,
Comes charged with woe!
Zamti. It cannot be. Ye vain,
Ye groundless terrors, hence! [*Aside.*
Man. My honoured lord,
Those eyes upturned to Heaven, alas! in vain,
Declare your inward conflict.
Zamti. Loved Mandane,
I prithee leave me—but a moment leave me.
Heed not the workings of a sickly fancy,
Wrought on by every popular report.
Thou know'st, with Morat, I conveyed the infant
Far as the eastern point of Corea's realm;
There, where no human trace is seen, no sound
Assails the ear, save when the foaming surge
Breaks on the shelving beach, that there the youth
Might mock their busy search. Then check thy fears—
Retire, my love, awhile; I'll come anon—
And fortify thy soul with firm resolve,
Becoming Zamti's wife.
Man. Yes, Zamti's wife
Shall never act unworthy of her lord!
Then hence I'll go, and satisfy each doubt
This youthful captive raises in my heart,
Quick panting with its fears. And O ye powers!
Protect my son, my husband, and my king!
[*Exit Mandane.*
Zamti. Come hither, Etan—thou perceiv'st the toils
That now encircle me.
Etan. Alas! too well
I see the impending storm. But surely, sir,
Should this young captive prove the royal orphan,
You'll never own the important truth.
Zamti. Dream not, young man,
To stand secure, yet blooming into life,
While vengeance hovers o'er your father's head.
The stock once fallen, each scyon must decay.
Etan. Then let me perish!—Witness for me, Heaven,
Could Etan's fall appease the tyrant's wrath,
A willing victim he would yield his life,
And ask no greater boon of Heaven.
Zamti. This zeal,
So fervid in a stranger's cause———
Etan. A stranger!—he!—
My king a stranger!—Sir, you never meant it—
Perhaps you would explore the fiery seeds
Of Etan's temper, ever prompt to blaze
At honour's sacred name. Perish the man,
Who, when his country calls him to defend
The rights of human kind, or bravely die,
Who, then, to glory dead, can shrink aghast,
And hold a council with his abject fears!
Zamti. These towerings of the soul, alas! are vain.
I know the Tartar well—should I attempt
By any virtuous fraud to veil the truth,
His lion-rage again shall stalk abroad,
Again shall quaff the blood of innocence;
And, for Zaphimri, all the poor remains
Of China's matrons, and her hoary sires,
Her blooming virgins, and her lisping babes,
Shall yield their throats to the fell murderer's knife,
And all be lost for ever!
Etan. Then at once
Proclaim him to the world; each honest hand
Will grasp a sword, and, 'midst the circling guards,
Reach the usurper's heart—or, should they fail,
Should overwhelming bands obstruct the deed,
They'll greatly dare to die!—better to die
With falling liberty, than basely lead
An ignominious life. Zaphimri lost,
Ne'er shall fair order dawn; but through the land
Slavery shall clank her chains, and violation,
Rapine, and murder, riot at the will
Of lust and lawless power.
Zamti. Thou brave young man,
Indulge my fond embrace—thy lovely ardour
It glads me thus to see!—To ease at once
Thy generous fears—the prince Zaphimri's safe;
Safe in my guardian care.
Etan. The prisoner, sir,
He does not then alarm you?
Zamti. No! from thence
I've nought to fear.
Etan. Oh! sir, inform your son
Where is the royal heir?
Zamti. Seek not too soon
To know that truth—now I'll disclose the work,
The work of vengeance, which my labouring soul
Has long been fashioning. Even at this hour
Stupendous ruin hovers o'er the heads
Of this accursed race.
Etan. Ruin!
Zamti. I'll tell thee———
When Timurkan led forth his savage bands,
Unpeopling this great city, I then seized
The hour, to tamper with a chosen few,
Who have resolved, when the barbarians lie
Buried in sleep and wine, and hotly dream
Their havock o'er again—then, then, my son,
In one collected blow to burst upon them;
Like their own northern clouds, whose midnight horror
Impending o'er the world, at length breaks forth
In the vaunt lightning's blaze, in storms and thunder
Through all the reddening air, till frighted nature
Start from her couch, and waken to a scene
Of uproar and destruction.
Etan. Oh! my father,
The glorious enterprize!
Zamti. Mark me, young man.
Seek thou my friends, Orasming and Zimventi:
In the dim holy cloisters of yon temple

Thou wilt find them musing. Near Osmingti's tomb
I charged them all convene, and there do thou
Await my coming—bid them ne'er remit
Their high heroic ardour; let them know,
Whate'er shall fall on this old mouldering day,
The tyrant never shall subdue my mind.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter ZAMTI.

Zamti. DREAM on, deluded tyrant! yes, dream on
In blind security! whene'er high Heaven
Means to destroy, it curses with illusion,
With error of the mind. Yes, wreak thy fury
Upon this captive youth; whoe'er he is,
If from his death this groaning empire rise,
Once more itself, resplendent, rich in arts
That humanize the world, he pays a debt
Due to his king, his country, and his God.
His father, wheresoe'er he dwell, in tears
Shall tell the glory on his boy derived;
And even his mother, amidst her matron shrieks,
Shall bless the child-bed pang that brought him forth
To this great lot, by fate to few allowed!
What wouldst thou, Mirvan?

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Eagerly without
A reverend stranger craves access to Zamti:
His head hoary with age, with galling tears
His eyes suffused; his every look impatience—
Zamti. Give him admittance. [*Exit Mirvan.*
How my spirits rush
Tumultuous to my heart—what may this mean?
Lo! where he comes——

Enter MORAT.

Morat. Zamti!——
Zamti. Ha! through the veil
Of age, that face—that mien—Morat!
Morat. Oh! Zamti!
Let me once more embrace thee——
Zamti. Good old man! [*They embrace.*
But wherefore art thou here? what of my boy?
Morat. Ah! what indeed? Even from the ocean's margin,
Parched with the sun, or chilled with midnight damps,
O'er hills, and rocks, and dreary continents,
In vain I have followed——
Zamti. Why didst let him forth?
Morat. Think not thy Morat urged him to the deed.
His valour was the cause; and soon as fame
Proclaimed the prince alive, the mighty din
Of preparation through all Corea's realm
Alarmed his breast—indignant of controul,
He burst his covert, and now, hapless youth—
Zamti. Ah! dead! in battle fallen!
Morat. Alas! even now
He drags the conqueror's chain.
Zamti. Mandane then
May still embrace her son! My boy may live,
To know the sweets of freedom ere he die.
Morat. Alas! the measure of your woes is full!
Unconscious of our frauds, the tyrant thinks
The prince his prisoner in your son.
Zamti. Ah! Morat!
Morat. Wild through the streets the foe call out on Zamti.
Thee they pronounce the author of this fraud;
And on your Hamet threaten instant vengeance.
Zamti. There was but this—but this, ye cruel powers,
And this you have heaped upon me! Was it not
Enough to tear him from his mother's arms—
Doomed for his prince to wander o'er the world!
Alas! what needed more? Fond foolish eyes,
Stop your unbidden gush——tear, tear me piecemeal——
No! I will not complain—but whence on him
Could that suspicion glance?
Morat. This very morn,
Ere yet the battle joined, a faithful messenger,
Who through the friendly gloom of night had held
His darkling way, and passed the Tartar's camp,
Brought me advices from the Corean chief,
That soon as Hamet joined the warlike train,
His story he related. Straight the gallant leader
With open arms received him—knew him for thy son,
In secret knew him, nor revealed he aught
That touched his birth. But still the busy voice
Of fame, increasing as she goes, through all the ranks
Babbled abroad each circumstance. By thee
How he was privately conveyed—sent forth
A tender infant to be reared in solitude,
A stranger to himself! The warriors saw
With what a graceful port he moved in arms,
An early hero! deemed him far above
The common lot of life—deemed him Zaphinri,
And all with reverential awe beheld him.
This, this, my Zamti, reached the tyrant's ear,
And rises into horrid proof.
Zamti. If so,
Oh! what a sacrifice must now be made! [*Aside.*
Morat. But when the secret shall be known—
Zamti. Oh! Morat!
Does thy poor bleeding country still remain

Dear to thy heart? Say, dost thou still revere
That holy power above, Supreme of beings,
Mistaken by the Bonzee, whom our fathers
Worshipped in happier days?
Morat. He—only he
For twenty years hath given me strength in exile.
Zamti. Then bending here, before his awful throne,
Swear, what I now unfold shall ever lie
In sacred silence wrapped.
Morat. I swear!
Zamti. Now mark me——
Morat—my son—[*Turning aside.*]—Oh! cruel, cruel task,
To conquer nature while the heart-strings break!
Morat. Why heave those sighs? and why that burst of grief?
Zamti. My son—his guiltless blood—I cannot speak! [*Bursts into tears.*
Morat. Ha! Wilt thou shed his blood?
Zamti. Thou wretched father!——
[*Half aside.*
Morat. Oh! had you known the virtues of the youth,
His truth, his courage, his enlightened mind—
Zamti. I prithee urge no more—here nature's voice
Speaks in such pleadings: such reproaches, Morat,
—Here in my very heart—give woundings here,
Thou canst not know, and only parents feel!
Morat. And wilt thou, cruel in thy tears——
Zamti. Nay, cease,
In pity to a father, cease—Think, Morat—
Think of Zaphimri!
Morat. Ah! how fares the prince?
Zamti. He fares, my Morat, like a god on earth,
Unknowing his celestial origin,
Yet quick, intense, and bursting into action;
His great heart labouring with—he knows not what—
Prodigious deeds! Deeds, which ere long shall rouse,
Astonish, and alarm the world.
Morat. What mean
Those mystic sounds?
Zamti. Revenge, conquest, and freedom!
Morat. Conquest and freedom!
Zamti. Ay! conquest and freedom!
The midnight hour shall call a chosen band
Of hidden patriots forth; who, when the foe
Sinks down in drunken revelry, shall pour
The gathered rage of twenty years upon him,
And vindicate the eastern world.
Morat. By Heaven!
The news revives my soul.
Zamti. And canst thou think,
To save one vulgar life, that Zamti now
Will mar the vast design? No; let him bleed,
Yet my boy bleed! in such a cause as this,
I can resign my son—with tears of joy
Resign him! and one complicated pang
Shall wrench him from my heart.——
The conqueror comes! [*Warlike music within.*
This is no hour for parleying—Morat, hence!
And leave me to my fixed resolve.
Morat. Yet think,
Think of some means to save your Hamet.
Zamti. Oh!
It cannot be—the soul of Timurkan
Is bold and stirring: when occasion calls,
He springs aloft, like an expanding fire,
And marks his way with ruin. Now he knows
Zaphimri lives, his fear will make him daring
Beyond his former crimes—for joy and riot,
Which this day's triumph brings, remorseless rage
And massacre succeed—and all our hopes
Are blasted for an unimportant boy.
[*A second flourish.*
Morat. That nearer sound proclaims his dread approach.
Yet once more, Zamti, think——
Zamti. No more—I will send
Those shall conduct thee where Orasming lives.
There dwell unseen of all. But, Morat, first
Seek my Mandane. Heavens! how shall I bear
Her strong impetuosity of grief,
When she shall know my fatal purpose! Thou
Prepare her tender spirit; soothe her mind,
And save, Oh! save me from that dreadful conflict! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Two large Folding-gates in the back-scene are burst open by the Tartars, and then enter TIMURKAN, *with his train.*

Timur. Hail to this regal dome, this gorgeous palace!
Where this inventive race have lavished all
Their elegance:—ye gay apartments, hail!
Beneath your storied roof, where mimic life
Glows to the eye, and at the painter's touch
A new creation lives along the walls;
Once more receive a conqueror, arrived
From rougher scenes, where stern rebellion dared
Draw forth his phalanx; till this warlike arm
Hurled desolation on his falling ranks,
And now the monster, in yon field of death,
Lies overwhelmed in ruin.
Octar. There he fell,
No more to stalk thy realm: the eastern world,
From this auspicious day, beneath your feet
Lies bound in adamantine chains.
Timur. Thus, Octar,
Shall Timurkan display his conquering banners,
From high Samarcand's walls, to where the Tanais
Devolves his icy tribute to the sea.
Octar. But first this captive prince!——
Timur. Yes, Octar, first
Zaphimri gluts my rage—bring him before us—first
We'll crush the seeds of dark conspiracy;

For Zamti—he, that false insidious slave,
Shall dearly pay his treasons.
Octar. Zamti's crimes
'Twere best to leave unpunished:——versed in wiles
Of sly hypocrisy, he wins the love
Of the deluded multitude. 'Twould seem,
Should we inflict that death his frauds deserve,
As if we meant destruction to their faith:
When a whole people's minds are once inflamed
For their religious rights, their fury burns
With rage more dreadful, as the source is holy.
Timur. Octar, thou reasonest right:—henceforth my art,
To make this stubborn race receive the yoke,
Shall be by yielding to their softer manners,
Their vesture, laws, and customs: thus to blend
And make the whole one undistinguished people.
The boy comes forth in sullen mood——what passions
Swell in his breast in vain!——

Enter HAMET, *in chains,*

Timur. Thou art the youth,
Who mowed our battle down, and fleshed your sword
In many a slaughtered Tartar.
Hamet. True; I am.
Timur. Too well I marked thy rage, and saw thee hew
A wasteful passage through the embattled plain.
Hamet. Then, be thou witness for me, in that hour
I never shunned your thickest war; and if
In yonder field, where my poor countrymen,
In mangled heaps, lie many a rood extended,
Kind fate had doomed me to a noble fall,
With this right arm I earned it.
Timur. Say, what motive
Unsheathed thy rebel blade, and bade thee seek
These wars?
Hamet. The love of honourable deeds,
The groans of bleeding China, and the hate
Of tyrants.
Timur. Ha!—take heed, rash youth—I see
This lesson has been taught thee. Octar, haste,
Seek me the mandarin: let him forthwith
Attend me here. [*Exit Octar.*] Now tremble at my words!
Thy motive to these wars is known—thou art Zaphimri.
Hamet. I Zaphimri!
Timur. False one, yes:
Thou art Zaphimri—thou!—whom treacherous guile
Stole from my rage, and sent to distant wilds,
Till years and horrid counsel should mature thee
For war and wild commotion.
Hamet. I the prince!
The last of China's race! Nay, mock not majesty,
Nor with the borrowed robes of sacred kings
Dress up a wretch like me—Were I Zaphimri,
Think'st thou thy trembling eye could bear the shock
Of a much-injured king? Couldst thou sustain it?
Say, couldst thou bear to view a royal orphan,
Whose father, mother, brother, sisters, all,
Thy murderous arm hath long since laid in dust?
Whose native crown on thy ignoble brow
Thou darest dishonour?——whose wide-wasted country
Thy arms have made a wilderness?
Timur. I see
Thou hast been tutored in thy lone retreat
By some sententious pedant. Soon these vain,
These turgid maxims, shall be all subdued
By thy approaching death.
Hamet. Let death come on;
Guilt, guilt alone shrinks back appalled——the brave
And honest still defy his dart;—the wise
Calmly can eye his frown;—and misery
Invokes his friendly aid to end her woes.
Timur. Thy woes, presumptuous youth, with all my fears,
Shall soon lie buried.

Enter ZAMTI,

Timur. Now, pious false one, say, who is that youth?
Zamti. His air, his features, and his honest mien,
Proclaim all fair within. But, mighty sir,
I know him not.
Timur. Take heed, old man, nor dare,
As thou dost dread my power, to practise guile
Beneath a mask of sacerdotal perfidy:
Priestcraft, I think, calls it a pious fraud.
Zamti. Priestcraft and sacerdotal perfidy
To me are yet unknown. Religion's garb
Here never serves to consecrate a crime:
We have not yet, thank Heaven, so far imbibed
The vices of the north!
Timur. Thou vile impostor!
Avow Zaphimri, whom thy treacherous arts
Concealed from justice; or else desolation
Again shall ravage this devoted land.
Zamti. Alas! full well thou know'st, that arm already
Hath shed all royal blood.
Timur. Traitor, 'tis false!
By thee, vile slave, I have been wrought to think
The hated race destroyed: thy artful tale
Abused my credulous ear. But know, at length,
Some captive slaves, by my command impaled,
Have owned the horrid truth—have owned they fought
To seat Zaphimri on the throne of China.
Hear me, thou froward boy—darest thou be honest,
And answer who thou art?
Hamet. Dare I be honest!
I dare!—a mind, grown up in native honour,
Dares not be otherwise—then, if thy troops

Ask from the lightning of whose blade they fled,
Tell them 'twas Hamet's.
Zamti. 'Tis—it is my son!——
My boy—my Hamet!—— [*Aside.*
Timur. Where was your abode?
Hamet. Far hence remote, in Corea's happy realm,
Where the first beams of day, with orient blushes,
Tinge the salt wave: there, on the sea-beat shore,
A cavern rock yielded a lone retreat
To virtuous Morat.
Zamti. Oh! ill-fated youth! [*Aside.*
Hamet. The pious hermit, in that moss-grown dwelling,
Found an asylum from heart-piercing woes,
From slavery, and that restless din of arms,
With which thy fell ambition shook the world.
There too the sage nurtured my greener years;
With him and contemplation have I walked
The paths of wisdom: what the great Confucius
Of moral beauty taught, whate'er the wise,
Still wooing knowledge in her secret haunts,
Disclosed of Nature to the sons of men,
My wondering mind has heard: but above all,
The hermit taught me the most useful science,
That noble science to be brave and good.
Zamti. Oh! lovely youth! at every word he utters,
A soft effusion, mixed of grief and joy,
Flows o'er my heart. [*Aside.*
Timur. Who, said he, was your father?
Hamet. My birth the pious sage—I know not why——
Still wrapped in silence; and when urged to tell,
He only answered that a time might come,
I should not blush to know my father.
Timur. Now,
With truth declare, hast thou ne'er heard of Zamti?
Hamet. Of Zamti! Oft, enraptured with his name,
My heart has glowed within me, as I heard
The praises of the godlike man.
Timur. Thou slave, [*To Zamti.*
Each circumstance arraigns thy guilt!
Hamet. Oh! Heavens!
Can that be Zamti?
Timur. Yes, that is the traitor.
Hamet. Let me adore his venerable form,
Thus on my knees adore—
Zamti. I cannot look upon him,
Lest tenderness dissolve my feeble powers,
And wrest my purpose from me— [*Aside.*
Timur. Hence, vain boy!
Thou specious traitor! thou false, hoary moralist! [*To Zamti.*
Confusion has o'erta'en thy subtle frauds.
To make my crown's assurance firm, that none
Hereafter shall aspire to wrench it from me,
Vow own your fancied king; or, by yon heaven,
To make our vengeance sure, through all the east
Each youth shall die, and carnage thin mankind,
Till in the general wreck your boasted Orphan
Shall undistinguished fall. Thou know'st my word
Is fate. Octar, draw near—when treason lurks,
Each moment's big with danger—thou observe
These my commands——
[*Talks apart to Octar.*
Zamti. Now, virtuous cruelty repress my tears!
Cease your soft conflict, Nature! Hear me, Tartar:
That youth—his air—his every look unmans me quite.
Timur. Wilt thou begin, dissembler?
Zamti. Down, down, down——
It must be so, or all is lost—That youth,
I've dealt by him—as every king could wish
In a like case, his faithful subjects would.
Timur. Dost thou, then, own it? Triumph, Timurkan,
And in Zaphimri's grave lie hushed my fears!
Brave Octar, let the victim straight be led
To yonder sacred fane: there, in the view
Of my rejoicing Tartars, the declining sun
Shall see him offered to our living Lama,
For this day's conquest: thence a golden train
Of radiant years shall mark my future sway.
[*Exit.*
Zamti. Flow, flow my tears, and ease this aching breast!
Hamet. Nay, do not weep for me, thou good old man!
If it will close the wounds of bleeding China,
That a poor wretch, like me, must yield his life,
I give it freely. If I am a king,
Though sure it cannot be, what greater blessing
Can a young prince enjoy, than to diffuse,
By one great act, that happiness on millions,
For which his life should be a round of care?
Come, lead me to my fate.
[*Exit with Octar, &c.*
Zamti. Hold, hold, my heart!
My gallant, generous youth! Mandane's air,
His mother's dear resemblance, rives my soul.
Man. [*Within.*] Oh! let me fly, and find the barbarous man!
Where—where is Zamti?
Zamti. Ha! 'tis Mandane——
Wild as the winds, the mother all alive
In every heart-string, the forlorn one comes
To claim her boy!

Enter MANDANE.

Man. And can it then be true?
Is human nature exiled from thy breast?
Art thou indeed so barbarous?
Zamti. Loved Mandane,
Fix not your scorpions here; a bearded shaft
Already drinks my spirits up.
Man. I've seen
The trusty Morat—Oh! I have heard it all!
He would have shunned my steps; but what can 'scape

The eye of tenderness like mine?
Zamti. By Heaven
I cannot speak to thee!
Man. Think'st thou those tears,
Those false, those cruel tears, will choak the voice
Of a fond mother's love, now stung to madness?
Oh! I will rend the air with lamentations,
Root up this hair, and beat this throbbing breast,
Turn all connubial joys to bitterness,
To fell despair, to anguish and remorse,
Unless my son——
Zamti. Thou ever faithful woman,
Oh! leave me to my woes!
Man. Give me my child,
Thou worse than Tartar! give me back my son!
Oh! give him to a mother's eager arms,
And let me strain him to my heart!
Zamti. Heaven knows
How dear my boy is here! But our first duty
Now claims attention—to our country's love
All other tender fondnesses must yield:
I was a subject ere I was a father.
Man. You were a savage bred in Scythian wilds,
And humanizing pity never reached
Your heart—Was it for this—oh! thou unkind one!
Was it for this—oh! thou inhuman father!
You wooed me to your nuptial bed? So long
Have I then clasped thee in these circling arms,
And made this breast your pillow? Cruel, say,
Are these your vows? are these your fond endearments?
Nay, look upon me—if this wasted form,
These faded eyes have turned your heart against me,
With grief for you I withered in my bloom.
Zamti. Why wilt thou pierce my heart?
Man. Alas! my son,
Have I then bore thee in these matron arms,
To see thee bleed? Thus dost thou then return?
This could your mother hope, when first she sent
Her infant exile to a distant clime?
Ah! could I think thy early love of fame
Would urge thee to this peril? thus to fall,
By a stern father's will—by thee to die!
From thee, inhuman, to receive his doom:
Murdered by thee! Yet hear me, Zamti, hear me—
Thus, on my knees—I threaten now no more—
'Tis Nature's voice that pleads—Nature alarmed,
Quick, trembling, wild, touched to her inmost feeling,
When force would tear her tender young ones from her.
Zamti. Nay, seek not, with enfeebling fond ideas,
To swell the flood of grief—it is in vain—
He must submit to fate!
Man. Barbarian! no—— [*She rises hastily*
He shall not die—rather—I prithee, Zamti,
Urge not a grief-distracted woman: tremble
At the wild fury of a mother's love!
Zamti. I tremble rather at a breach of oaths.
But thou! break thine—bathe your perfidious hands
In this life-blood—betray the righteous cause
Of all our sacred kings.
Man. Our kings! our kings!
What are the sceptered rulers of the world?
Formed of one common clay, are they not all
Doomed with each subject, with the meanest slave,
To drink the cup of human woe? alike
All levelled by affliction? Sacred kings!
'Tis human policy sets up their claim—
Mine is a mother's cause—mine is the cause
Of husband, wife, and child: those tenderest ties!
Superior to your right divine of kings!——
Zamti. Then go, Mandane—thou once faithful woman,
Dear to this heart in vain: go, and forget
Those virtuous lessons, which I oft have taught thee,
In fond credulity, while on each word
You hung enamoured. Go, to Timurkan
Reveal the awful truth. Be thou spectatress
Of murdered majesty. Embrace your son,
And let him lead, in shame and servitude,
A life ignobly bought. Then let those eyes,
Those faded eyes, which grief for me hath dimmed,
With guilty joy re-animate their lustre,
To brighten slavery, and beam their fires
On the fell Scythian murderer.
Man. And is it thus,
Thus is Mandane known? My soul disdains
The vile imputed guilt. No—never—never—
Still I am true to fame. Come, lead me hence,
Where I may lay down life to save Zaphimri.
But save my Hamet too. Then, then you'll find
A heart beats here, as warm and great as thine.
Zamti. Then make with me one strong, one glorious effort,
And rank with those, who, from the first of time,
In Fame's eternal archives stand revered,
For conquering all the dearest ties of Nature,
To serve the general weal.
Man. That savage virtue
Loses with me its horrid charms. I have sworn
To save my king. But should a mother turn
A dire assassin? oh! I cannot bear
The piercing thought! Distraction, quick distraction
Will seize my brain. Think thou beholdst my Hamet,
The dear, the lovely youth, my blooming hero!
Think thou beholdst him—See! my child! my child!
By guards surrounded, a devoted victim!
Barbarian, hold—ah! see, he dies! he dies!
[*She faints into Zamti's arms.*

Zamti. Where is Arsace? Fond maternal love
Shakes her weak frame.

Enter ARSACE.

Quickly, Arsace, help
This ever-tender creature. Wandering life
Rekindles in her cheek. Soft, lead her off
To where the fanning breeze, in yonder bower,
May woo her spirits back—Propitious Heaven!
Pity the woundings of a father's heart!
Pity my strugglings with this best of women!
Support our virtue! kindle in our souls
A ray of your divine enthusiasm;
Such as inflames the patriot's breast, and lifts
The impassioned mind to that sublime of virtue,
That even on the rack it feels the good,
Which, in a single hour, it works for millions,
And leaves the legacy to after times!

[*Exit, leading off Mandane.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Temple. Several tombs up and down the stage.*

Enter MORAT.

Morat. This is the place—these the long winding aisles,
The solemn arches, whose religious awe
Attunes the mind to melancholy musing,
Such as befits free men reduced to slaves.
Here Zamti meets his friends. Amid these tombs,
Where lie the sacred manes of our kings,
They pour their orisons——hold converse here
With the illustrious shades of murdered heroes,
And meditate a great revenge——(*a groan is heard*) A groan!
The burst of anguish from some care-worn wretch,
That sorrows o'er his country—ha! 'tis Zamti!

ZAMTI *comes out of a tomb.*

Zamti. Who's he, that seeks these mansions of the dead?
Morat. The friend of Zamti and of China.
Zamti. Morat!
Come to my arms, thou good, thou best of men;
I have been weeping o'er the sacred reliques
Of a dear murdered king—Where are our friends?
Hast seen Orasming?
Morat. Through these vaults of death
Lonely he wanders, plunged in deep despair.
Zamti. Hast thou not told him? hast thou nought revealed
Touching Zaphimri?
Morat. There will I wait thy will——
Zamti. Oh! thou art ever faithful! on thy lips
Sits pensive Silence, with her hallowed finger,
Guarding the pure recesses of thy mind.
But, lo! they come.

Enter ORASMING, ZIMVENTI, *and others.*

Zamti. Droop ye, my gallant friends?
Oras. Oh! Zamti, all is lost! Our dreams of liberty
Are vanished into air. Nought now avails
Integrity of life. E'en Heaven, combined
With lawless might, abandons us and virtue.
Zamti. Can your great souls thus shrink within ye? thus
From heroes will ye dwindle into slaves?
Oras. Oh! could you give us back Zaphimri! then
Danger would smile, and lose it's face of horror.
Zamti. What! would his presence fire ye?
Oras. 'Twould, by Heaven!
Zim. This night should free us from the Tartar's yoke.
Zamti. Then mark the care of the all-gracious gods!
This youthful captive, whom in chains they hold,
Is not Zaphimri.
Oras. } Not Zaphimri!
Zim. }
Zamti. No!
Unconscious of himself, and to the world unknown,
He walks at large among us.
Oras. Heavenly powers!
Zamti. This night, my friends, this very night to rise
Refulgent from a blow, that frees us all—
From the usurper's fate! the first of men,
Deliverer of his country!——
Oras. Mighty gods!
Can this be possible?
Zamti. It is most true.
I'll bring him to ye straight—(*calling to Etan, within the tomb*) What ho! come forth—
You seem transfixed with wonder! oh! my friends,
Watch all the motions of your rising spirit,
Direct your ardour, when anon you hear
What fate, long pregnant with the vast event,
Is labouring into birth.

ETAN *comes out of the tomb.*

Etan. Each step I move
A deeper horror sits on all the tombs;
Each shrine, each altar seems to shake, as if
Conscious of some important crisis.
Zamti. Yes!
A crisis, great indeed, is now at hand!
Heaven holds it's golden balance forth, and weighs
Zaphimri's and the Tartar's destiny,
While hovering angels tremble round the beam.
Hast thou beheld that picture?

Etan. Fixed attention
Hath paused on every part; yet still to me
It shadows forth the forms of things unknown;
All imagery obscure, and wrapt in darkness.
Zamti. That darkness my informing breath shall clear,
As morn dispels the night. Lo! here displayed
This mighty kingdom's fall,——
Etan. Alas! my father,
At sight of these sad colourings of woe,
Our tears will mix with honest indignation.
Zamti. Nay, but survey it closer——see that child,
That royal infant, the last sacred relic
Of China's ancient line—see where a mandarin
Conveys the babe to his wife's fostering breast,
There to be nourished in an humble state;
While their own son is sent to climes remote,
That, should the dire usurper e'er suspect
The prince alive, he, in his stead, might bleed,
And mock the murderer's rage.
Etan. Amazement thrills
Through all my frame, and my mind, big with wonder,
Feels every power suspended!
Zamti. Rather say,
That strong imagination burns within thee——
Dost thou not feel a more than common ardour?
Etan. By Heaven! my soul dilates with some new impulse;
Some strange inspired emotion—Would the hour
Of fate were come!—this night my dagger's hilt
I'll bury in the tyrant's heart.
Zamti. Wilt thou?
Etan. By all the mighty dead, that round us lie,
By all who this day groan in chains, I will.
Zamti. And when thou dost—then tell him 'tis the prince
That strikes!
Etan. The prince's wrongs shall nerve my arm
With tenfold rage.
Zamti. Nay, but the prince himself!
Etan. What says my father?
Zamti. Thou art China's orphan;
The last of all our kings—no longer Etan,
But now Zaphimri!
Zaph. Ha!
Oras. O wondrous hand
Of Heaven!
Zaph. A crowd of circumstances rise——
Thy frequent hints obscure——thy pious care
To train my youth to greatness.—Lend your aid
To my astonished powers, that feebly bear
This unexpected shock of royalty!
Zamti. Thou noble youth, now put forth all your strength,
And let Heaven's vengeance brace each sinew.
Zaph. Vengeance!
That word has shot its lighting through my soul.
But tell me, Zamti—still 'tis wonder all——
Am I, indeed, the royal orphan?
Zamti. Thou——
Thou art the king, whom, as my humble son,
I've nurtured in humanity and virtue.
Thy foes could never think to find thee here,
Even in the lion's den; and therefore here
I've fixed thy safe asylum, while my son
Hath dragged his life in exile.—Oh! my friends,
Morat will tell ye all—each circumstance.
Meantime—there is your king!
[*All kneel to him.*
Oras. } Long live the father of the eastern
Zim. } world!
Zamti. Sole governor of earth!——
Zaph. All-ruling powers!
Is then a great revenge for all the wrongs
Of bleeding China—are the fame and fate
Of all posterity included here
Within my bosom? [*They all rise.*
Zamti. Yes; they are:—the shades
Of your great ancestors now rise before thee,
Heroes and demi-gods——Aloud they call
For the fell Tartar's blood.
Zaph. Oh, Zamti! all,
That can alarm the powers of man, now stirs
In this expanding breast——
Zamti. Anon to burst,
With hideous ruin, on the foe.——My gallant heroes,
Are our men stationed at their posts?
Oras. They are.
Zamti. Is every gate secured?
Oras. All safe.
Zamti. The signal fixed?
Oras. It is.—Will Mirvan join us?
Zamti. Doubt him not.
In bitterness of soul he counts his wrongs,
And pants for vengeance——would have joined ye here,
But, favoured as he is, his post requires him
About the Tartar's person. The assault begun,
He'll turn his arms upon the astonished foe,
And add new horrors to the wild commotion.
Zaph. Now, bloody spoiler! now thy hour draws nigh,
And, ere the dawn, thy guilty reign shall end.
Zamti. How my heart burns within me!—Oh! my friends,
Call now to mind the scene of desolation,
Which Timurkan, in one accursed hour,
Heaped on this groaning land!—Even now I see
The savage bands, o'er reeking hills of dead,
Forcing their rapid way.—I see them urge,
With rage unhallowed, to this sacred temple,
Where good Osmintgi, with his queen and children,
Fatigued the gods averse. See where Arphisa,
Rending the air with agonizing shrieks,
Tears her dishevelled hair:—then, with a look
Fixed on her babes, grief chokes its passage up,
And all the feelings of a mother's breast
Throbbing in one mixed pang, breathless she faints
Within her husband's arms. Adown his cheek,
In copious streams, fast flowed the manly sorrow;

While, clustering round his knees, his little offspring,
In tears all-eloquent, with arms outstretched,
Sue for parental aid.——
Zaph. Go on—the tale
Will fit me for a scene of horror.
Zamti. Oh! my prince,
The charge, which your great father gave me, still
Sounds in my ear. Ere yet the foe burst in,
'Zamti,' said he—Ah! that imploring eye!
That agonizing look!——
Preserve my little boy, my cradled infant—
Shield him from ruffians——train his youth to virtue:——
Virtue will rouse him to a great revenge;
Or failing, virtue shall still make him happy.'
He could no more—the cruel spoiler seized him
And dragged my king—my ever honoured king—
The father of his people—basely dragged him,
By his white reverend locks, from yonder altar,
Here—on the blood-stained pavement; while the queen,
And her dear fondlings, in one mingled heap,
Died in each other's arms!
Zaph. Revenge! revenge!
With more than lion's nerve I'll spring upon him,
And at one blow relieve the groaning world.
Let us this moment carry sword and fire
To yon devoted walls, and whelm him down
In ruin and dismay!
Zamti. Zaphimri, no.
By rashness you may mar a noble cause.
To you, my friends, I render up my charge——
To you I give your king. Farewell, my sovereign!
Zaph. Thou good, thou godlike man!—a thousand feelings
Of warmest friendship—all the tendencies
Of heart-felt gratitude are struggling here,
And fain would speak to thee, my more than father!
—Farewell!—sure we shall meet again!
Zamti. We shall——
Zaph. Farewell!—Zamti, farewell!—[*Embraces him.*]—Orasming, now
The noblest duty calls us. Now remember
We are the men, whom, from all human kind,
Our fate hath now selected, to come forth
Asserters of the public weal;—to drench our swords
In the oppressor's heart;—to do a deed
Which Heaven, intent on its own holy work,
Shall pause with pleasure to behold.
[*Exit, with conspirators.*
Zamti. May the Most High
Pour down his blessings on him! and anon,
In the dead waste of night, when awful justice
Walks, with her crimson steel, o'er slaughtered heaps
Of groaning Tartars, may he then direct
His youthful footsteps through the paths of peril!
Oh, may he guide the horrors of the storm,
An angel of your wrath, to point your vengeance
On every guilty head! Then, then 'twill be enough;
When you have broken the oppressor's rod,
Your reign will then be manifest—Mankind will see
That truth and goodness still obtain your care—
[*A dead march.*
What mean those deathful sounds?—Again!—They lead
My boy to slaughter!—Oh! look down, ye Heavens!
Look down propitious!—Teach me to subdue
That nature which ye gave!——— [*Exit.*

A dead march. Enter HAMET, OCTAR, *Guards, &c.*

Octar. Here let the victim fall, and with his blood
Wash his forefathers' tomb. Here ends the hated race.
The eastern world, through all her wide domain,
Shall then submissive feel the Scythian yoke,
And yield to Timurkan.
Hamet. [*Standing by the tomb.*] Where is the tyrant? I would have him see,
With envy see, the unconquered power of Virtue;
How it can calmly bleed, smile on his racks,
And with strong pinion soar above his power,
To regions of perennial day.
Octar. The father
Of the whole eastern world shall mark thee well,
When, at to-morrow's dawn, thy breathless corse
Is borne through all our streets for public view.
It now befits thee to prepare for death.
Hamet. I am prepared. I have no lust or rapine,
No murders to repent of. Undismayed,
I can behold all-judging Heaven, whose hand,
Still compassing it's wondrous ends, by means
Inextricable to all mortal clue,
Hath now inclosed me in it's awful maze.
Since 'tis by your decree that, thus beset,
The inexorable angel hovers o'er me,
Be your great bidding done!
Octar. The sabre's edge
Thirsts for his blood—then let it's lightning fall
On his aspiring head. [*Guards seize Hamet.*
Man. [*within*] Off—set me free!—inhuman, barbarous ruffians!——
Octar. What means that woman with dishevelled hair,
And wild extravagance of woe?
Man. My griefs
Scorn all restraint—I must—I will have way!
[*She enters, and throws herself on her knees.*
Me—me—on me convert your rage—plunge deep,
Deep in this bosom your abhorred steel,
But spare his precious life!
Octar. Hence, quickly bear
This wild, this frantic woman!
Man. Never, never——
You shall not force me hence. Here will I cling

Fast to the earth, and rivet here my hands,
In all the fury of the last despair!
He is my child!——my dear, dear son!
Octar. How, woman!
Said'st thou your son?
Man. Yes, Octar, mine;—my son,
My boy—my Hamet! [*she rises, and embraces him*] Let my eager love
Fly all unbounded to him—oh! my child!—my child!
Octar. Suspend the stroke, ye ministers of death,
Till Timurkan hear of this new event.
Meantime, thou, Mirvan, speed in quest of Zamti,
And let him answer here this wondrous tale.
[*Exit.*
Mir. The time demands his presence; or despair
May wring each secret from her tender breast;
[*Aside.*
And then our glorious, fancied pile of freedom,
At one dire stroke, shall tumble into nought.
[*Exit.*
Man. Why did'st thou dare return?—ah! rather
Did'st thou so long defer, with every grace,
And every growing virtue, thus to raise
Your mother's dear delight to rapture?
Hamet. Lost
In the deep mists of darkling ignorance,
To me my birth's unknown—but sure that look,
Those tears, those shrieks, that animated grief,
Defying danger, all declare the effect
Of Nature's strugglings in a parent's heart.
Then let me pay my filial duty here,
Kneel to her native dignity, and pour
In tears of joy the transport of a son!
Man. Thou art, thou art my son!—thy father's face,
His ev'ry feature, blooming in his boy!
Oh! tell me, tell me all—how hast thou lived
With faithful Morat!—how did he support
In dreary solitude thy tender years?—
How train thy growing mind?—oh! quickly tell me,
Oh! tell me all, and charm me with thy tongue!
Hamet. Mysterious Powers! have I then lived to this,
In the hour of peril thus to find a parent,
In virtue firm, majestic in distress,
At length to feel unutterable bliss
In her dear circling arms——— [*They embrace.*

Enter TIMURKAN, OCTAR, *&c.*

Timur. Where is this wild
Outrageous woman, who, with headlong grief,
Suspends my dread command?—Tear them asunder!
Send her to some dark cell to rave and shriek,
And dwell with madness—and let instant death
Leave that rash youth a headless trunk before me.
Man. Now, by the ever-burning lamps that light
Our holy shrines, by great Confucius' altar,
By the prime source of life, and light, and being,
That is my child, the blossom of my joys!
Send for his cruel father—he—'tis he
Intends a fraud—he, for a stranger's life,
Would yield his offspring to the cruel axe,
An I rend a wretched mother's brain with madness!

Enter ZAMTI.

Zamti. Sure the sad accents of Mandane's voice
Struck on my frighted sense!
Timur. Once more, thou slave!
Who is that stubborn youth?
Zamti. Alas! what needs
This iteration of my griefs?
Man. Oh! horror!—horror!
Thou marble-hearted father!—'tis your child,
And wouldst thou see him bleed?
Zamti. On him!—on him
Let fall your rage, and ease my soul at once
Of all it's fears!
Man. Oh! my devoted child!— [*She faints.*
Hamet. Support her, Heaven! support her tender frame!——
Now, tyrant, now I beg to live—[*kneels*] lo! here
I plead for life; not for the wretched boon
To breathe the air, which thy ambition taints;
But oh! to ease a mother's pains; for her,
For that dear object—oh! let me live for her!
Timur. Now by the conquests this good sword has won,
In her wild vehemence of grief I hear
The genuine voice of nature.
Man. [*Recovering.*] Ah! where is he?
He is my son! my child! and not Zaphimri!
Oh! let me clasp thee to my heart! thy hard,
Thy cruel father shall not tear thee from me!
Timur. Hear me, thou frantic mourner, dry those tears—
Perhaps you still may save this darling son.
Man. Ah! quickly name the means!
Timur, Give up your king,
Your phantom of a king, to sate my vengeance.
Hamet. Oh! my much honoured mother, never hear
The base, the dire proposal! let me rather
Exhaust my life-blood at each gushing vein.
Mandane, then—then you may well rejoice
To find your child—then you may truly know
The best delight a mother's heart can prove,
When her son dies with glory.
Timur. Curses blast
The stripling's pride! [*Talks apart with Octar.*
Zamti. Ye venerable host,
Ye mighty shades of China's royal line,
Forgive the joy that mingles with my tears,

When I behold him still alive! Propitious powers!
You never meant entirely to destroy
This bleeding country, when your kind indulgence
Lends us a youth like him.
Oh! I can hold no more—let me enfold
That lovely ardour in his father's arms—
My brave—my generous boy! [*Embraces him.*
Timur. Dost thou at length
Confess it, traitor?
Zamti. Yes, I boast it, tyrant;
Boast it to thee—to earth and heaven I boast,
This—this is Zamti's son!
Hamet. At length the hour,
The glorious hour is come, by Morat promised,
When Hamet shall not blush to know his father.
[*Kneels to him.*
Zamti. Oh! thou intrepid youth! what bright reward
Can your glad sire bestow on such desert?
The righteous gods, and your own inward feelings
Shall give the sweetest retribution. Now,
Mandane, now my soul forgives thee all,
Since I have made acquaintance with my son:
Thy lovely weakness I can now excuse;
But oh! I charge thee by a husband's right——
Timur. A husband's right! a traitor has no right—
Society disclaims him—Woman, hear——
Mark well my words—Discolour not thy soul
With the black hue of crimes like his—renounce
All hymeneal vows, and take again
Your much-loved boy to his fond mother's arms,
While justice whirls that traitor to his fate.
Man. Thou vile adviser!—what, betray my lord,
My honoured husband? Turn a Scythian wife?
Forget the many years of fond delight,
In which my soul ne'er knew decreasing love,
Charmed with his noble, all-accomplished mind?
No, tyrant, no! with him I will rather die;
With him in ruin more supremely blest,
Than guilt triumphant on its throne.
Zamti. Now then,
Inhuman Tartar, I defy thy power.
Lo! here, the father, mother, and the son!
Try all your tortures on us—here we stand,
Resolved to leave a tract of bright renown
To mark our beings—all resolved to die
The votaries of honour!
Timur. Then die ye shall—what, ho! guards, seize the slaves,
Deep in some baleful dungeon's midnight gloom,
Let each apart be plunged—and Etan too—
Let him be forthwith found—he too shall share
His father's fate.
Mir. Be it my task, dread sir,
To make the rack ingenious in new pains,
Till even cruelty almost relent
At their keen, agonizing groans.
Timur. Be that,
Mirvan, thy care. Now, by the immortal Lama,
I will wrest this mystery from them—else the dawn
Shall see me up in arms—against Corea's chief
I will unfurl my banners—his proud cities
Shall dread my thunder at their gates, and mourn
Their smoaking ramparts—o'er his verdant plains
And peaceful vales I will drive my warlike car,
And deluge all the east with blood. [*Exit.*
Octar. Mirvan, do thou bear hence those miscreant slaves;
Thou, Zamti, art my charge.
[*Laying hold of him.*
Zamti. Willing I come— [*Shakes him off.*
The steady mind can scorn your mansions drear,
And brighten horror with its noon-tide ray.
Mandane, summon all thy strength. My son,
Thy father doubts not of thy fortitude.
[*Exit, guarded by Octar.*
Man. Allow me but one last embrace—
Hamet. Oh! mother, [*To the Guards.*
Would I could rescue thee!
Man. Lost, lost again!
Hamet. Inhuman, bloody Tartars!
Oh! farewell!——[*Both together.*]
[*Exeunt, on different sides.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A prison.* HAMET *in chains.*

Enter ZAPHIMRI, *(disguised in a Tartar dress) with* MIRVAN.

Mir. THERE stretched at length on the dark ground he lies,
Scorning his fate. Your meeting must be short.
Zaph. It shall——
Mir. And yet I tremble for the event:
Why wouldst thou venture to this place of danger!
Zaph. And canst thou deem me, then, so mean of spirit,
To dwell secure in ignominious safety,
With cold insensibility to wait
The lingering hours—with coward patience wait them,
Deliberating on myself, while ruin
Nods over Zamti's house?
Mir. Yet whilst thou art here,
Thy fate's suspended on each dreadful moment.
Zaph. I will hold converse with him, even though death
Were armed against the interview. [*Exit Mirvan.*
Hamet. [*Still on the ground.*] What wouldst thou, Tartar?

Zaph. Rise, noble youth——no vulgar errand mine——
Hamet. [*Comes forward.*[Now speak thy purpose.
Zaph. Under this disguise——
Hamet. If under that disguise, a murderer's dagger
Thirst for my blood—thus I can meet the blow.
[*Throwing himself open.*
Zaph. No ruffian's purpose lurks within this bosom.
To these lone walls, where oft the Scythian stabber,
With murderous stride, hath come; these walls that oft
Have seen the assassin's deeds—I bring a mind
Firm, virtuous, upright. Under this vile garb,
Lo! here a son of China. [*Opens his dress.*
Hamet. Yes, thy garb
Denotes a son of China; and those eyes
Roll with no black intent. Say on——
Zaph. Inflamed with admiration of heroic deeds,
I come to seek acquaintance with the youth,
Who for his king would bravely die!
Hamet. Say then,
Dost thou applaud the deed?
Zaph. By Heaven, I do.
Yes, virtuous envy rises in my soul—
Thy ardour charms me, and even now I pant
To change conditions with thee.
Hamet. Then my heart
Accepts thy proffered friendship. In a base,
A prone, degenerate age, when foreign force
And foreign manners have o'erwhelmed us all,
And sunk our native genius—thou retainest
A sense of antient worth. But wherefore here,
To this sad mansion, this abode of sorrow,
Com'st thou to know a wretch that soon must die?
Zaph. By Heaven, thou shalt not die—I come to speak
The gladsome tidings of a happier fate,
By me Zaphimri sends——
Hamet. Zaphimri sends!
Kind powers! Where is the king?
Zaph. His steps are safe;
Unseen as is the arrow's path. By me he says,
He knows, he loves, he wonders at thy virtue.
By me he swears, rather than thou should'st fall,
He will emerge from dark obscurity,
And greatly brave his fate.
Hamet. Ha! die for me!
For me, ignoble in the scale of being!
An unimportant wretch! Whoe'er thou art,
I prithee, stranger, bear my answer back—
Oh! tell my sovereign that here dwells a heart
Superior to all peril. When I fall,
A worm—an insect dies! But in his life
Are wrapped the glories of our ancient line,
The liberties of China! Then let him
Live for his people—be it mine to die.
Zaph. Can I bear this, ye powers, and not dissolve
In tears of gratitude and love? [*Aside.*
Hamet. Why streams
That flood of grief? and why that stifled groan?
Through the dark mist his sorrow casts around him,
He seems no common man. Say, generous youth,
Who, and what art thou?
Zaph. Who, and what am I?
Thou lead'st me to a precipice, from whence
Downward to look, turns wild the maddening brain,
Scared at the unfathomable deep below.
Who, and what am I? Oh! the veriest wretch,
That ever yet groaned out his soul in anguish!
One lost, abandoned, hopeless, plunged in woe
Beyond redemption's aid. To tell thee all
In one dire word, big with the last distress,
In one accumulated term of horror——
Zaphimri!——
Hamet. Said'st thou!——
Zaph. He!—that fatal wretch,
Exalted into misery supreme.
Oh! I was happy, while, good Zamti's son,
I walked the common tracts of life, and strove
Humbly to copy my imagined sire.
But now——
Hamet. Yes, now—if thou art he—as sure
'Tis wond'rous like—raised to a state, in which
A nation's happiness on thee depends—
Zaph. A nation's happiness! There, there I bleed!
There are my pangs! For me this war began,
For me hath purple slaughter drenched yon fields;
I am the cause of all. I forged those chains—
For Zamti and Mandane too—Oh! Heavens!—
Them have I thrown into a dungeon's gloom.
These are the horrors of Zaphimri's reign.
I am the tyrant!—I ascend the throne,
By trampling on the neck of innocence—
By base ingratitude! by the vile means
Of selfish cowardice, that can behold
Thee, and thy father, mother, all in chains,
All lost, all murdered, that I thence may rise
Inglorious to a throne!
Hamet. Alas! thy spirit,
Thy wild disordered fancy pictures forth
Ills that are not—or, being ills, not worth
A moment's pause.
Zaph. Not ills! Thou canst not mean it.
Oh! I am environed with the worst of woes!
The angry fates, amidst their hoards of vengeance,
Had nought but this—they meant to render me
Peculiarly distressed. Tell me, thou gallant youth—
A soul like thine knows every fine emotion—
Is there a nerve, in which the heart of man
Can prove such torture, as when thus it meets

Unequalled friendship, honour, truth, and love,
And no return can make?———Oh! tis too much,
Ye mighty gods, too much—thus, thus to be
A feeble prince, a shadow of a king,
Without the power to wreak revenge on guilt,
Without the power of doing virtue right!
Hamet. That power will come.
Zaph. But when?—when thou art lost,
When Zamti and Mandane are destroyed.
Oh for a dagger's point, to plunge it deep,
Deep in this—ha! deep in the tyrant's heart!
Hamet. There your revenge should point. For that great deed
Heaven hath watched all thy ways; and wilt thou, now,
With headlong rage spurn at its guardian care,
Nor wait the movements of eternal justice?
Zaph. Ha!—whither has my frenzy strayed? Yes, Heaven
Has been all-bounteous Righteous powers!
To you my orisons are due—But oh!
Complete your goodness: save this valiant youth:
Save Zamti's house; and then—if such your will,
That from the Tartar's head my arm this night
Shall grasp the crown of China—teach me, then,
To bear your dread vicegerency—I stand
Resigned to your high will.
Hamet. And Heaven, I trust,
Will still preserve thee; in its own good time
Will finish its decrees.
Zaph. Yes, Hamet, yes;
A gleam of hope remains. Should Timurkan
Defer his murder to the midnight hour,
Then will I come, then burst these guilty walls,
Rend those vile manacles, and give thee freedom.
Hamet. Oh! no—you must not risk.
Zaph. A band of heroes
For this are ready; honourably leagued
To vindicate their rights. Thy father's care
Planned and inspired the whole. Among the troops,
Nay, in his very guards, there are not wanting
Some gallant sons of China, in that hour,
Who will discover their long pent-up fury,
And deal destruction round.
Hamet. What—all convened,
And every thing disposed?
Zaph. Determined!—Now
In silent terror all intent they stand,
And wait the signal in each gale that blows.
Hamet. Why didst thou venture forth?
Zaph. What! poorly lurk
While my friends die!—that thought—but, generous youth,
I'll not think meanly of thee—No—that thought
Is foreign to thy heart.
Hamet. But think, my prince,
On China's wrongs, the dying heroes' groans;
Think on thy ancestors.
Zaph. My ancestors!
What is it to me a long-descended line,
A race of worthies, legislators, heroes,
Unless I bring their virtues too? No more—
Thy own example fires me. Near this place
I'll take my stand, and watch their busy motions,
Until the general roar; then will I come,
And arm thee for the assault.
Hamet. Oh! if thou dost,
Yet once again I'll wield the deathful blade,
And bear against the foe.
Zaph. Yes, thou and I
Will rush together through the paths of death,
Mow down our way, and with sad overthrow
Pursue the Tartar—like two rushing torrents,
That from the mountain's top, 'midst roaring caves,
'Midst rocks and rent-up trees, foam headlong down,
And each depopulates his way.——
[*A flourish of trumpets.*
Hamet. What means
That sudden and wild harmony?
Zaph. Even now
The conqueror, and his fell barbaric rout,
For this day's victory indulge their joy;
Joy soon to end in groans—for all conspires
To forward our design—and lo! the lights
That whilom blazed to heaven, now rarely seen,
Shed a pale glimmer, and the foe secure
Sinks down in deep debauch; while all awake,
The genius of this land broods o'er the work
Of justice and revenge.
Hamet. Oh! revel on!
Still unsuspecting plunge in guilty joy,
And bury thee in riot!
Zaph. Ne'er again
To wake from that vile trance—for, ere the dawn,
Detested spoiler, thy bot blood shall smoke
On the stained marble, and thy limbs abhorred
I'll scatter to the dogs of China.

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Break off your conference—Octar this way comes.
Zaph. This garb will cloak me from each hostile eye;
Thou need'st not fear detection.

Enter OCTAR.

Mir. There's your prisoner.
[*Pointing to Hamet.*
Octar. Lead him to where Mandane's matron grief
Rings through yon vaulted roof.
Hamet. Oh! lead me to her!
Let me give balm to her afflicted mind,
And soften anguish in a parent's breast.
[*Exit with Mirvan.*

Zaph. What may this mean? I dread some lurking mischief.

[*Exit on the opposite side.*

Octar. When the boy clings around his mother's heart
In fond endearment, then to tear him from her,
Will once again awaken all her tenderness,
And, in her impotence of grief, the truth
At length will burst its way. But Timurkan
Impatient comes.

Enter TIMURKAN.

Thus with disordered looks,
Why will my sovereign shun the genial banquet,
To seek a dungeon's gloom?

Timur. Oh, valiant Octar!
A more than midnight gloom involves my soul.
Hast thou beheld this stubborn mandarin?

Octar. I have; and tried, by every threatened vengeance,
To bend his soul: unconquered yet by words,
He smiles contempt; as if some inward joy,
Like the sun, labouring in a night of clouds,
Shot forth its gladdening unresisted beams,
Cheering the face of woe.

Timur. What of Mandane?

Octar. At first with tears and bitter lamentations,
She called on Hamet lost; but when I urged,
She still might save her boy, and save herself,
Would she but give Zaphimri to your wrath,
Her tears forgot to flow; her voice, her look,
Her colour sudden changed, and all her form,
Enlarging with the emotions of her soul,
Grew vaster to the sight. With blood-shot eyes
She cast a look of silent indignation,
Then turned in sullen mood away.

Timur. Perdition
O'erwhelm her pride!

Octar. Might I advise you, sir,
An artful tale of love should softly glide
To her afflicted soul—a conqueror's sighs
Will waft a thousand wishes to her heart,
Till female vanity aspire to reach
The eastern throne; and when her virtue melts
In the soft tumult of her gay desires,
Win from her every truth, then spurn to shame
The weak, deluded woman.

Timur. Octar, no:
I cannot stoop with love-sick adulation
To thrill in languishing desire, and try
The hopes, the fears, and the caprice of love.
Inured to rougher scenes, far other arts
My mind employed: to sling the well-stored quiver
Over this manly arm, and wing the dart
At the fleet rein-deer, sweeping down the vale,
Or up the mountain, straining every nerve;
To vault the neighing steed, and urge his course
Swifter than whirlwinds; through the ranks of war
To drive my chariot-wheels, smoking with gore:
These are my passions, this my only science,
Above the puling sicknesses of love.
Bring that vile slave, the hoary priest, before me.

[*Exit Octar.*

By Heaven, their fortitude erects a fence,
To shield them from my wrath, more powerful far
Than their high-boasted wall, which long hath stood
The shock of time, of war, of storms, and thunder,
The wonder of the world!
What art thou, Virtue, who can'st thus inspire
This stubborn pride, this dignity of soul,
And still unfading, beauteous in distress,
Can'st taste of joys my heart hath never known!

Enter ZAMTI, *in chains.*

Mark me, thou traitor! thy detested sight
Once more I brook, to try if yet the sense
Of deeds, abhorred as thine, has touched your soul.
Or clear this mystery, or, by yonder Heaven,
I'll hunt Zaphimri to his secret haunt,
Or spread a general carnage round the world.

Zamti. Thy rage is vain—far from thy ruthless power
Kind Heaven protects him, till the awful truth,
In some dread hour of horror and revenge,
Shall burst, like thunder, on thee.

Timur. Ha! beware——
Nor rouse my lion-rage—yet, ere 'tis late,
Repent thee of thy crimes.

Zamti. The crime would be
To yield to thy unjust commands. But know,
A louder voice than thine forbids the deed;
The voice of all my kings! Forth from their tombs
Even now, they send a peal of groans to Heaven,
Where all thy murders are long since gone up,
And stand in dread array against thee.

Timur. Murders!
Ungrateful mandarin! Say, did not I,
When civil discord lighted up her brand,
And scattered wide her flames—when fierce contention
'Twixt Xohohamti and Zaphimri's father
Sorely convulsed the realm—did not I, then,
Lead forth my Tartars from their northern frontier,
And bid fair order rise?

Zamti. Bid order rise!
Hast thou not smote us with a hand of wrath?
By thee each art has died, and every science
Gone out at thy fell blast. Art thou not come
To sack our cities, to subvert our temples,
The temples of our gods, and with the worship,
The monstrous worship, of your living Lama,
Profane our holy shrines?

Timur. Peace, insolent!
Nor dare, with horrid treason, to provoke
The wrath of injured majesty.

Zamti. Yes, tyrant!

Yes, thou hast smote us with a hand of wrath;
Full twenty years hast smote us; but at length
Will come the hour of Heaven's just visitation,
When thou shalt rue——hear me, thou man of blood——
Yes, thou shalt rue the day, when thy fell rage
Imbrued those hands in royal blood. Now tremble——
The arm of the Most High is barred against thee—
And see!—the hand of fate describes thy doom,
In glaring letters, on yon rubied wall!
Each gleam of light is perished out of Heaven,
And darkness rushes o'er the face of earth.

Timur. Think'st thou, vile slave, with visionary fears,
I e'er can shrink appalled? Thou moon-struck seer!
No more I'll bear this mockery of words:
Or straight resolve me, or, by hell and vengeance,
Unheard of torment waits thee!

Zamti. Know'st thou not
I offered up my boy? And after that,
After that conflict, think'st thou there is aught
Zamti has left to fear?——

Timur. Yes; learn to fear
My will, my sovereign will, which here is law,
And treads upon the neck of slaves.

Zamti. Thy will
The law in China! Ill-instructed man!
Now learn an awful truth—Though ruffian power
May for a while suppress all sacred order,
And trample on the rights of man, the soul,
Which gave our legislation life and vigour,
Shall still subsist, above the tyrant's reach:——
The spirit of the laws can never die.

Timur. I'll hear no more. What, ho!

Enter OCTAR *and Guards.*

Bring forth Mandane——
Ruin involves ye all—this very hour
Shall see your son impaled: yes, both your sons.
Let Etan be brought forth.

Octar. Etan, my liege,
Is fled for safety.

Timur. Thou pernicious slave! [*To Zamti.*
Him, too, would'st thou withdraw from justice? him
Wouldst thou send hence to Corea's realm, to brood
O'er some new work of treason? By the powers
Who feel a joy in vengeance, and delight
In human blood, I will unchain my fury
On all, who trace Zaphimri in his years!
But chief on thee and thy devoted race.

Enter MANDANE *and* HAMET. MIRVAN *guarding them, &c.*

Timur. Woman, attend my words——instant reveal
This dark conspiracy, and save thyself.
If, wilful, thou wilt spurn the joys that woo thee,
The rack shall have its prey.

Man. It is in vain.
I tell thee, homicide, my soul is bound
By solemn vows: and wouldst thou have me break,
What angels wafted on their wings to Heaven?

Timur. Renounce your rash resolves, nor court destruction.

Man. Goddess of vengeance! from your realms above,
Where near the throne of the Most High thou dwellest,
Insphered in darkness, amidst hoards of thunder,
Serenely dreadful, till dire human crimes
Provoke thee down; now, on the whirlwind's wing
Descend, and, with your flaming sword, your bolts,
Red with almighty wrath, let loose your rage,
And blast this vile seducer in his guilt!

Timur. Blind frantic woman!—think on your loved boy.

Man. That tender struggle's o'er—if he must die,
I'll greatly dare to follow.

Timur. Then, forthwith
I'll put thee to the proof—Drag forth the boy
To instant death—— [*They seize Hamet.*

Hamet. Come on, then—Lead me hence
To some new world where justice reigns; for here
Thy iron hand is stretched o'er all.
[*Exit guarded.*

Timur. Quick, drag him forth.

Man. Now, by the powers above, by every tie
Of humanizing pity, seize me first;
Oh! spare my child, and end his wretched mother!

Timur. Thou pleadest in vain.

Enter a Messenger in haste.

Mess. Etan, dread sir, is found.

Zamti. Ah! China totters on the brink of ruin! [*Aside.*

Timur. Where lurked the slave?

Mess. Emerging from disguise,
He rushed amid the guards that led forth Hamet:
'Suspend the stroke,' he cried: then craved admittance
To your dread presence, on affairs, he says,
Of highest import to your throne and life.

Zamti. Ruin impends. [*Aside.*] Heed not an idle boy.—— [*To Timurkan.*

Timur. Yes, I will see him: bring him straight before me.

Zamti. Angels of light! quick on the rapid wing
Dart from the throne of grace, and hover round him!

Enter ZAPHIMRI, *Guards following him.*

Timur. Thou com'st on matters of importance deep
Unto my throne and life——

Zaph. I do. This very hour
Thy death is plotting.

Timur. Ha!——by whom?
Zaph. Zaphimri!
Zamti. What means my son?———
Timur. Quick, give him to my rage,
And mercy shall to thee extend.
Zaph. Think not
I meanly come to save this wretched being.
Pity Mandane—save her tender frame! [*Kneels.*
Pity that youth!—Oh! save that godlike man!
Zamti. Wilt thou dishonour me, degrade thyself,
Thy native dignity, by basely kneeling?
Quit that vile posture.
Timur. Rash intruder, hence.—— [*To Zamti.*
Hear me, thou stripling; or unfold thy tale,
Or by yon heaven they die——Wouldst thou appease my wrath,
Bring me Zaphimri's head.
Zaph. Will that suffice?
Zamti. Oh! Heavens! [*Aside.*
Timur. It will———
Zaph. Then take it, tyrant.
[*Rising up, and pointing to himself.*
Zamti and Hamet. Ah!——
Zaph. I am Zaphimri—I your mortal foe!
Zamti. Now, by yon heaven, it is not——
Zaph. Here——strike here——
Since nought but royal blood can quench thy thirst,
Unsluice these veins——but spare their matchless lives.
Timur. Wouldst thou deceive me too?
Zamti. He would——
Zaph. No——here,
Here on his knees, Zaphimri begs to die.
Zamti. Oh! horror, 'tis my son! by great Confucius,
That is my Etan, my too generous boy,
That fain would die to save his aged sire!
Man. Alas! all is ruined—freedom is no more! [*Aside.*
Zaph. Yet hear me, Tartar—hear the voice of truth—
I am your victim—by the gods, I am.
[*Laying hold of Timurkan.*
Timur. Thou early traitor! by your guilty sire
Trained up in fraud—no more these arts prevail.
My rage is up in arms, ne'er to know rest,
Until Zaphimri perish. Off, vile slave!
This very moment sweep them from my sight.
Man. Alas! my husband—Oh! my son—my son!
Zamti. May all the host of Heaven protect him still!
[*Exeunt Zamti and Mandane, guarded by Octar, &c.*

ZAPHIMRI, *struggling with* TIMURKAN, *on his knees.*

Zaph. Ah! yet withhold—in pity hold a moment—
I am Zaphimri—I resign my crown——
Timur. Away, vain boy! Go see them bleed; behold
How they will writhe in pangs; pangs doomed for thee,
And every stripling through the east. Vile slave, away! [*Breaks from him, and exit.*

ZAPHIMRI, *lying on the ground; officers and guards behind him.*

Oh! cruel! yet a moment—barbarous Scythians!
Wilt thou not open, earth, and take me down,
Down to thy caverns of eternal darkness,
From this supreme of woe? Here will I lie,
Here, on thy flinty bosom—with this breast
I'll harrow up my grave, and end at once
This powerless wretch—this ignominious king!
And sleeps almighty justice? Will it not
Now waken all its terrors? arm yon band
Of secret heroes with avenging thunder?
By Heaven that thought [*rising*] lifts up my kindling soul
With renovated fire. [*Aside.*] My glorious friends,
(Who now convene big with your country's fate)
When I am dead—oh! give me just revenge!
Let not my shade rise unatoned amongst ye;
Let me not die inglorious; make my fall,
With some great act of yet unheard-of vengeance,
Resound throughout the world; that farthest Scythia
May stand appalled at the huge distant roar
Of one vast ruin tumbling on the heads
Of this fell tyrant, and his hated race.
[*Exit, guarded.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The palace.*

Enter OCTAR, ZAMTI *and* MANDANE *following him.*

Zamti. WHY dost thou lead us to this hated mansion?
Must we again behold the tyrant's frown?
Thou know'st our hearts are fixed.
Octar. The war of words
We scorn again to wage: thither ye come
Beneath a monarch's eye to meet your doom.
The rack is now preparing: Timurkan
Shall soon behold your pangs, and count each groan
Even to the fullest luxury of vengeance.
Guard well that passage: [*To the guards within.*] See these traitors find
No means of flight; while to the conqueror
I hasten, to receive his last commands.
[*Exit Octar, on the opposite side.*

Zamti. Thou ever faithful creature!
Man. Can'st thou, Zamti,
Still call me faithful? By that honoured name
Wilt thou call her, whose wild maternal love
Hath overwhelmed us all?
Zamti. Thou art my wife,
Whose matchless excellence, even in bondage,
Hath cheered my soul; but now thy every charm,
By virtue wakened, kindled by distress
To higher lustre, all my passions beat
Unutterable gratitude and love.
And must—oh! cruel! must I see thee bleed?
Man. For me death wears no terror on his brow.
Full twenty years hath this resounding breast
Been smote with these sad hands; these haggard eyes
Have seen my country's fall; my dearest husband—
My son—my king—all in the Tartar's hands:
What then remains for me? Death! only death.
Zamti. Ah! can thy tenderness endure the pangs
Inventive cruelty even now designs?——
Must this fair form—this soft perfection bleed?
Thy decent limbs be strained with cruel cords
To glut a ruffian's rage?——
Man. Alas! this frame,
This feeble texture never can sustain it.
But this—this I can bear—— [*Shews a dagger.*
Zamti. Ha!
Man. Yes! this dagger!
Do thou but lodge it in this faithful breast,
My heart shall spring to meet thee.
Zamti. Oh!——
Man. Do thou,
My honoured lord, who taught me every virtue,
Afford this friendly, this last human office,
And teach me now to die.
Zamti. Oh! never——never——
Hence let me bear this fatal instrument.
[*Takes the dagger.*
What, to usurp the dread prerogative
Of life and death, and measure out the thread
Of our own beings! 'tis the coward's act,
Who dares not to encounter pain and peril.
Be that the practice of the untutored savage;
Be it the practice of the gloomy North.
Man. Must we, then, wait a haughty tyrant's nod,
The vassals of his will! No; let us rather
Nobly break through the barriers of this life,
And join the beings of some other world,
Who'll throng around our greatly daring souls,
And view the deed with wonder and applause.
Zamti. Distress too exquisite! Ye holy powr's!
If aught below can supersede your law,
And plead for wretches, who dare, self-impelled,
Rush to your awful presence; Oh! it is not
When the distempered passions rage, when pride
Is stung to madness, when ambition falls
From his high scaffolding; Oh! no. If aught
Can justify the blow, it is when Virtue
Has nothing left to do; when Liberty
No more can breathe at large; 'tis with the groans
Of our dear country when we dare to die.
Man. Then here at once direct the friendly steel.
Zamti. One last adieu! now! ah! does this become
Thy husband's love? thus, with uplifted blade,
Can I approach that bosom-bliss, where oft
With other looks than these—Oh! my Madane!
I've hushed my cares within thy sheltering arms?
Man. Alas! the loves, that hovered o'er our pillows,
Have spread their pinions, never to return,
And the pale fates surround us!
Then lay me down in honourable rest:
Come, as thou art, all hero, to my arms,
And free a virtuous wife.
Zamti. It must be so.
Now, then, prepare thee—My arm flags and droops,
Conscious of thee in every trembling nerve.
[*Dashes down the dagger.*
By Heaven, once more I would not raise the point
Against that hoard of sweets, for endless years
Of universal empire.
Man. Ha! the fell ministers of wrath—and yet
They shall not long insult us in our woes.
Myself will still preserve the means of death.
[*Takes up the dagger.*

Enter TIMURKAN *and* OCTAR.

Timur. Now, then, detested pair, your hour is come—
Drag forth these slaves to instant death and torment.
I hate this dull delay; I burn to see them
Gasping in death, and weltering in their gore.
Man. Zamti, support my steps—with thee to die
Is all the boon Mandane now would crave.
[*Exeunt Mandane and Zamti.*
Timur. Those rash, presumptuous boys, are they brought forth?
Octar. Mirvan will lead the victims to their fate.
Timur. And yet what boots their death? the Orphan lives,
And in this breast fell horror and remorse
Must be the dire inhabitants. Oh! Octar,
These midnight visions shake my inmost soul!
Octar. And shall the shadowings of a feverish brain
Disturb a conqueror's breast?
Timur. Octar, they've made
Such desolation here—'tis drear and horrible!
On yonder couch, soon as sleep closed my eyes,
All that yon mad enthusiastic priest

In mystic rage denounced, rose to my view;
And ever and anon a livid flash,
From conscience shot, shewed to my aching sight
The colours of my guilt——
Billows of blood were round me; and the ghosts,
The ghosts of heroes, by my rage destroyed,
Came with their ghastly orbs, and streaming wounds.
They stalked around my bed; with loud acclaim
They called Zaphimri! 'midst the lightning's blaze
Heaven rolled consenting thunders o'er my head;
Straight from his covert the youth sprung upon me,
And shook his gleaming steel—he hurled me down,
Down, headlong down the drear——Hold, hold! where am I?
Oh! this dire whirl of thought—my brain's on fire!

Octar. Compose this wild disorder of thy soul.
Your foes this moment die.

Enter MIRVAN.

Timur. What wouldst thou, Mirvan?

Mir. Near to the eastern gate, a slave reports,
As on his watch he stood, a gleam of arms
Cast a dim lustre through the night; and straight
The steps of men thick sounded in his ear:
In close array they marched.

Timur. Some lurking treason!——
What, ho! my arms—ourself will sally forth.

Mir. My liege, their scanty and rash-levied crew
Want not a monarch's sword—the valiant Octar,
Joined by yon faithful guard, will soon chastise them.

Timur. Then be it so—Octar, draw off the guard,
And bring their leaders, bound in chains, before me. [*Exit Octar.*

Mir. With sure conviction we have further learned
The long-contended truth—Etan's their king—
The traitor Zamti counted but one son;
And him he sent far hence to Corea's realm,
That, should it e'er be known the prince survived,
The boy might baffle justice.

Timur. Ha! this moment
Ourself will see him fall.

Mir. Better, my liege,
At this dead hour you sought repose—meantime
Justice on him shall hold her course. Your foes
Else might still urge that you delight in blood.
The semblance of humanity will throw
A veil upon ambition's deeds—'tis thus
That mighty conquerors thrive; and even vice,
When it would prosper, borrows virtue's mein.

Timur. Mirvan, thou counsell'st right: beneath a shew
Of public weal we lay the nations waste.
And yet these eyes shall never know repose,
Till they behold Zaphimri perish. Mirvan,
Attend me forth.

Mir. Forgive, my sovereign liege,
Forgive my over-forward zeal——I knew
It was not fitting he should breathe a moment:
The truth once known, I rushed upon the victim,
And, with this sabre, cleft him to the ground.

Timur. Thanks to great Lama! treason is no more,
And their boy king is dead. Mirvan, do thou
This very night bring me the stripling's head.
Soon as the dawn shall purple yonder east,
Aloft, in air, all China shall behold it,
Parched by the sun, and weltering to the wind:
Haste, Mirvan, haste, and sate my fondest wish.

Mir. This hour approves my loyalty and truth. [*Exit.*

Timur. Their deep-laid plot hath missed its aim, and Timurkan
May reign secure. No longer horrid dreams
Shall hover round my couch: the prostrate world
Henceforth shall learn to own my sovereign sway.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, Mirvan, hast thou brought the wished-for pledge?

Mir. My liege, I fear 'twill strike thy soul with horror!

Timur. By Heaven, the sight will glad my longing eyes!
Oh! give it to me!

Enter ZAPHIMRI *(a sabre in his hand) and plants himself before the tyrant.*

Ha! then all is lost.

Zaph. Now, bloody Tartar, now then, know Zaphimri.

Timur. Accursed treason! To behold thee thus
Alive before me, blasts my aching eye-balls:
My blood forgets to move; each power dies in me.

Zaph. Well may'st thou tremble, well may guilt like thine
Shrink back appalled; for now avenging Heaven
In me sends forth its minister of wrath,
To deal destruction on thee.

Timur. Treacherous slave!
'Tis false—with coward art, a base assassin,
A midnight ruffian, on my peaceful hour
Secure thou com'st; thus to assault a warrior
Thy heart could never dare to meet in arms.

Zaph. Not meet thee, Tartar? ha! in me thou seest
One on whose head unnumbered wrongs thou'st heaped;
Else could I scorn thee, thus defenceless. Yes,
By all my great revenge, could bid thee try each shape,
Assume each horrid form, come forth arrayed
In all the terrors of destructive guilt;

But now a dear, a murdered father calls;
He lifts my arm to rivet thee to earth,
The avenger of mankind.
Mir. Fall on, my prince.
Timur. By Heaven, I'll dare thee still. Resign it, slave,
Resign thy blade to nobler hands.
[*Snatches Mirvan's sabre.*
Mir. Oh! horror!
What, ho! bring help!—Let not the fate of China
Hang on the issue of a doubtful combat.
Timur. Come on, presumptuous boy!
Zaph. Inhuman regicide!
Now, lawless ravager, Zaphimri comes
To wreak his vengeance on thee.
[*Exeunt fighting.*
Mir. Oh! nerve his arm, ye powers, and guide each blow!

Enter HAMET.

Mir. See there! behold—he darts upon his prey.
Zaph. [*within.*] Die, bloodhound, die!
Timur. [*within.*] May curses blast my arm,
That failed so soon!
Hamet. The Tartar drops his point.
Zaphimri now——
Timur. [*within.*] Have mercy! mercy! oh!
Zaph. [*within.*] Mercy was never thine. This, fell destroyer,
This, for a nation's groans!
Mir. The monster dies;
He quivers on the ground. Then let me fly
To Zamti and Mandane with the tidings,
And call them back to liberty and joy.
[*Exit Mirvan.*

Enter ZAPHIMRI.

Zaph. Now, Hamet, now oppression is no more:
This smoking blade hath drunk the tyrant's blood.
Hamet. China again is free! There lies the corse
That breathed destruction to the world.
Zaph. Yes, there,
Tyrannic guilt, behold thy fatal end,
The wages of thy sins.

Enter MORAT.

Morat. Where is the king?
Revenge now stalks abroad. Our valiant leaders,
True to the destined hour, at once broke forth
From every quarter on the astonished foe:
Octar is fallen; all covered o'er with wounds
He met his fate; and still the slaughtering sword
Invades the city, sunk in sleep and wine.
Zaph. Lo! Timurkan lies levelled with the dust!
Send forth, and let Orasming straight proclaim
Zaphimri king—my subjects' rights restored.
[*Exit Morat.*
Now, where is Zamti? where Mandane?—ha!
What means that look of wan despair?

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Oh! dire mischance!
While here I trembled for the great event,
The unrelenting slaves, whose trade is death,
Began their work. Nor piety, nor age,
Could touch their felon-hearts; they seized on Zamti,
And bound him on the wheel. All frantic at the sight,
Mandane plunged a poniard in her heart,
And at her husband's feet expired.
Hamet. Oh! heavens!
My mother!
Zaph. Fatal rashness!—Mirvan, say,
Is Zamti, too, destroyed?
Mir. Smiling in pangs,
We found the good, the venerable man:
Released from anguish, with what strength remained,
He reached the couch where lost Mandane lay;
There threw his mangled limbs; there, clinging to the body,
Prints thousand kisses on her clay-cold lips,
And pours his sad lamentings, in a strain
Might call each pitying angel from the sky,
To sympathize with human woe.
[*The great folding-doors open in the back scene.*
Zaph. And see,
See on that mournful bier he clasps her still;
Still hangs upon each faded feature; still
To her deaf ear complains in bitter anguish.
Heart-piercing sight!
Hamet. Oh! agonizing scene!
[*The corse is brought forward, Zamti lying on the couch, and clasping the dead body.*]
Zamti. Ah! stay, Mandane, stay!—yet once again
Let me behold the day-light of thy eyes!——
Gone, gone—for ever, ever gone! Those orbs,
That ever gently beamed, must dawn no more!
Zaph. Are these our triumphs?—these our promised joys?
Zamti. The music of that voice recalls my soul.
[*Rises from the body, and runs eagerly to embrace Zaphimri; his strength fails him, and he falls at his feet.*]
My prince! my king!
Zaph. Soft, raise him from the ground.
Zamti. Zaphimri!—Hamet too!—Oh! blessed event!
I could not hope such tidings—Thee, my prince—
Thee, too, my son—I thought ye both destroyed.
My slow remains of life cannot endure
These strong vicissitudes of grief and joy.
And there—Oh! Heaven!—see there, there lies Mandane!
Hamet. How fares it now, my father?
Zamti. Lead me to her——
Is that the ever dear, the faithful woman?

Is that my wife?—And is it thus at length,
Thus do I see thee then, Mandane?—Cold,
Alas! death-cold——
Cold is that breast, where virtue from above
Made its delighted sojourn, and those lips
That uttered heavenly truth—pale! pale!—dead,
dead! [*Sinks on the body.*
Pray ye, entomb me with her!
Zaph. Then take, ye Powers, then take your
conquests back;
Zaphimri never can survive——
Zamti. [*Raising himself.*] I charge thee, live:
A base desertion of the public weal
Can ne'er become a king.—Alas! my son——
(By that dear tender name, if once again
Zamti may call thee)—tears will have their way!
Forgive this flood of tenderness: my heart
Melts even now! Thou noble youth, this is
The only interview we e'er shall have.
Zaph. And will ye then, inexorable powers,
Will ye then tear him from my aching heart!
Zamti. The moral duties of the private man
Are grafted in thy soul—Oh! still remember
The mean immutable of happiness,
Or in the vale of life, or on a throne,
Is virtue. Each bad action of a king
Extends beyond his life, and acts again
Its tyranny o'er ages yet unborn.
To error mild, severe to guilt, protect
The helpless innocent; and learn to feel
The best delight of serving human kind.
Be these, my prince, thy arts; be these thy cares,
And live the father of a willing people.
Hamet. Oh! cruel!—see—ah see!—he dies!
—his lips
Tremble in agony—his eye-balls glare!—
A death-like paleness spreads o'er all his face!
Zaph. Is there no help to save so dear a life?
Zamti. It is too late—I die—alas! I die!—
Life harassed out, pursued with barbarous art,
Through every trembling joint—now fails at once!
Zaphimri—oh! farewell!—I shall not see
The glories of thy reign.—Hamet!—my son—
Thou good young man, farewell!—Mandane, yes
My soul with pleasure takes her flight, that thus
Faithful in death, I leave these cold remains
Near thy dear honoured clay. [*Dies.*
Zaph. And art thou gone,
Thou best of men?—Then must Zaphimri pine
In ever-during grief, since thou art lost;
Since that firm patriot, whose parental care
Should raise, should guide, should animate my
virtues,
Lies there a breathless corse.
Hamet. My liege, forbear:
Live for your people; madness and despair
Belong to woes like mine.
Zaph. Thy woes, indeed,
Are deep, thou pious youth—yes, I will live,
To soften thy afflictions; to assuage
A nation's grief, when such a pair expires.
Come to my heart:—in thee, another Zamti
Shall bless the realm. Now let me hence to bless
My people with the sound of peace; that done,
To these a grateful monument shall rise,
With all sepulchral honour. Frequent, there,
We'll offer incense;—there, each weeping muse
Shall grave the tributary verse;—with tears
Embalm their memories; and teach mankind,
Howe'er oppression stalk the groaning earth,
Yet Heaven, in its own hour, can bring relief;
Can blast the tyrant in his guilty pride,
And prove the Orphan's guardian to the last.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

BY

HARTSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LORD SALISBURY, *disguised as* ALWIN.
RAYMOND, *lover of lady Salisbury.*
GREY, *his creature.*
MORTON, SIR ARDOLF, LEROCHES, } *friends to Salisbury.*
LORD WILLIAM, *infant son of Salisbury.*

WOMEN.

LADY SALISBURY.
ELEANOR, *her attendant.*

Knights, Peasants, &c.

Scene—Salisbury Castle, and the Country about it.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An avenue leading to a Gothic castle.*

Enter GREY *and First Knight.*

Grey. A MESSENGER dispatched by lady Salisbury!
Knt. And, in the specious guise he wore, had passed
nquestioned, had not I, in happy season,
pproached, even as the unwary centinels
alf op'd the gate. By threats o'erawed in part,
part through hope of favour won, he owned,
t length, by whom employed, whither bent,
nd for what purpose.
Grey. Say———
Knt. Straight to repair
o Marlborough; where now, as fame reports,
ur king resides, with all his peers; and there
o seek the lord de Warren; to what end
his paper will, as I suppose, inform you.
was about to bear it to lord Raymond.
Grey. That care be mine. Henceforward it concerns
Us near. Our vigilance be doubly firm. [*Exit Knt.*
[*Reads.*] 'The countess of Salisbury, to her illus-
'trious friend, the lord de Warren.
'I have lost my husband—Me and my lands
'lord Raymond claims, as by royal grant assigned
'to him. He has banished my train, encompass-
'ed me with his creatures, and holds me a pri-
'soner in my own castle. If the memory of thy
'noble friend be dear to thee, haste and rescue
'the afflicted 'ELA.'
How near was Raymond's hope, the beauteous hope
He tended with unceasing care; how near
My rising fortunes marred—I like not this:
Her, and her rich domains, he would possess;
Yet in his breast there lives that kind of heart
Withholds him from the path that's nearest. He,
That would be great, must first be bold.
I hate those motleyed characters;
Something, I know not what, 'twixt good and ill,
Yet neither absolute; all good, all ill,
For me—That day, saith he, that happy day,
Which sees the countess mine, shall amply pay

Thy services—a doubtful balance this
Whereon my fortunes hang.—This way he moves;
And, by his gait and gesture, ill at ease———
We must be firm;
My hopes demand it, and the time admits
No weak, no scrupulous delay——

Enter RAYMOND.

Ray. To sue,
But ever without grace to sue—Oh Grey!
I am even weary of the vain pursuit.
Grey. It is, in truth, my lord, an irksome labour.
Ray. But now I cast me at the fair one's feet;
Pleaded my passion with whatever arts
Might best the gentle purpose aid; but she,
Instead of such return as I might hope,
Repaid me with an eye of cold contempt.
Of her late gallant lord she spoke; his merits
In opposition hateful placed to mine.
Urged then with recollection of her wrongs,
Like the loud torrent, with steep winter rains
O'ercharged, in all the loose, ungoverned sway
Of wrath and indignation, she assailed me.
Grey. And did my lord, in this unseemly fashion,
Hear all with equal temper? Waked he not
With such a peal——
Ray. Thou know'st not what it is
To love like me—Long time (for passion now
Had shed o'er all her charms a brighter glow,
That like Jove's daughter most she looked, severe
In youthful beauty) long I lay, o'erawed
And silenced, as by some superior being;
Till, waked by pride, quick from the floor I sprung;
Warned her how she provoked my power;
'Twas great, 'twas now within these walls supreme;
I long had gently wooed her; but that love,
Though patient, would not always brook disdain.
Grey. 'Twas well: and what ensued?
Ray. Silence at first,
Then tears; bright drops, like May-morn dews, that fall
From the sweet blossomed thorn. Back in her chair
She sunk——Oh! had you seen her then, dissolved
In all the soft, the lovely languishment
Of woe; while at her knee, with countenance
Most piteous, stood her beauteous boy, and looked
As if each tear, which from his mother fell,
Would force a passage to his little heart—
I fled; else had I kneeled, and wept myself
As well as she.
Grey. O shame to manhood! suits
Such weakness with our hopes?
Ray. She must, she must,
Yes, Grey, she must be mine—and yet—yet fain
Would I persuade the fair one, not compel.
Grey. Say to what purpose, then, was seized her castle?
When she your suit rejected, then, perforce,
To claim her as the gift of royal favour!
To lord it here so long, and now to falter——
My lord, my lord, the mound is overleapt;
What now forbids but, without further pause,
To crop the rich, the golden fruits within?
Ray. Ungracious is the love reluctance yields;
And cold, cold even as marble, is the maid,
Who comes unwilling to another's arms.
Grey. In brief, would you partake the lady's bed?
Ray. What means the question?
Grey. Look on that, my lord:
Better reluctant come, than not at all.
Ray. How came this to your hand?
Grey. By one whose cares
Of thee demand no trivial recompence.
His wakeful eye it was descried the bearer;
Else had the watch, with all their vigilance,
Proved insufficient.
Ray. My better angel interposed.
Grey. Had this its purposed scope attained—my lord,
Were this but whispered in our Henry's ear—
He gave the royal nod, you say: true, he
Permitted, but thus far; that you should woo
The lady, and, her choice approving, wed;
No more. By us the public ear is told
She hath approved: our artifice hath spread
The rumour; and with some it is received,
That she is now your full espoused consort:
But truth, my lord, long cannot rest concealed;
It will abroad, of that be sure, in spite
Of all our studied wiles.
Ray. What's to be done?
Grey. 'Tis critical, and must be managed nicely——
But see, with Eleanor the countess comes;
And in her hand the young lord William. Here
Her custom is to walk; retire we now;
And thou observe the counsels of a friend. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter LADY SALISBURY, LORD WILLIAM, and ELEANOR.

Lady Sal. Talk'st thou of patience? What! the very roof,
That should protect and shelter me, become
My prison? Awed, and threatened, as I am,
By this intruder! Cruel destiny!
Had I not more than common griefs before?
Ele. In evil hour thy hospitable gates
Were opened to receive him.
Lady Sal. Unguarded that I was! But who could then
Foresee the purpose of his coming?
Ele. Who
Can think even yet, that, once repulsed, he e'er
Would thus presume?
Lady Sal. Is there no succour then?

No generous hand to vindicate my wrongs?
Oh Salisbury! Salisbury! Why, if yet thou liv'st——
Fond hope! he lives not, else with speed of thought
Would he repair to his afflicted Ela.
Ele. Why, dearest lady, will you yield you up
A prey to purposed sorrow? Time is fruitful;
And the next hour, perhaps, may bring thee comfort.
Lady Sal. Day after day I have watched the joyless hours:
Night after night, when some fleet courier, sent
Before perchance, or letter, fraught with sweet
Assurance of his safety, might appear;
Five tedious moons have passed since first were told
The dismal tidings; no fleet courier, sent
Before, alas! nor letter, with such sweet
Assurance, yet appears—he's gone! he's lost!
And I shall never, never see him more.
Ele. Ah! suffer not the leaden hand of cold
Despair thus weigh thee down; I yet have hope.
Lady Sal. Away with hope, away! No, no; full loud,
As I remember, and outrageous blew
The storm, that even the solid fabric shook
Of yonder walls; deep-rooted oaks gave way;
Churches and spires were overturned; nor even
The peasant's humble roof escaped that hour.
The fleet, save only one, one luckless ship,
Have all returned; my lord nor hath been seen,
Alas! nor ever heard of since the storm.
Ele. Heaven visit her affliction, and bestow
That patience which she needs!
Lady Sal. No, Eleanor; no more shall he
To these deserted walls return. No more
Shall trophies, won by many a gallant deed,
Through the long hall in proud procession move;
No more fair Salisbury's battlements and towers
Re-echo to the approaching trumpet's voice.
Never, Oh! never more shall Ela run,
With throbbing bosom at the well-known sound,
To unlock his helmet, conquest-plumed, to strip
The cuishes from his manly thigh, or snatch
Quick from his breast the plated armour, wont
To oppose my fond embrace—Sweet times, farewell!
Lord Wil. Mother, why do you speak so? you make me sad.
Lady Sal. It is too soon, my child, for thee to know
What sadness is.
Lord Wil. Will not my father come home soon?
Eleanor told me he would: she would not tell a lie.
Lady Sal. No, love.
Lord Wil. Then he will come.
Lady Sal. Sweet innocence! I fear he will not.
Lord Wil. I hope he is not sick.
Lady Sal. Go, lovely prattler, seek thy toys; go, go.
Lord Wil. I will, good mother; but dont be sad, or I shall be so too. [*Exit.*
Lady Sal. Sweet state of childhood! unallayed with cares;
Serene as spring-tide morn, new-welcomed up
With bleat of lamb, with note of woodlark wild.
With riper years come passions turbulent
And rude, a baleful crew, unnumbered as
The forest leaves, that strew the earth in autumn.
When happiness is round thee, when thou art on
The lap of downy ease, when thou art cherished
In the fair bosom of unruffled joy,
Comes a fell hand, dashes thee rudely down,
And leaves thee to despair.
Ele. Cease,
Cease, lady, to afflict thee: Raymond may,
I trust he will, ere long, retire and give
Thee ease again—But hither comes his minion:
Much with his lord he can; and, as he lists,
To purposes of good or ill o'er-rules
His mind: if he accost thee, speak him gently.

Enter GREY.

Grey. As you are fair above all other women,
So may you lend to that I would implore
A gracious ear.
Lady Sal. Without more preface, briefly speak thy suit.
Grey. To love, but ne'er to reap of love the sweet
Returns, is sure the worst of ills.
Lady Sal. And what of that?
Grey. Though love denied, yet pity may do much
To soothe the wound that pity gives. In brief,
Thou much-revered! my suit is in behalf of Raymond.
Lady Sal. Then I will spare us both some cost
Of words: In brief, I love him not, nor pity:
So tell thy lord—I would be private—hence.
Grey. Your words are brief indeed; but of that kind
I dare not, must not bear my lord.
Lady Sal. Must not!
Grey. 'Tis cruel towards the man who loves so fondly.
Lady Sal. Doth he assume the specious name of love?
Love is a bright, a generous quality,
Heaven gave to noble minds; pure and unmixed
With every grosser stuff; a goodly flower,
Shoots up and blossoms in great souls alone.
Grey. The mind, the exalted soul thou nam'st, is his.
Lives there a youth more gentle of condition,
In fair accomplishments more graced, admired?
If beauty sway thy fond regards, if wealth,

I know not in fair England one with him
Can vie.
Lady Sal. Is then the star, the peerless star,
That late was gazed on, quite obscured? What
though
He may have set, hath he not left a train
Of glory in the skies? The illustrious name
Of Salisbury yet survives. If wealth—but mark
me;
Were he of all the wealth possessed from where
The East Indian bids the sun good-morrow, to
where
The Atlantic, in her wide-extended lap,
Receives him setting; could he in each hand
A thousand sceptres place, not all should bribe
Me to his bed. No, Salisbury! thou hast been
The husband of my early love; with thee,
That love was all interred; and when I pluck
It forth again, gape wide that earth wherein
Thou liest, quick snatch me from the light of
Heaven,
And swallow me within her lowest prison!
Grey. For pity's sake yet soften; for, Oh! sure
No former love could ever equal his;
No bosom boast the generous flame wherewith
Lord Raymond glows for thee, admired fair!
Lady Sal. Hear this, ye Heavens! and grant
me patience—Where's
My people? where the freedom that I late
Was blest with? Wherefore is my palace thronged
With strangers? Why, why are my gates shut up
And fortified against their rightful mistress?
Grey. Madam———
Lady Sal. Is this the love he boasts?
Is this the fair accomplished, this the gentle
youth?
Must I recal to mind—Came he not, then,
Even while the memory of my dear loved lord
Was green, while sorrow yet was in my eyes?
Tears! ye will choke me—Came he not even
then,
And broke in on my sorrows? Like a spoiler
He came, heaped up the measure of my woes,
Added new anguish to the afflicted heart,
And swelled the current of the widow's tears!
Grey. Madam, were he that spoiler thou proclaim'st,
He need not now thus humbly sue for that
His power, long since, unasked, might have extorted.
Lady Sal. Ha! what art thou, that thus presum'st to threaten?
Extorted!—Hence, thou rude one, bolder even
Than him who calls thee slave.
Grey. Madam, you speak
As though you knew me not.
Lady Sal. I know thee well—
To what concerns lord Raymond I have spoke,
My final purpose fixed:
For thee, I charge thee shun my presence; hence!
And learn the distance that befits thy calling.
Grey. Not ere I speak more fully to the
cause—
Nay, lady, look not on me with so stern
An eye, but give me patient hearing—
Lady Sal. No more; I'll hear no more.
Grey. Not hear me!—When next we meet—
I will be heard. [*Exit.*
Lady Sal. What meant he, Eleanor?—I will
be heard!
Ele. Alas! I know not: but a soul he hath,
Prompt and alert to acts of desperate thinking.
Hardly thou art beset; O lady, lend
An ear to what thy Eleanor would counsel.
When next he comes, (for that he hath obtained
Of Raymond leave to woo thee to his will,
I know) assume a gentler carriage. Seem
As though you may hereafter to his suit
Incline. Be ruled: necessity oft lends
A sanction to deceit. Demand a pause:
My lord of Salisbury's fate, yet unconfirmed,
Shall add thereto a seeming colour. Chance,
Mean time, that comes or soon or late to all,
To thee may come with unexpected succour.
Lady Sal. Sincerity,
Thou, spotless as the snowy-vested hill!
Forgive me, if, by lawless power constrained,
I turn this once from thy long-trodden path;
It must be so——
Oh, Salisbury! Salisbury! thou lamented shade;
Descend from those pure mansions, where thou
sit'st
Exalted: hover o'er me: and, as thou
Wert wont, support me in this hour of trial!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Within the castle.*

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey. AWAY, my lord, away with every care!
The conflict's past, and fortune is our own—
Defeated once, again I sought the fair;
I sought her, and prevailed.
Ray. By all the joys, the nameless joys, that
on
The precious hour of soft compliance wait,
I will requite thee nobly. Say—for much
My wonder's moved—how hast thou found
Such grace? How wrought this change, thus sudden——thus
Unhoped, from her late bearing?
Grey. Uncertain is the sex—but that imports
not.
It now remains, that proof, such proof be sought,
Of Salisbury's fate, as, by minute detail
Of circumstances, shall with the lady gain

Prompt credence. Hear what I have devised, if you
Approve——

Enter a Knight.

Kni. My lord, two strangers I have brought,
Within the precincts of the castle found.
Ray. Say'st thou two strangers? of what quality?
Kni. With me they were of speech not over-prompt;
But, by their outward guise, they would seem men
As with some pious purpose charged. Severe
The younger seems, but of excelling form;
And wishes to recruit his wearied limbs
Beneath the friendly covert of this roof.
Ray. Conduct them to our presence. [*Exit Knight.*] I were loth
The weary traveller to dismiss my gates,
Inhospitably rude; yet none I wish,
While we are yet suspended at the nod
Of peevish and uncertain chance, approach
These walls.

Re-enter Knight, with Strangers.

Whence, and what are you?
1st Stran. What we are,
These weeds, though we were silent, might unfold.
Alwin I am called, my fellow-traveller
Leroches. Our way was bent for Canterbury,
With purpose of a pious vow: o'ertaken
By weariness from travel, and desire
Of food, we journeyed hitherward, in hope
The lord of these fair turrets, first descried
At close of evening, might befriend our toils.
Ray. Whence have you come?
Alw. From France, not many days,
Ray. Say, what occasion may have called you hither?
Alw. To aid (Heaven prosper long) my country's weal.
Ray. You are a soldier then?
Alw. I have been such;
And to be such was my most dear inclining;
Suit with the love, even from my greenest youth,
Of honest arms. Some share of fame I too
Achieved—But ill the soldier it beseems
To trumpet his own praises.
Ray. Cease not so.
Though in the school of war untutored, much
It pleaseth me to hear the brave man's labours.
Alw. None but have heard how some time since was sent,
To claim of Lewis certain lands usurped,
A puissant force——
Ray. Were you therein employed?
Alw. Beneath the royal banner I enrolled,
As was my bent, in quest of fame.
Ray. Indeed!
Lord Salisbury then, perchance, of thee was known?
Alw. I knew him well; our liege's near ally,
And second to duke Richard in command.
Fast by his side was my allotted post
Upon the marshalled field: by him I fought,
For him had died.
Ray. Of him fame loudly speaks,
That in those wars he was a gallant man.
Alw. He was not wont, while others bravely fought,
To look inactive on.
Ler. A foe like him
France never knew, of all that warrior host,
Which, like an inundation, England poured
On her affrighted shores—
Ray. But what
Have proved his latter fortunes I should wish
To learn—Say, courteous stranger, if thou can'st,
Of this renowned lord: a rumour hath
Long since prevailed, that he on Gallia's coast
Was wrecked with all his crew.
Alw. What cause there was
Of such report, alas! these eyes have seen;
How true in part it is, too sure this tongue
Can testify.
Ray. I pray you, let us hear.
Alw. O'ercharged with human prey, fell war had ceased
To walk his wasteful round; well pleased we turn
Us from the blood-stained field; exulting each
With some rich spoil, trophies by valiant dint
Of arms achieved. Forthwith the eager host
Embark.
And now the chalky cliffs on Albion's coast
To our straining view appeared; the exulting crew
With peals redoubled greet the well known shore—
Ill-fated men! in vain the anxious dame
Oft mounts the high-raised tower, thence earnest looks
Haply if her wished-for lord may come; in vain
The prattling boy oft asks her of his sire,
That never, never shall return.
Ray. Proceed,
Good stranger——what was the event?
Alw. Anon
The winds began to shift; up rose a storm,
And heaved the bosom of the troubled deep:
On the swoln billows sits enthroned grim Death,
And shakes his fatal dart.—The fleet, which late
In such fair order sailed, is now dispersed.
Before the wind we drove, left to the mercy
Of the wild waves, and all-disposing Heaven—
Oh my loved friends! associates of my toils!
Rescued in vain from war's wide wasteful arm,
Here end your labours! here, sweet life forsakes you!
For me, a slender plank, next to the hand
Of some good angel, bore me to the shore.
Of full five hundred gallant lives, which late

Embarked, not one that fatal hour survived—
Ray. Save only thee?
Alw. Save only me.
Ray. Speak now, secure, for nearly it concerns
My quiet—speak— was Salisbury of your crew?
Alw. Alas! too sure.
Ray. Enough—Thy courtesy
Of us may well, and shall be well requited.
Of this our friend accept mean time his prompt
Regards: anon we shall be glad to hold
Some farther converse with you.
[*Exit Alw. Ler. and Knt.*
Grey. Of this stranger
What thinks my lord?
Ray. As of an angel, sent
To waft me on his wings strait to the summit
Of all my wishes—With what a gallant grace
He bears him!—Much I wish to hear him speak
Again—to hear the battles he has fought,
And all the story of his life and fortunes.
Grey. That we shall learn hereafter: but 'tis meet
That he to lady Salisbury first unfold
The sum of what he here reported.
Ray. Methinks
I now behold her, like some full-blown flower,
The fairest of the garden, late o'ercharged
With showers, her head declining sad, whilst he
Recounts the story of her Salisbury's fate.
Would she were mine without a tear;
Without a sigh.—But she must weep; she must;
Thereon my all depends—Oh wayward sorrow!
That wounds—yet, wounding, heals the lover.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to an apartment.* LADY SALISBURY *reclining on a couch.*

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. Grief, that of time's fixed periods for repose
Takes small account, hath lulled her wearied senses—
Where'er thou dwell'st, Oh Peace! with azure eyes
Serene; or if in stately-structured dome,
Or thatched-roofed cottage low, or in cool grot
By fountain clear thou sit'st, or if perchance
Along the silver brook's green liveried verge
Reclined, approach, thou rosy-dimpled fair!
Leave thy sweet haunts awhile; and with that balm
Which soothes the woe-struck heart, await her slumbers.
The hour approaches, when, as is her custom,
She seeks the hallowed shrine, and pious wakes
The voice of pure devotion to high heaven:
I'll thither, and expect her—but she wakes——
How fares the mistress of my best regards?
Proved her slumbers sweet as were my wishes?
Lady Sal. Sweet, sweet, my Eleanor; so sweet, oh! would
I never had waked. I dreamt, as wont on him
To dream, that I beheld his gracious form,
My bosom's lord: a while he stood, and seemed
On me to smile; then flew to my embraces——
Ah fleeting ecstacy!—'twas but a dream.

Enter a Knight.

Knt. Thy favour, lady; I am charged with news,
That much imports thy hearing: summon up
Thy powers; two strangers late have come, of whom
One brings assured tidings of thy lord.
Lady Sal.——My lord——what——speak—
Knt. He saith he knew my lord
Of Salisbury well; that he was of his crew;
And with that peer embarked from France.
Lady Sal.—But—well—from France.——
Knt. Lady, all must have
Their sorrows. Strait uprose a mighty tempest,
Dispersed the fleet o'er all the seas——
The storm—the fatal wreck—of all
The stranger gives most circumstantial proof.
Ele. Alas the tidings!—Dearest lady, give
Thy sorrows vent; thy bosom's overfraught,
And will find ease by letting loose its woes.
Lady Sal.——Well, well——
Then he is lost, and all, all is despair.
Though languid, yet was hope not quite extinct—
Where, where's the stranger? Seek him, haste, that I
May hear him fully speak of all. Methinks
[*Exit Knt.*
'Twill be a desperate sort of soothing; to hang
Upon each sound, catch every circumstance
Of the sad story; and wring my aching heart,
Till I am even surfeited with sorrow.
Ele. Behold! the stranger comes——

Enter ALWIN.

Lady Sal. Bear, bear me up, good Heaven!
That I may give full measure to my sorrow.
Alw. Thy angel hover o'er thee, and support thee. [*In an under voice.*
Lady Sal. The dead ere now
Have burst the prisons of the close-pent grave,
And apparitions, strange of faith, appeared;
Perhaps thou too art but a shadow; let
Me grasp thee, for, as I have life, I think——
It is, it is my Salisbury! O my lord!
Lord Sal. My bosom's joy!
Lady Sal. And dost thou live indeed?
Amazing Providence! He does! he does!
Look! look! behold him, Eleanor! behold
The gracious form! The vision was not vain.
[*Ele. goes aside.*
Lord Sal.—And art thou, art thou then—
Lady Sal. O my full bosom!
Lord Sal. The same, by time or circumstance unchanged?

Lady Sal. Unhoped reverse! Hence, hence all former woes—
My lord! my life! hence, hence, be swallowed up
All griefs, and lost in this most blisful hour.
Lord Sal. Thou art, I see, thou art the same, thou must—
Thou hast not yielded to another lord?
Lady Sal. Another lord! and could you, did you think
'Twas so?
Lord Sal. Thus spoke loud rumour on my way:
Indeed, I scarce could think it.
Lady Sal. Oh! 'twas foul!
Indeed thou should'st not think it——
Lord Sal. Ever dear!
No more; my soul is satisfied, and thinks
Of nothing now but happiness and thee.
Lady Sal. Say, then, thou wanderer—Oh! I have much
Of thee to ask, thou much to hear: how is't
I see thee, see thee thus? Where hast thou been?
What secret region hath so long detained thee?
Lord Sal. O thou! whose image, ever in my view,
Sustained me, angel-like, against the rough
And rapid current of adversity;
Should I recount the story of my fortunes,
Each circumstance beginning from that day
We parted, to this hour, thine ear would be
Fatigued; the stars, ere I had ended, cease
To twinkle; and the morning's sun break in
Upon the unfinished tale; suffice it thee
To know the sum:
For England we embarked, when, black and foul,
A tempest rising, quick upturned the seas,
And cast me forth upon a hostile shore.
Why need I tell thee, love, how, in disguise,
On foot, alone, I've toiled my weary way,
Through dreary vale, o'er mountain wild; my bed
Oft of the blasted heath, whilst o'er my limbs
Damp night hath shaken her cold, dewy wings,
And the chill northern gale hath spent his breath
On my defenceless head?
Through what variety of strange events
I've come, heaven-guided, to behold, once more,
My wife? But, ah! my son! our only hope!
My boy! what, what of him?
Lady Sal. Dear to these eyes
As is the new-born light of heaven! he lives;
Is well—But say, my lord, what would thy coming,
Thus unattended, thus disguised?
Lord Sal. How I escaped from hard captivity,
And Gallia's coast, more leisure shall inform you.
My friend, sir Ardolph, had but just embraced me,
(The first glad transports of our meeting o'er)
When, with an honest tear, the good old man
In brief disclosed what fame had now reported;
That thou wert soon, or hadst, ere this, espoused
Earl Hubert's nephew, and sole purposed heir.
Lady Sal. Oh, most unhallowed, thus to abuse
My unattainted love! And could my lord——
Lord Sal. Yet hear me. Strait I grasped my sword;
And, single as I was, had sallied forth,
Had not my friend's sage counsels interposed.
By Ardolph swayed, I veiled me as thou seest;
And, with a sharer in the dark intent,
Set forward on my way for Salisbury castle:
A simple hind's low cottage, not far hence,
Received us. Here, fast by the greenwood side,
We lodged; resolved, ourselves unknown, to prove
What doubtful rumour only had proclaimed.
With this intent, at dusk of evening we
Forsook the cot.
Lady Sal. There needs no more: Heaven saw
Me, and was touched with pity. What a change
This hour! Sequestered as I was, even like
The votarist; perhaps the destined prey
Of rude desire.
Lord Sal. O for to-morrow's slow returning night!
Lady Sal. Say, what of that, my lord?
Lord Sal. Revenge, revenge—
I'll tell thee: Soon as the dark usurping night
Shall chace to-morrow's sun adown the skies,
Know, Ardolph, with a chosen troop of friends,
To that same cottage, armed, shall come——

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. My lord, I hear the approach of hasty steps.
Lord Sal. Farewell, my best:
Nor peace nor sleep shall visit me, till I
Have given thee freedom, and revenged our wrongs.

Enter Knight.

Knt. Lord Raymond, sir, forthwith expects your coming.
Lord Sal. I will attend him. Lady, fain would I
Have told thee less ungracious things: but all
Have their appointed trials. Learn to bear;
Convinced, the hand of Heaven, when it inflicts,
Prepares us oft for some superior good.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Within the castle.*

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Ray. I see nor cause my joys to check; nor boast
As yet securely.
Grey. Think, that Hope, the young,
The merry-minded fair, exalts us oft,
To make our fall the greater.
Ray. Why this cold,
This prudent maxim?
Grey. Mark the wary falcon:
Forward he shoots his piercing eye, and kens
The quarry from afar; like his be thine.
Perhaps, my lord, mine are but nicer fears,
Waked in a heart o'er anxious of thy welfare:
Yet hath the younger of those strangers raised
In me suspicion of alarming hue,
Lest, underneath this honest guise, there lurk
Some subtle mischief. Lady Salisbury saw him:
Their conference, as 'twas long, so was it held
In secret—would we had been present.
Ray. Granting
Our presence had been seemly—wherefore spoke
You not this counsel ere they met?
Grey. I saw not then the danger.
His honest carriage, and the recent change
Within her mind, had lulled each nicer fear.
Ray. 'Till now unmoved, say what hath waked suspicion?
Grey. I know not well. Would she were firmly thine,
Beyond the reach and grasp of wayward fortune.
The knight, whose office was to introduce
Him to the countess, he dismissed, ere they
Approached the apartment.
Ray. Indeed!
Grey. This too: Is it not strange, though night, and this
Thy proffered roof, invited his sojourn,
He would not wait the approach of morning?
Ray. Are they gone?
Grey. Amid the unguarded joy
Which held us, they escaped, unheeded.

Enter Second Knight.

Knt. My lord,
Two strangers, it is said, in palmers' weeds
Attired, have lodged since morning in a hut;
You may have marked it, in the darksome glen,
Near to the forest of wild oaks, just where
The stream white rushes down the shelving cliff.
Ray. Since morning, say'st thou?
Knt. Further I have learned:
Their guise, as doth appear from certain words
O'erheard, is borrowed with design to mask
Some secret purpose. [*Exit.*
Grey. It must be so:
Their close-concerted arts have foiled our caution.
Ray. They scarce have measured half the precincts yet;
Send forth my knights, we will pursue them.
Grey. No: One way there is, and only one—
But hence;
I hear the countess——She loves lord William well:
And much, much will a pious mother, sure,
To save an only son. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* ELEANORA.

Lady Sal. In spite of this event, this blest event,
That hath restored the lord of this fond bosom,
Yet is my mind with doubts and fears disturbed;
With images and wild conceits, of form
Unsightly; such as hover oft in dreams
About the curtains of the sick.——Alas!
Whilst others joy within the friendly roof,
Of night regardless, and the storm that beats
Without, he struggles hard; or hies, at best,
To the dark shelter of the dripping wood.
Besides, what unknown perils may assail him,
Unaided thus against whatever ill.
Would he had waited the return of morn!
Ele. The night is dark indeed, the tempest high;
But hear me, lady, hear a pious lesson,
Which thy own lips to me have oft repeated:
There is a power unseen, whose charge it is,
With ever wakeful eye, to watch the good;
And peaceful ever is that breast, which trusts
In his angelic guard.—The hand
Of Heaven, that hitherto hath been his shield,
Will minister safe convoy to his steps,
Though night and darkness shed their thickest gloom.
Lady Sal. Misdeem not of my fears; or think I speak,
As over diffident of that same power
Thou namest, whose all-surveying eye wakes ever:
Clear, unobstructed, either when the sun
Shrowds in night's shadowy veil, or when at noon
He shines revealed on his meridian throne.
But where's the bosom throbs not, if it hopes?
Hope ever is attended with a train
Of wakeful doubts; and where the sweet nymph harbours,
There flutters also her pale sister, Fear.——
But hence, as was our purpose, to the shrine;
Where, as is meet, for my dear lord restored,
I will, with grateful adoration——

Enter LORD WILLIAM.

Lord Wil. Mother, I fain would know that stranger, who he is, that just now met me.
Lady Sal. And wherefore wouldst thou know him, love?

Lord Wil. Gentle he was, and mild; not like those grim-faced ones I see here every day: and such kind things he did, as make me love him dearly.

Lady Sal. Say, what were they?

Lord Wil. He kissed me, stroked my head, and patted me upon the cheek, and said——

Lady Sal. What said he, sweet?

Lord Wil. He said, 'Heaven bless thy beauteous head, sweet boy.'

Enter GREY.

Grey. Permit me, honoured dame; I have a word
Or two, that claims thine ear.

Lady Sal. Then but a word;
My present cares ill brook long interruption.

Grey. Behold the blossom of the spring, how fair!
Yet in his velvet bosom lurks the worm,
And hourly wastes him of his choicest sweets;
Nor less a foe is slow consuming grief
To beauty.——
You may remember, when we last conferred,
The gracious purport of your words to what
Concerned lord Raymond, when you taught his suit
To hope a prosperous issue; thus by me he speaks:
In the recesses of the hallowed shrine,
Where with him stands the sable vested priest,
He waits thy coming; there, with pious vows
Exchanged, even now to consecrate thee his.—
May every rose-lipped son of light look down,
And smile propitious on the joyful hour!

Lady Sal. Is this a season meet for such a theme?

Grey. For gracious acts all seasons should be meet;
Heaven shews the bright example; ever prompt
To incline, when virtue lifts her suppliant eye.
But say that for the present he forbore
His earnest suit, say, shall to-morrow make
Him happy? or to-morrow's night, perchance?
Or—what shall be the bright succeeding day?

Lady Sal. I know not; nor will I submit me or
To promised league or tie; no, though thou shouldst plead
Even with an angel's tongue.

Grey. You will not, lady!——
Know, then, this night, this hour must make thee his.

Lady Sal. This night! this hour!——Who'll make me his this hour?

Grey. A power, my lady, thou shalt learn to fear;
Force, force superior, that, with giant hand,
Plucks even the monarch from his throne—disrobes
The virgin of her honour; while distress,
With streaming eyes and loose dishevelled hair,
Holds forth her supplicating hands in vain.

Lady Sal. I know the monster thou wouldst fright me with;
But I despise his power.—Hast thou ne'er heard?
Learn, then, of me a truth, a golden truth,
Graved on the registers of hoary time:
Virtue, with her own native strength upheld,
Can brave the shock of ruffian force, unmoved
As is the rock, whose firm-set base not all
The tumult of the western surge can shake,
Though the fierce winds uplift him to the stars.

Grey. This is a truth, indeed, may hold a place
On fancy's tinsel page:—What will avail
Thy virtue's boasted powers, when thou shalt see,
Torn from thy feeble arms, all thou holdest dear?
Yes, lady, thy lord William, thy loved son!

Lady Sal. Ha!—Save him, Heaven! He dare not sure——and yet——

Grey. Think, lady, think upon thy son.

Lady Sal. Protect
Him, O ye powers celestial!——angels watch
His steps, and hover round his harmless head!

Grey. Say, will you to the altar, lady?

Lady Sal. Sooner to my grave.

Grey. Thy obstinacy on his head—Who waits?

Enter a Ruffian.

Lady Sal. What wouldst thou here? Hence, execrable wretch!
Thou makest my blood run cold.

Lord Wil. Oh, mother, I am frightened.

Lady Sal. Dearest lamb!——
Hast thou no terrors for thyself?—Oh, Salisbury!
Hast thou no fears?—Oh, I could tell thee what,
Like thunder, would appal thy hearing, shrink
Up every nerve within thy blasted frame,
And make thee nothing.——Fear not, love.

Grey. Think not
With empty sounds to shake our purpose; say,
Will you comply?

Lady Sal. My little innocent!
Thou darest not, fell as is thy nature—My love!
My life!

Grey. Convey lord William hence.

Lord Wil. Oh, save me, mother, save me!

Lady Sal. Forbear your impious hands! forbear!

Grey. Or to the altar, or, by all therein,
I swear, this moment wrests him from thy view.

Lady Sal. Inhuman that thou art, can nothing move
Thee?——Oh! those little harmless looks would preach
Even to the hungry lion, make him pause,
And turn his rage to pity.

Grey. Nay, madam——

Lady Sal. Forbear, and I will go—Whither?
Distraction! I will rouse
The castle.——Help!—My cries shall tear the roofs!
Help, help, oh, help!—the mother and the son!

Grey. Your cries are vain.——

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord Sal. Hold!—What is it ye do?
Grey. He here again!
Lord Sal. Speak, lady! would these men have wronged thee?
Pale fear is on thy cheek!
[*Ele. removes Lord Wil.—Exeunt Grey and Ruf.*
Lady Sal. Cold horror hath o'ercome me.
Lord Sal. Ever loved!
Sure thou wert sore distressed! I heard thee cry.
Lady Sal. Ah, sore distressed indeed! the hand of peril
Was on me; violence and murder stared
Me full in all their hideous forms!
Lord Sal. Gracious powers! my fear, my fear, new waked;
For thee it was, as Heaven decreed, that urged
Me back, and brought me to thy timely rescue.
Lady Sal. 'Twas Heaven, indeed, that brought thee hither now!
Yet I have wondrous fears—thou art but one,
Surrounded by a legion of those fiends.

Enter RAYMOND, GREY, *and armed Knights.*

Ray. [*As he enters.*] Where is the audacious man, that hath presumed
To question with such bold intrusion?
Lord Sal. If him you mean,
Who took the part of feeble innocence
Against the ruffian's arm—he's here.
Ray. Which of you, slaves, have suffered him to enter?
Knt. My lord, he bade us to unbar the gates,
Driven by the tempest, as he said, to seek
The proffered shelter he had late declined;
Pardon, if, deeming him your honoured guest,
We answered him with prompt compliance.
Ray. Say, what dark purpose is it hath brought thee hither?
Confess thee true, or, by the blessed saints,
Thou shalt have cause to mourn the hour which moved
Thee, daring as thou art, to approach our castle.
Lord Sal. To other regions, other climes, with threats
Like these, where proud oppression lords it: here
The free-born subject knows not what it is
To be in awe of arbitrary power.
Ray. I will know what thou art.
Lord Sal. Even what thou seest
Am I; a man not prompt to offer wrong,
Yet of that frame, I brook not to behold
A noble lady made the prey of ruffians.
Ray. Intruder, bold as thou art officious, wherefore
Shouldst thou concern thee in this lady's cause?
Lord Sal. The cause of innocence should be the cause
Of all. Confess thee, lord! was it nobly done,
To let those bold, those rude assailants loose,
And give a sanction to such foul proceedings?
Ray. Pilgrim, hast thou forgot thee? Who am I?
Lord Sal. Who art thou! Ask, ask thy deeds,
And they will answer. The breath of fame hath told
How base they have been; they are gone abroad,
And the pure air is tainted with their foulness.
Ray. Presuming slave! whoe'er thou art, for thy
Unlicenced bearing dearly shalt thou answer.
Hence with the bold defamer; bind him fast;
Be instant death his lot, should he resist—
Seize him, I say!
Lady Sal. Oh! spare him, spare—
Lord Sal. Out, servile ministers!
Ye know not who it is ye would attempt—
Oppressive lord! whom nor the sacred bond
Of justice, nor of hospitality
Controls, regard me! while with sight
More dire than e'er of Gorgon feigned, I strike thee—
Now, Raymond, if thou hast of noble fire
One spark within thee, draw thy sword; come on,
And meet my arm; wake all that's man within thee.
Come on— [*Flings off his disguise.*
'Tis Salisbury, Salisbury calls thee to the strife.
Lady Sal. Heaven shield my dearest lord!
Ray. Salisbury! then what am I!—
Lord Sal. Vengeance at length is armed; thy fate cries out,
And honour, injured honour, claims aloud
Her victim.
Ray. Secure thou seem'st of fate, but fall who will
A victim, let the sword— [*Drawing.*
Grey. What would you do?—
[*Aside, holding his arm.*
Look not to know him, all may yet be well—
Be not abused, my lord: this is a plot,
Devised with purpose to effect thy ruin.
Lord Sal. Ha! what dost say?
Grey. Believe him not, my lord. He! he lord Salisbury!
'Tis all a trick, an artful cheat, and he
A liar traced—
Lord Sal. Nay then my sword—
Dishonest knights!
[*Going to attack Raymond, he is disarmed.*
Lady Sal. Now, by these tears, do him no violence!
He is, he is my husband.
Grey. Regard her not:
He hath conspired against thee, and demands
The hand of justice.
Lord Sal. Will ye not ope, ye Heavens, and instant send
Your thunder to my aid? Unhand me, villains!
Or, by the powers of vengeance, I will dash
You piece-meal!

Ray. Bear the traitor hence, and bind
His stubborn arms: bestow the lady safe
Within her chamber.
Lady Sal. I will not part my husband—Hold your hands—
They overpower me——barbarous, barbarous men!
Lord Sal. Ruffians, forbear your more than impious hands!

Lady Sal. Yet hear me, Raymond—by these streaming eyes,
Oh! hear me yet—
Ray. Away—
Lord Sal. Slaves! murderers!
[*They are forced off severally.*
Ray. Away with him, away! honour is lost,
And shame must henceforth be my only portion.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey. My lord, you waste the precious hours in cold
Irresolute delays: nor circumstance
Nor time admit of long deliberation.
Ray. Would I had never seen this fatal mansion!
Grey. A sorry wish, my lord. Behold the fierce,
The lordly ranger of the desert wild;
No sluggish fear he knows; he pauses not,
Nor looks behind, but onward speeds him till
He gripes the trembling prey: be ever thus
The youth, whom thirst of love and beauty fires.
Ray. Away; call forth my train—nay, murmur not:
Command that, ere the lark proclaim the morn,
They hold them each prepared. Here I will rest,
If rest I can, this night; to-morrow's sun
Shall see me fled for ever from these walls.
Grey. Go———I detain thee not.
Summon thy train, mount the swift steed, away;
The gates shall open to thy flight. But know,
That shame and scorn shall follow at thy heels.
Yet worse; the insulted baron next pursues thee:
Nor rocks, nor mountains, nor opposing seas
Shall stay him; but with more than mortal rage
He shall assail thee.
Ray. Are there no other means?
Grey. None.
Ray. No other way but murder? Horrid thought!
Oh! Grey, if e'er the dagger's drawn, I feel
Such perturbation here! what then, oh what
Shall prove my portion when 'tis steeped in blood?
The drops can from the point be wiped away,
But never from the mind,
Grey. Lift, lift thine eye,
And let it gaze upon the bright reward.
Riches and honours grace the swelling act,
While beauty, like the ruby-crowned morn,
When first she appears upon the mountain top,
Comes smiling on to meet you. These are objects,
My lord, would irritate the palsied arm
Itself of fear; excite the lagging blood,
And spur it on to acts of noble daring.
Ray. What would you do? Think—Salisbury is a name
Of all beloved, of more than vulgar sway
Throughout the land; a deed, unauthorised
As this, shall never escape the arm of justice.
Grey. Such wary counsels shall our steps o'errule,
As may deride suspicion—One there is,
A knight among thy vassal train, perhaps
Unnoted: soft of speech he is, and fair;
But of a heart that mocks at human feelings:
Him I have sounded with reserve; and find
Him not unapt to this our secret purpose.
But say, what recompence, what high reward
Awaits the man, whose arm for thee enacts
Such signal service?
Ray. Half my fortunes——all
Would I on him bestow, whose prosperous arts
Should make the fair one mine.
Grey. She shall be thine.
Ray. But say, my friend—what tale, what rare device
Should fruitful art explore, that might amuse
Her just suspicions?
Grey. Innocence! the mask
Of innocence, and counterfeited sorrow——

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. If beauty in distress, if dignity,
Now sinking into ruin, can assail
Thy pity, come, oh! come, and weep to see——
Grey. The countess, I suppose.
Ele. My lord, my lord,
'Twould melt the savage into human softness,
And make him howl forth pity, to behold her—
Oh! did you see her, pale, disordered as
She runs, now calling wildly on her lord,
Again upon her son, again on thee!
Sometimes, alas! she beats her beauteous bosom;
Anon, in frantic mood, tears from her head
The silken hairs, which fall in heaps unheeded;
Wrings her white hands, and weeps and raves by turns,
Till nature, spent and wearied, gives her pause.

Ray. Away: we will speak comfort to her sorrows. [*Exit Eleanor.*
Wretch that I am! But I will yield them up;
Son, husband——all I will resign, if so
I may appease her phrenzy.
[*Going, is detained by Grey.*
Grey. Be not rash.
Short is the date of every stronger passion;
Unstayed the mind of woman; by a breath
Oft agitated, by a breath composed——
Yield them, my lord! it would be madness, ruin.
Ray. Which ever way I turn, it is destruction.
Grey. O'ercast with fear, thine eyes take nothing in
But fancies of the sickliest hue——For shame!
Rouse, rouse, my noble lord; awake, shake off
This weakness. Pleasure must be wooed with toil.
Go to her, solace her; if that should fail,
Permit her, as by stealth, to visit Salisbury;
At sight of him this tumult shall subside.
Ray. With love and pity I am torn. In vain
I strive; too far I am advanced in error.
Oh! will no hand disclose a path, whereby
I may return? Accursed be thou, myself;
And doubly be accursed that fatal hour
I turned mine ear to thy destructive counsels!
[*Goes out in great agitation.*
Grey. [*Alone.*] My hopes begin to totter.
If he resign them, Salisbury is appeased,
And he retires: what then becomes of Grey?
On me, on me, of course, the tempest falls.
That must not be—he goes to see her now—
Who knows what new-sprung hope may follow thence?
There is a charm in soft distress, that works
Upon the soul like magic; causing love
Oft times, as oft exciting loose desire——
It is most apt. I will, before he goes
To her, explore each access to his heart;
Attack each avenue that leads to virtue;
Try every winning art that may assist
The loose contagion: should he seize her beauties,
Farewell remorse; then dies the injured husband. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Opens and discovers* LORD SALISBURY *on the ground, in chains.*

Enter LEROCHES.

Ler. Alas! on the cold ground! I fear his wrongs
Have made him mad; I heard him rage—My lord—
Rise, rise, my lord, and speak to thy Leroches.
Lord Sal. —Thou art unkind.
Ler. Oh! would to Heaven that I could ease thy troubles!
Lord Sal. I had in sweet oblivion lost myself
And every care; why hast thou called me back
To hated recollection?—O! my wrongs,
My wrongs! they now come rushing o'er my head—
Again, again, they wake me into madness.
Ler. Thy wrongs shall be revenged.
Lord Sal. Torn from them both!
——Let me not think.
Ler. Think on our friends, my lord:
Perhaps, even now, they are at hand; and soon
Will thunder at the gates.
Lord Sal. Is it possible?
Or do my eyes but false persuade me to it?—
In trammels, and within my walls! beneath
That roof where I am sole invested lord!—
Ler. Look, behold.
Lord Sal. I see thou art dishonoured.
Ler. 'Tis the will
Of Heaven, and I submit me to my fortunes.
Lord Sal. How cam'st thou hither?
Ler. By command, as I
Suppose, of—but I will not name him.
Lord Sal. Blasts
Upon him!—Didst thou see my wife?
Ler. No, my lord.
Lord Sal. Nor my son?
Ler. My lord, I saw not either.
Lord Sal. Nor of either heard?
Ler. No, my good lord;—I trust that they are safe.
Lord Sal. Hear me, sweet Heaven! ye throned powers above,
Dread arbiters of mortal doings, hear—
Dry not instant up the springs of life,
But grant me measure of revenge. Unbind,
For pity, these dishonoured limbs unbind,
And give this monster to my willing arm:
If I not firmly gripe, if I not tear
With more than savage force his hated form—

Enter a Knight.

Traitor!
What hast thou done? Bring forth my honoured dame—
Haste, bring her instant; give her to my arms,
Uninjured, undefiled, or, by the souls
Of the most holy and unspotted saints——
Spare me, good Heaven—I am, I am to blame.
Imports thy coming aught w th me?
Knt. Behold
In me thy better angel, come to warn
Thee of unguarded danger—Oh! my lord,
My lord! beware of horrid treachery—
Whatever knight thou not'st, that, traitor-like,
Approacheth thee with smiles; that, with the charm
Of honeyed speech, would practice on thy hearing,
Of him beware—They seek thy ruin; chance
Betrayed their purpose; I was touched with pity.
[*Going.*
Lord Sal. Nay, go not yet.
Knt. Suspicion's on the watch;
My thoughts are scarce my own.

Lord Sal. It is for guilt,
Not conscious honesty, to taste of fear.
Knt. Know then, my lord, though strict necessity
Enrolls me in the list of Raymond's train,
Yet doth my soul abhor the unhallowed service.
Lord Sal. Be thou but faithful, and discover all
Thou know'st, so shalt thou thrive in Salibury's favour.
Knt. Fear not my faith. But shall lord Salisbury prove
A friend indeed? For I shall need thy arm
And interest both against so great a foe.
Lord Sal. Now by my honour, ever yet held dear,
I will protect thee, 'gainst whatever foe.
Knt. Morton desires but this—Know then, that late
As by the western porch I stood, my ear
Was met by certain voices: straight I turned;
And through the crevice of the adjoining door
Was known that same insidious knight and Grey,
In low, but earnest converse. Thee they named;
And I could hear the latter, whilst he said,
'A dagger is the best. With honest smiles,
'And fair-instructed speech you must essay him.
'Thy pence and fortunes on this feat depend.'
Lord Sal. I thank thee for this warning; and ere long
Shall recompense thy love.
Mor. Had I the power
To serve thee, as the will, thou should'st not wear
Those marks of shame—But oh! the unhappy countess!
Lord Sal. What, what of her?
Mor. Alas! to think the pangs
She feels this moment, torn as she hath been,
By rude barbarians, from her lord and son.
Lord Sal. But is she safe? Hath not dishonour reached her?
Mor. Oh may she never know dishonour!—Yet Lord Raymond—
Lord Sal. Perish the detested name
For ever! for it makes my blood outcourse
The wholesome speed of nature.
Mor. It is true,
He holds her in his power—
Lord Sal. He does, he does:
And I do live to know it!
Mor. But I trust
He will not use that power—Farewell, my lord;
I will away, and gather all I can
Of their condition.
Lord Sal. Thou shalt win my love.
See, see my wife, oh! see her if thou can'st:
Speak comfort to her. Say, the only pangs I feel,
Are for her safety. Bid her hope for timely aid;
But to remember still, the virtuous mind
Will welcome death itself before dishonour.
Mor. To see her, is a task I fear will foil
My utmost; but no art shall be untried.
[*Exit Mor.*
Lord Sal. Is there no way to freedom?—Oh my friends!
My friends! Haste, Ardolf, haste to my revenge!
Ler. Thy fierce impatience, thy untoward will,
It is, my lord, that hath betrayed our safeties.
To Ardolf deaf, thou would'st not wait his succours;
Deaf, too, to me, thou would'st approach the castle.
Lord Sal. Fear not: this stranger, like Heaven's brighter star,
Hath risen propitious—Heavens! but what of that?
My wife!—perhaps, even now within the gripe
Of fell incontinence she struggles—Beware
That thought—down, down, or I shall rage to madness.
Ler. My lord, he would not—
Lord Sal. Hark!—
Ler. He would not, dare not, sure: or, if he dare,
Her inborn dignity, her virtue—
Lord Sal. Peace!—
Lady Sal. Hold off your brutal hands!
[*From without.*
Lord Sal. 'Tis she! 'tis she!
The slave assails her—Let me forth—
Slaves! murderers! instant let me forth, or I—
Lady Sal. Hast thou no touch of pity?
Lord Sal. Horror! horror!
Out hair! out by the roots! nor let a grain
Be left to tell there grew such honours there.
Lady Sal. O, my lord! my lord!—
Lord Sal. By Heaven I will not be restrained—
[*Ler. strives to stay him.*
Nor all your bolts, nor barriers, all the powers
Of hell united shall withhold me from her—
Ler. Preserve him, Heaven! I fear
Some act of horrid import—Oh! she comes!
Wild, wild as the rough ocean vexed with storms.
[*Bursts forth.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY, ELEANOR, *and* MORTON,

Lady Sal. I will have vengeance. Such an outrage—No,
I will not weep. They think I have no means:
'Tis false: I will resume a spirit.
Ele. Alas, alas!
Lady Sal. I had a son: sweet William!—thou hast heard
Him prattle; there was music on his tongue.
Ele. Can Heaven behold such crimes, and not awake
Its thunders?
Lady Sal. Weep'st thou? I can weep myself;
I have some cause——He is my husband—who
Will part us?—Cold, cold, cold. The rains beat sore,
And the winds make a noise; 'tis a rough night;
No little star to guide his darkling steps——
The heavens do rain down pity for me.
Ele. Rave
Not thus, dear lady; oh! be comforted.
Lady Sal. Yes, yes; I know; these trifles have disturbed me,

The bird is rifled.
Poor flutterer! oh! it was naught to spoil
Her of her little hope——Did'st thou not see
Her valiant mate, how fierce he shook his plumes,
And pecked at them? Did he not?—He had saved
His mistress from the spoilers, but they snared him.
Lord Sal. [*Entering.*] Where is the slave? I will not brook delay.
Lady Sal. He's come! he's come——Now, ruffians, I have found
Him, we will die together ere you part us!
Lord Sal. Hell! what are your blackest horrors to this?
Lady Sal. We will have justice,—bury Grey alive.
Lord Sal. She's lost!
Lady Sal. Say you!—Put Raymond to the torture.
Lord Sal. I will tear him joint by joint.
Lady Sal. But they will part us——
They come—You shall not—no; no power on earth
Shall force me—Now they pull; hold, hold, my lord;
Yet closer——now, now, now. [*Faints.*
Lord Sal. My wife, my Ela!
Lost as thou art, oh! do not leave me.
Mor. Distressful sight! Oh, most inhuman Grey!
Ele. Nature, my lord, unequal to the conflict,
Has for a space retired within herself;
But shortly to return. This interval
Of death-like quiet will, I trust, recall
Her safer senses——She revives.
Lady Sal. But this is strange——
Ele. My lord,
Speak to her; soothe her, and she will be calm.
Lord Sal. Speak to her, soothe her——what have I with her? with thee?
Oh agonizing hour! Had I but perished
In the safe wave that buried my loved friends,
It had been well—'Twas cruelty to save me.
Lady Sal. Am I indeed awake?—Let me stand up—
What is the matter?
Lord Sal. My poor, injured wife!
Lady Sal. Nay, but inform me, I am over doubtful;
I would believe, I know—If what I now
Behold be not a dream, you are my husband?
Lord Sal. The wretch that was so called.
Lady Sal. Alas! alas!
Sure I have been afflicted sore—My lord!
My life!—why dost thou start from me? Oh take
Me to thy arms, for I have need of comfort!
Lord Sal. Art thou not undone?
Lady Sal. Indeed I have wept.
Lord Sal. Lost, stained, dishonoured by a villain!
Lady Sal. How,
My lord! Think'st thou that I have other wrongs
To weep, than thou hast seen?
Lord Sal. I heard thee cry.
Lady Sal. I know not what I did—Dishonoured—O!
The thought wakes every pulse to indignation.
Lord Sal. What! did he not assail thee?
Lady Sal. No—Assail me!
Lord Sal. Then thou art safe, thy honour unassayed?
Lady Sal. So witness Heaven!
Lord Sal. The God of Heaven be praised!
Lady Sal. —And couldst thou think so meanly of me?—Oh!
I had let the life-blood from this bosom forth,
Ere I had brooked dishonour.
Lord Sal. Best of thy sex—thy cries like daggers pierced me:
And fearful fancy pictured such a scene,
As hurried me to madness—But thou art safe,
My wife is safe! and I am blest again.
Lady Sal. My heart o'erjoys—Then wherefore do I fear?
Lord Sal. I had forgot—our son; for him thou fear'st!
Lady Sal. Not only for my son, but for thyself,
Thy precious self, I trembled—Oh, this fiend!
The slaves and agents of destruction, black
And bold, are stationed round him, and but wait
Their master's nod.
Ler. Would we were safe bestowed
Without this fearful prison!
Lady Sal. Would we were!—
Think, think, my lord, is there no way of flight?
Lord Sal. Thou hast recalled to my remembrance what,
If seconded by this our plighted friend,
May claim a serious and attentive hearing.
Mor. Small is the service I can boast, my lord;
In all my best I shall be prompt to aid you.
Lord Sal. Hear, then. Deep underneath this vaulted ground,
Curious and close, by our forefathers scooped,
I do remember me there is a dark
And secret mine, which leads by many a maze,
Without the castle. Not far thence there stands,
Within the bosom of an aged grove,
An house, for pious uses set apart,
The hallowed seat of godly brethren: there,
I fear not, we shall rest secure of ill.
Lady Sal. Most opportune, as could our wishes frame—
But oh! our little hope! our younger care!
Mor. My life shall answer for lord William's safety.
Lady Sal. Then let us forth.
Mor. The night is over young;
The castle's yet awake, and would but mock
The attempt.
Lord Sal. Say, what shall be the appointed hour!
Mor. Some three hours hence, my lord; or ere the clock

Perchance have told the second watch—and now,
That squint suspicion mar not, let us part.
Lady Sal. Then must we part?—But 'tis to save us all.
Three hours—farewell!—Oh! they will be three long,
Long hours to me!
Lord Sal. Farewell, my best!—Mean time
Leroches, we will rest us here apart. Farewell,
Farewell! thou soother sweet of every care!
The God, that loves the unsullied mind, descend,
And be thy guardian till we meet again! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A forest and cottage.*

Enter ARDOLF *and a Knight.*

ARD. THE storm is laid; and from the parting clouds
See where the moon steps forth, pale goddess,
Cheering the dark, dull brow of haggard night.
This is the forest—that the cottager's,
Or I do err, the appointed place of meeting.
Kni. It is: behold the rock, as was described,
The torrent foaming down his rugged side.
Ard. See, the bright harbinger of morning climbs
The steep of heaven: they're in the first repose—
Wake, peasant, wake—How balmy sweet the sleep
Of him, who stretches under rustic roof!
His task of labour o'er, content he lays
Him on his rushy couch; nor elves, nor goblins
(The coinage of swoln surfeit or of guilt)
Approach his peaceful pillow. Wake, I say:
Peasant, awake.

Enter a Peasant from the cottage.

Pea. Who calls?
What is your business, that at this late hour
You make the forest echo with your cries?
Ard. Peasant, are there not certain travellers
Within your cottage?
Pea. No.
Ard. What! saw you not
Two stranger pilgrims pass this way!
Pea. I did.
Two such arrived ere the lark had risen
From her moss cabin, or the cock
Gave note of morn.
Ard. Say, gentle cottager,
Where may they now be lodged?
Pea. Nay, stranger, that
I know not. They went hence about the time
The bat began her twilight play.
Ard. 'Tis strange
They should depart—Left they no message?
Pea. None.—
They said, they wished to see the neighbouring abbey;
But would to-night partake our homely fare.
[*Returns into the cottage.*
Ard. We now are in the precincts of the castle;
But whether to proceed, or wait, perchance
If they return, I know not.—Hark! some one
Approaches—who is there?

Enter LEROCHES.

Leroches!
Ler. Happily met—where are your friends?
Ard. At hand; and well appointed each—where is my lord?
Ler. In chains: in his own castle basely bound——
Torn from his wife and son.—How I escaped—
But haste; time is too precious now for more:
His life hangs upon each eventful moment.
Ard. In chains! his life in danger!—Ho! my friends!
To horse, quick; we will rescue him, or perish.
Ler. Ardolf, pursue the eastern causeway you;
I, with a chosen few, will trace the path,
Which led me from the postern.
Ard. Wisely cautioned:——
Divided thus, we wage an easier war. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Within the castle.*

Enter GREY *and* MORTON.

Grey. My noble Morton!——well hast thou repaid
The nicer hope which I reposed in thee.
—Their unprovided rest outruns my wishes.
Mor. Fools! not to see through my hypocrisy!
That, in the borrowed guise of honest friendship,
I studied but to lure them to my toils—
Concealed from upper light, it yields a safe
Retreat—through that they purposed their escape.
Grey. Within the secret womb of that same vault,
When all the castle's hushed, their bleeding trunks
We will deposit.
Mor. Yes—we will be bloody.
Grey. Here is the weapon—Be firm, and prosper.
[*Mor. receives a dagger, and goes out.*
——Thou too, unthinking fool, must this hour bleed—
Would it were over—they may chance to wake.—
Thou, Sleep! still child of sable-hooded night,
Befriend us! From the dark Lethean cell
Up-conjure all thy store of drowsy charms:
Lock fast their lids, o'erpower each torpid sense,

That they awake not ere the deed be done—
[*Bell tolls.*
—The second watch: and, like death's curfew, deep
And dismal verberates the solemn knell!

Enter a Knight.

Knt. A stranger, sir, who calls him Oswald, waits
Without the castle, and would speak with you.
Grey. Oswald!—He is our friend.
Knt. I have not learned
His errand; but, as it would seem, he comes
With news that much import thy present hearing.
Grey. I'll speak with him anon.
Knt. I know not what
Their purpose; but even now, as on the tower
I stood, which high o'erlooks the eastern causeway,
Methought I heard the distant sound of horses,
As hither bent in full career.
Grey. The sound
Of horse!—Look out; call up our knights—away. [*Exit Knt.*
—What can delay him?—Should my present hopes
Miscarry, I will bear the lady hence,
And make her hostage for my safety; nay,
Perchance, what I have some incentives to,
Supplant them both, the lover and the husband—
He comes!—

Re-enter MORTON.

Mor. Oh! that the earth would yawn and cover me!
Or that Heaven's quick-devouring fires had shrunk
And withered up this arm when it was raised—
Eyes! eyes! why closed ye not ere you beheld
The ghastly ruin?
Grey. Speak, direct——are they disposed?
Mor. Away!—thou hast destroyed my peace for ever—
Had you beheld him as he lay, struggling
In the cold gripe of death; cheeks o'erspread
With livid pale; those eyes, that late shot forth
So radiant, now quite sunk; their burning lamps
Extinct; while from the deep-mouthed wound,
As from a copious fountain, issued forth
Life's purple spring.
I would have fled, but horror for a space
Suspended every power.
Grey. Tis well—
Hast thou, then, slain lord Salisbury?
At thy own peril be it—Help!—He has slain
The innocent!
They're murdered, foully murdered by a slave.
[*Exit.*
Mor. The earth has teemed with prodigies—this sure
Out-monsters all!

Enter RAYMOND *hastily, with his sword drawn.*

Ray. On what purpose art thou here?
Mor. Lord Raymond cannot be a stranger, sure.
Ray. A dagger!—what hast thou done?
Mor. Did not my lord approve the deed?
Ray. What deed?
Mor. How's this!—My lord,
I had your sanction ratified by Grey;
With promise of high recompence the hour
When Salisbury should expire.
Ray. Accursed be he that told thee so; and thou
That gavest him credit!
Mor. This is strange!
Ray. Approve!
I did not; by the powers of truth I did not—
Remorseless villain!—Where, where shall I hide
Me? whither shall I fly?—O deed of horror!—
Thy blood, detested hireling, shall in part
Compensate.
Mor. Hold—He cannot sure dissemble—
Wish you, my lord, this deed were yet undone?
Ray. What would the monster? Oh! could I recall
His life by killing twenty thousand slaves
Like thee, it were a comfort!
Mor. I believe
That you are innocent: know, then, my lord,
He lives; he sleeps; and sleeps secure of harm.
Ray. Take heed thou dost not trifle!
Mor. I will confess
Me true, and heaven forgive my foul intent!
I undertook to slay this innocent:
Approached him as a friend—I saw his sufferings;
Saw his distracted wife: at length I cursed,
And in my heart abjured the wicked purpose.
Ray. Hadst thou the goodness! Then, perhaps——
Mor. I thought
Haply that you yourself might soon relent.
This instrument of purposed cruelty,
I took; and, with a fair-devised tale
Of Salisbury's death, amused the guilty wretch,
That would ensnare your quiet.
Ray. Is this honest?
Mor. Approach, my lord, approach, and let your eye
Be witness of my truth—In doing thus,
I thought I should be deemed lord Raymond's friend.
Ray. Thou wert the best of friends! Retire thou now. [*Exit Mor.*
One way there yet remains to reconcile
This double war, and heal my tortured bosom.
Thou, that so soundly sleep'st, unguarded thus
[*Going to the side of the stage.*
Against whatever ill that may approach thee,

Awake! rouse from the bed of listless sleep,
And see who comes to greet thee.

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord Sal. Do I dream?
Or am I in the regions of the unblest,
Beset with monsters? Though thou art a fiend,
I will attempt thee.

Ray. Rush not on my weapon.
I have sought thee on a cause which honour loves;
And would not have thee mar my soul's fair purpose.

Lord Sal. Inglorious! base! Oh, shame to manhood! Dearly
Shalt thou atone the accumulated wrongs
That I do bleed withal. Nor sea, nor earth,
Though thou shouldst traverse her remotest climes,
Shall shelter thee from my determined fury.

Ray. Think not that I shall fly thee; or that I
Have sought thee now, but on such terms as even
May challenge thy applause. I come a foe,
Indeed, but I do come a generous foe.

Lord Sal. A generous foe! The brave indeed aspire
To generous acts; their every thought looks up,
And honour's dictates are their only function:
But thou! what terms would'st thou propose? what act
Of that essential virtue, that may raze
The ignoble stains wherewith thou art polluted?

Ray. The ignoble and the brave alike have erred;
And he, that re-ascends to virtue's height,
Does often snatch a wreath, which never bloomed
On safer wisdom's brow. First let me lose
Those ignominious bonds, which have, indeed,
My own dishonoured—not the wearer's arm.
[*Takes off his chains.*

Lord Sal. Say to what purpose tends this honest seeming?

Ray. That I have wronged thee, I confess; take this,
[*Gives him a sword, and draws another.*
The only restitution I have left.
I know thou never canst forgive, nor I
Forget: the sword, then, judge between.

Lord Sal. Indeed!
Lives there so much honour, then, within thee?
Spite of the mighty wrongs which thou hast done
Me, I do thank thee.

Ray. Now, Fortune mark her favourite!
[*Raymond is disarmed.*
Then she is partial, and I must submit.

Lord Sal. Take up thy sword again; my fair revenge
Disdains too cheap a conquest.

Ray. 'Tis too much.
Oh generous! generous even to cruelty!
Some way I would repay thee—Oh, that I
[*Takes up his sword.*
Had never seen thy wife! It may not be;
Then let me tear for ever from my breast
The guilty passion: thus I thank thee——thus
[*Wounds himself.*
Atone the mischiefs, that——Oh!——[*Falls.*

Lord Sal. This, indeed,
Atones for all. Thou much misguided youth!
What tempted thee to stray so wide from honour?

Ray. Ask, ask that villain; he will answer all;
That villain Grey, whose wicked arts seduced me;
Forgive——I die, I die: a dreadful proof
What ills await the wretch, who gives his ear
To vicious counsels. [*Dies.*

Lord Sal. Dreadful proof indeed!
I do forgive thee, so forgive thee, Heaven!

Re-enter MORTON.

Now, where's my wife? where is my friend Leroches?

Mor. My lord, by my assistance, he has fled.
I saw how vain your purpose to escape;
His single flight was unobserved. Your friends,
In quest of whom he hasted, are arrived:
That trumpet speaks it. [*A trumpet heard.*

Lord Sal. It is, it is sir Ardolph! See, he comes.

Enter ARDOLF *and* KNIGHT.

Ard. My noble friend! safe! crowned with conquest too!

Lord Sal. Saw you Leroches?

Ard. My lord,
He sought the castle by a private path.
I thought he had been here by this.

Lord Sal. 'Tis well.
But where's my wife? my son? my soul is maimed
Of half its joys till I've again embraced them.

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. My lord, my lord! the countess and lord William——
Send, send and save them from destruction!
With horses, that outstrip the winds, the villains
Have borne her from the castle!

Lord Sal. Ravished by villains! Mount your horses, haste!

Ard. Say, which way have they fled?

Ele. West of the castle:
Heaven grant their swiftness mock not your best speed!

Ard. Now, good my lord, if I might speak—

Lord Sal. Speak not
To me; but forth and scour the country!

Ard. Hark!
Methought I heard a voice——

Ele. And I methought.
Perhaps Heaven has been kind! perhaps 'tis she.

Lady Sal. [*Entering.*] Now, hushed be every fear—Where, where's my hero,
That I may once more hold him to my bosom?

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* LORD WILLIAM, *conducted by* LEROCHES.

Lord Sal. 'Tis she! 'tis she!
My wife is in my arms again! Speak, speak!
Oh, whence this precious, this unlooked event?
Lady Sal. When the fell ruffian,
When Grey, with impious hands, had snatched us hence,
Then came my guardian angel——came your friend,
And rescued us from ruin.
Ler. Happy hour!
I took the path which brought me to their rescue;
The atrocious villain fell beneath this arm.
Lord Sal. My wife!
My son! my friend! My God! my guardian God!
Ele. O joy, that they are here again!
Lord Sal. They're here! they're here! my wife and son are here!
Proclaim it, O ye sons of light! spread wide
Your starry pinions, angels, spread them wide,
And trumpet loud throughout the unmeasured tracts
Of highest Heaven, that virtue is made happy!
Lady Sal. Let the sun cease to shine, the planets cease,
Drop every star from his etherial height,
Ere I forget thee, source of every good!
Lord Sal. Friends, I am much beholden to you all.
My love! the gloom, that overspread our morn,
Is now dispersed; our late mishaps,
Recalled, shall be the amusing narrative,
And story of our future evening, oft
Rehearsed. Our son, too, he shall hang upon
The sounds, and lift his little hands in praise
To heaven: taught by his mother's bright example,
That, to be truly good, is to be blessed.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

EARL OF WARWICK.

BY

FRANKLIN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
KING EDWARD, *attached to lady E. Gray.*	MARGARET OF ANJOU, *the deposed queen.*
EARL OF WARWICK, *her lover.*	LADY ELIZABETH GRAY, *attached to Warwick.*
EARL OF PEMBROKE, *friend to Warwick.*	LADY CLIFFORD, *confidante of Margaret.*
EARL OF SUFFOLK, *his enemy.*	*Officers, Attendants, Guards, &c.*

Scene—The Palace.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A palace.*

Enter MARGARET OF ANJOU, *and* LADY CLIFFORD.

Clif. THANKS, gracious Heaven! my royal mistress smiles,
Unusual gladness sparkles in her eye,
And bids me welcome in the stranger, Joy,
To his new mansion.
Marg. Yes, my faithful Clifford,
Fortune is weary of oppressing me:
Through my dark cloud of grief a cheerful ray
Of light breaks forth, and gilds the whole horizon.
Clif. Henry in chains, and Edward on the throne
Of Lancaster; thyself a prisoner here;
Thy captive son torn from his mother's arms,
And in the tyrant's power; a kingdom lost:
Amidst so many sorrows, what new hope
Hath wrought this wondrous change?
Marg. That, which alone,
In sorrow's bitterest hour, can minister
Sweet comfort to the daughters of affliction,
And bid misfortune smile—the hope of vengeance:
Vengeance! benignant patron of distress,
Thee I have oft invoked, propitious now
Thou smilest upon me; if I do not grasp
The glorious opportunity, henceforth
Indignant frown, and leave me to my fate!
Clif. Unhappy princess! that deceiver, Hope,
Hath often flattered, and as oft betrayed thee;
What hast thou gained by all its promises?
What's the reward all thy toils?
Marg. Experience——
Yes, Clifford, I have read the instructive volume
Of human nature, there long since have learned,
The way to conquer men is by their passions;
Catch but the ruling foible of their hearts,
And all their boasted virtues shrink before you.
Edward and Warwick, those detested names,
Too well thou know'st, united to destroy me.
Clif. That was, indeed, a fatal league.
Marg. But mark me;
If we could break this adamantine chain,
We might again be free: this mighty warrior,
This dread of kings, the unconquerable Warwick,

Is plighted to the fair Elizabeth.
Clif. The lady Gray, you mean, the beauteous widow,
Whose husband fell in arms for Lancaster,
Marg. The same, my Clifford—Warwick long has loved———
Clif. And means to wed her.
Marg. But if I have art,
Or she ambition, that shall never be.
Clif. Canst thou prevent it?
Marg. Yes, my Clifford; Warwick
Were a mean choice for such transcendent beauty;
I shall provide her with a fitter husband,
A nobler far, and worthier of her charms—
Young Edward———
Clif. Ha! the king! impossible!
Warwick, even now, commissioned by the state
To treat with Lewis, offers England's throne
To France's daughter; and, ere this, perhaps,
Hath signed the solemn contract.
Marg. Solemn trifles!
Mere cobweb ties—Love's a despotic tyrant,
And laughs, like other kings, at public faith,
When it opposes private happiness:
Edward is youthful, gay, and amorous;
His soul is ever open to the lure
Of beauty; and Elizabeth hath charms
Might shake a hermit's virtue.
Clif. Hath he seen
This peerless fair one?
Marg. Yes—by my contrivance,
When last he hunted in the forest, some,
Whom I had planted there, as if by chance
Alone directed, led him cross the lawn
To Grafton. There, even as my soul had wished,
The dazzling lustre of her charms surprised
His unsuspecting heart———
Clif. What followed?
Marg. Oh!
He gazed and wondered; for awhile his pride
Indignant rose, and struggled with his passion,
But love was soon victorious: and last night,
The earl of Suffolk—so my trusty spies
Inform me—was dispatched, on wings of love,
To plead his master's cause, and offer her
The throne of England.
Clif. What if she refuse
The golden bribe?
Marg. No matter; all I wish
Is but to make them foes; the generous Warwick
Is fiery, and impatient of reproof;
He will not brook a rival in his love,
Though seated on a throne; besides, thou know'st,
The haughty earl looks down with scorn on Edward,
As the mere work of his all-powerful hand,
The baby monarch of his own creation.
Clif. Believe me, madam, Edward still reveres
And loves him; still, as conscious of the debt,
Pays him with trust and confidence; their souls
Are linked together in the strictest bonds
Of sacred friendship.
Marg. That but serves my cause:
Where ties are close, and interests united,
The slightest injuries are severely felt;
Offended friendship never can forgive.
Clif. Now the full prospect opens to my view;
I see thy distant aim, and trace the paths
Of vengeance: England soon will be a scene
Of blood and horror; discord's fatal torch
Once lit up in this devoted land,
What power shall e'er extinguish it? Alas!
I tremble at the consequence.
Marg. And I
Enjoy it:—Oh! 'twill be a noble contest
Of pride 'gainst pride, oppression 'gainst oppression;
Rise but the storm, and let the waves beat high,
The wreck may be our own: in the warm struggle,
Who knows but one or both of them may fall,
And Margaret rise triumphant on their ruin!
It must be so; and see, the king approaches:
This way he passes from the council—Mark
His downcast eye! he is a stricken deer,
The arrow's in his side—he cannot 'scape:
We'll meet and speak to him.
Clif. What mean you, madam?
Marg. To ask him—what, I know, he will refuse;
That gives me fair pretext to break with him,
And join the man I hate, vindictive Warwick.
But soft, he comes———

Enter KING EDWARD, *and an Officer.*

Edw. Is Suffolk yet returned? [*To an Officer.*
Offi. No, my good liege.
Edw. Go, wait and bring him to me.
[*Exit Off.*
I'll to my closet. Pardon me, fair lady,
I saw you not.
Marg. Perhaps it is beneath
A conqueror to look down upon his slave;
But I've a boon to ask.
Edw. Whate'er it is,
Within the limits of fair courtesy,
Which honour can bestow, I'll not refuse thee.
Marg. There was a time, when Margaret of Anjou
Would not have deigned to ask of Edward aught;
Nor was there aught, which Edward dared refuse her;
But that is past, great Warwick's arm prevailed,
And I am now your prisoner.
Edw. Since the hour,
When fortune shone propitious on the cause
Of justice, and gave victory to our arms,
You have been treated with all due respect,
Served like a queen, and lodged within our palace:
Is there aught more, you can, with reason, ask,
Or I, in prudence, grant you?
Marg. Give me back
The liberty I lost—restore my son,
And I may then, perhaps, be reconciled

To an usurper, may withhold my vengeance,
And let thee sit unpunished on—my throne.
Edw. You ask too proudly, madam; but to shew you
I cannot fear, you have your liberty.
Letters this morning I received from France,
Have offered noble ransom for your person;
Without that ransom—for the soul of Edward
Is far above the sordid lust of gold,
I grant it—from this moment you are free;
But for your son, I cannot part with him.
Marg. I scorn your bounties, scorn your proffered freedom.
What's liberty to me without my child?
But fate will place us soon above thy reach:
Thy short-lived tyranny is almost past,
The storm is gathering round thee, and will burst
With tenfold vengeance on thy guilty head.
Edw. I am not to be talked into submission,
Nor dread the menace of a clamorous woman.
Marg. Thou may'st have cause to dread a woman's power.
The time may come—mark my prophetic word—
When wayward beauty shall repay with scorn
Thy fruitless vows, and vindicate my wrongs:
The friend thou lean'st on, like a broken reed,
Shall pierce thy side, and fill thy soul with anguish,
Keen as the pangs I feel: York's perjured house
Shall sink to rise no more, and Lancaster
With added lustre re-assume the throne.
Hear this and tremble—give me back my son—
Or dread the vengeance of a desperate mother.
[*Exit Margaret.*
Edw. Imperious woman! but the voice of woe
Is ever clamorous: 'tis the privilege,
The charter of affliction to complain.
This tardy Suffolk! how I long to know,
Yet dread to hear my fate! Elizabeth,
On thee the colour of my future life
Depends, for thou alone canst make me blest,
Or cursed for ever! O! this cruel doubt
Is worse than all my tortures: but he comes,
The ambassador of love.

Enter the EARL OF SUFFOLK.

What news, my Suffolk?
Shall I be happy? O! I'm on the rack
Of expectation! Didst thou tell my tale
As if it were thy own, and may I hope—
Suf. My royal liege——
Edw. Good Suffolk, lay aside
The forms of dull respect; be brief, and tell me,
Speak, hast thou seen her? Will she be my queen?
Quick, tell me every circumstance, each word,
Each look, each gesture: didst thou mark them, Suffolk?
Suf. I did, and will recount it all; last night,
By your command, in secret I repaired
To Grafton's tufted bower, the happy seat
Of innocence and beauty; there I found
Thy soul's best hope, the fair Elizabeth;
Ne'er did these eyes behold such sweet perfection:
I found her busied in the pious office
Of filial duty, tending her sick father.
Edw. That was a lucky moment, to prefer
My humble suit: touch but the tender string
Of soft compassion in the heart, and love
Will quickly vibrate to its kindred passion;
You urged our royal purpose, then?
Suf. I did,
With all the warmth of friendship; dwelt with pleasure
On every princely virtue, that adorns
Your noble heart; she listened with attention,
And echoed back your praises.
Edw. Was not that
A kind propitious omen?
Suf. Such indeed
Hoping to find it, I called in the powers
Of flattery to my aid, and gazed upon her,
As if confounded by her dazzling beauties—
Conscious she smiled; but when, at length, I spake
Of England's monarch sighing at her feet,
The crimson glow of modesty o'erspread
Her cheek, and gave new lustre to her charms:
She turned aside, and, as she silent bowed
Her doubtful thanks, I marked the pearly tear
Steal down its secret track, and from her breast
Heard a deep sigh, she struggled to conceal;
If I have any judgment, or can trace
The hidden feelings of a woman's heart,
Her's is already fixed: I fear, my liege,
With all that England, all that thou couldst give,
The crown would sit but heavy on her brow.
Edw. Not heavier, Suffolk, than it sits on mine:
My throne is irksome to me; who would wish
To be a sovereign, when Elizabeth
Prefers a subject? Then the impetuous Warwick,
His awful virtue will chastise my weakness.
I dread his censure, dread his keen reproaches;
And dread them more, because they will be just.
I've promised Lewis to espouse his daughter,
To strengthen our alliance: would to Heaven
I had not! If I seek this coy refuser,
And break with France, Warwick will take the alarm;
If once offended, he's inexorable.
Suf. I know him well—Believe me, sir, the high
And haughty spirit, when it meets rebuke,
Is easiest checked, and sinks into submission.
Let him, my liege, who ventures to arraign
His master's conduct, look into his own:
There ever is a corner in the heart
Open to folly; Warwick is not free
From human frailties.
Edw. No: ambition fires
His noble breast, love triumphs over mine;
But well thou knowest, our eyes are ever open
To others' faults, and shut against our own.

We seldom pity woes we ne'er experienced,
Or pardon weakness, which we do not feel:
He is a hero.
Suf. Heroes are but men;
I have some cause to think so—but of that
We'll talk another time: meanwhile, my liege,
I think lord Warwick is a useful friend.
Edw. Aye, and a dangerous foe; the people love,
To adoration love him; if he falls
From his allegiance, crowds will follow him.
England has long been rent by civil broils,
And fain would rest her in the arms of peace;
Her wounds scarce closed, shall Edward open them,
And bid them bleed afresh? believe me, Suffolk,
I would not be the cause of new divisions
Amongst my people, for a thousand kingdoms.
Suf. 'Tis nobly said, and may thy grateful subjects
Revere thy virtues, and reward thy love!
Edw. O! Suffolk, did they know but half the cares,
That wait on royalty, they would not grudge
Their wretched master a few private hours
Of social happiness. If France consents,
I am undone; and Warwick hath, ere this,
Enslaved me: curse on this state policy,
That binds us thus to love at second hand!
Who knows but he may link me to a wretch;
Wed me to folly, ignorance, and pride,
Ill-nature, sickness, or deformity;
And, when I'm chained to misery, coldly tell me,
To soothe my grief, 'twas for the public good!
Suf. How far you have commissioned him, I know not;
But were I worthy to advise, my liege,
I would not be the dupe of his ambition,
But follow nature's dictates, and be happy.
England has charms beside Elizabeth's,
And beauties that——
Edw. No more; my heart is fixed
On her alone; find out this powerful rival,
I charge thee, Suffolk: yet why wish to find,
What, found, will make me wretched? were he bound
In cords of tenderest friendship round my heart,
Dearer than Warwick, dearer than thyself,
Forgive me, but I fear I should abhor him.
O think on something, that may yet be done,
To win her to my heart ere Warwick comes!
Suf. I hear he is expected every hour.
Edw. Grant, Heaven, some friendly storm may yet retard him.
I dread his presence here.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege, the earl
Of Warwick is arrived.
Edw. Ha! when? how? where?
Would he were buried in the rapid waves,
That brought him hither! comes he here to-night?
Mess. My liege, ere now he might have reached the palace,
But that the shouting multitudes press hard
On every side, and seem to worship him. [*Exit.*
Suf. Such adoration
But ill befits the idol, that receives it.
Edw. What's to be done? I cannot, must not see him,
Till all is fixed; once more, my best-loved Suffolk,
Try the soft arts of thy persuasive tongue:
What method canst thou think on, to evade
This promised marriage with ambitious France?
Suf. Summon your council, lay your thoughts before them,
Meet Warwick there, and urge a sovereign's right,
To please himself in that, which should concern
Himself alone—firm Buckingham and I
Will plead your cause against the haughty Warwick,
Whom I would treat with cold civility,
And distant state, which ever angers more
Resentful spirits than the warmth of passion.
Edw. 'Tis well advised:—mean time, if possible,
I will compose my troubled thoughts to rest:
Suffolk, adieu: if Warwick asks for me,
I am not well—I'm hunting in the forest—
I'm busy—stay—remember what I told you,
Touching the earldom, which I mean to give
Her father; that may bring her to the court;
You understand me, Suffolk—fare thee well.
[*Exit Suf.*
Why should I dread to see the man I love—
The man I reverence——Warwick is not changed,
But Edward is—Suffolk, I know, abhors him—
A favourite must be hated—if he urges
This dreadful contract, I shall hate him too:
I cannot live without Elisabeth:
I'll think no more—if I must sacrifice
My friendship or my love—the choice is made.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter WARWICK, *speaking to an Officer.*

Warw. 'Tis well: I shall attend his highness' pleasure. [*Comes forward.*
Meet me in the council! Warwick might have claimed
A private audience—After all my toils,
My perils in his service, 'tis a cold,
Unkind reception: some base whisperer,
Some needy sycophant, perhaps, hath poisoned
My royal master's ear—or, do I judge
Too rashly? As my embassy concerns
The public welfare, he would honour me
With public thanks—Elizabeth will chide me
For this unkind delay—but honour calls,
And duty to my king: that task performed,
Haste, my love, to happiness and thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Council-Chamber.*

Enter King EDWARD, *Dukes of* CLARENCE *and* BUCKINGHAM, *Earls of* SUFFOLK, PEMBROKE, *&c.*

Edw. Good Buckingham, I thank thee for thy counsel,
For blame thy honest warmth; I love this freedom;
It is the birth-right of an Englishman,
And doth become thee: what says noble Suffolk?
Suf. I would not cross my royal master's will;
But, on my soul, I think this nuptial league
With France preposterous and impolitic!
It cannot last; we are by nature foes,
And nought but mutual poverty and weakness
Can ever make us friends—she wants our aid
Against the powerful Burgundy, and therefore
Throws out this lure of beauty to ensnare you.
That purpose gained, she turns her arms against us.
Pem. Why, let her: if she comes with hostile arm,
England, thank Heaven, is ready to receive her:
I love my country, and revere my king,
As much, perhaps, as honest Buckingham,
Or my good fearful lord of Suffolk here,
Who knows so well, or would be thought to know,
What France will do hereafter: yet I think,
The faith of nations is a thing so sacred,
It ought not to be trifled with—I hate,
As much as you, the unnatural forced alliance;
And yet, my lords, if Warwick is empowered,
For so I hear he is, to treat with Lewis,
I know not how in honour you can swerve
From his conditions. [*Shouting.*
Hark! the hero comes;
Those shouts proclaim him near: the joyful people
Will usher in their great deliverer,
As he deserves.

Enter WARWICK.

Edw. Thrice welcome, noble Warwick!
Welcome to all! [*To Clarence, Pembroke, &c.*
Suf. You've had, my lord, I fear,
An arduous task, which few could execute.
But Warwick, in the council and the field,
Alike distinguished, and alike successful.
Edw. What says our cousin France?
Warw. By me, my liege,
He greets you well, and hopes, in closer ties
United, soon to wear a dearer name.
At length, thank Heaven! the iron gates of war
Are closed, and Peace displays her silken banners
O'er the contending nations; every doubt
Is now removed, and confidence established,
I hope, to last for ages.
Edw. Peace, my lord,
Is ever welcome; 'tis the gift of Heaven,
The nurse of science, art's fair patroness,
And merit's best protector; but if France
Would chain us down to ignominious terms,
Cramp our free commerce, and infringe the rights
Of our liege subjects, England may repent
Too late her rash credulity, and peace,
With all her blessings, may be bought too dear.
Warw. The shame would then be his, who made the purchase.
If any doubt my faith, my honest zeal
For thee, and for my country, let him speak,
And I will answer: punish me, just Heaven,
If in the task I have consulted aught
But England's honour, and my sovereign's glory!
Edw. Mistake me not, good Warwick; well I know
Thy spotless truth, thy honour, and thy love;
But glory has no farther charms for me:
Raised, by thy powerful aid, to England's throne,
I ask no more: already I am great
As fame and fortune with their smiles can make me,
And all I wish for now is—to be happy.
Warw. That too, my liege, hath been thy Warwick's care:
Happy thou shalt be, if the fairest form,
That ever caught a gazing lover's eye,
Joined to the sweetest, most engaging virtues,
Can make thee so:—she is indeed a gem,
Fit to adorn the brightest crown: to see,
Is to admire her; trust me, England's self,
The seat of beauty, and the throne of love,
Boasts not a fairer.
Edw. Beauty, good my lord,
Is all ideal; 'tis the wayward child
Of fancy, shifting with the changeful wind
Of fond opinion; what to you appears

The model of perfection, may disgust
My strange capricious taste.
Warw. Such charms would fix
Inconstancy itself:—her winning virtues,
Even if her beauty failed, would soon subdue
The rebel heart, and you would learn to love her.
Edw. Is passion to be learned then? wouldst thou make
A science of affection, guide the heart,
And teach it where to fix? impossible!
'Tis strange philosophy.
[*Rises and comes forward.*
My lord of Warwick,
Your zeal in England's, and in Edward's cause
Merits our thanks; but for the intended marriage
With France's daughter—it may never be.
Warw. Not be! it must: your sacred word is passed,
And cannot be recalled; but three days since
I signed the contract, and my honour's pledged
For the performance: Heavens! whilst fickle France
Is branded 'midst the nations of the earth
For breach of public faith, shall we, my liege,
Practise ourselves the vices we condemn,
Pass o'er a rival nation's every virtue,
And imitate their perfidy alone?
Edw. You'll pardon me, my lord; I thought it part
Of a king's power to have a will, to see
With his own eyes, and in life's little feast,
To cater for himself; but 'tis, it seems,
A privilege his servants can refuse him.
Warw. And so they ought—the king, who cannot conquer
His private interest for the public welfare,
Knows not his duty.
Edw. Kings, my lord, are born
With passions, feelings, hearts—like other men;
Nor see I yet, why Edward's happiness
Must fall a sacrifice to Warwick's honour.
Warw. My honour, sir, is yours; my cause your own:
Who sent me, and whose image did I bear?
The image of a great and glorious king,
Or of a weak and wavering boy?—henceforth,
Choose from the herd of fawning sycophants,
Some needy slave for your mock embassies,
To do your work, and stain the name of England
With foul reproach—Edward, I blush for thee,
And for my country; from this hour, expect
From injured France contempt, with deep resentment
For broken faith, and enmity eternal.
Edw. Eternal be it, then! for, as I prize
My inward peace beyond the pomp of state,
And all the tinsel glare of fond ambition,
I will not wed her.—Gracious Heaven! what am I?
The meanest peasant in my realm may choose
His rustic bride, and share with her the sweets
Of mutual friendship and domestic bliss!
Why should my happier subjects, then, deny me
The common rights, the privilege of nature,
And, in a land of freedom, thus conspire
To make their king the only slave amongst them?
Warw. The worst of slaves is he, whom passion rules,
Unchecked by reason, and the powerful voice
Of friendship, which, I fear, is heard no more
By thoughtless Edward.—'Tis the curse of kings
To be surrounded by a venal herd
Of flatterers, that soothe his darling vices,
And rob their master of his subjects' love.
Nay, frown not, sirs! supported as ye are,
I fear ye not. Which of this noble train,
These well-beloved counsellors and friends,
Assembled here to witness my disgrace,
Have urged you to this base, unmanly falsehood?
Shame on you all! to stain the spotless mind
Of uncorrupted youth, undo the work
Of Warwick's friendly hand, and give him back
A sovereign so unlike the noble Edward!
Suff. My lord, we thank you for the kind suggestion,
Howe'er ill-founded; and when next we meet,
To give our voice in aught, that may concern
The public weal, no doubt shall ask your leave,
Ere we proceed.
Pemb. My lord of Suffolk, speak
But for yourself; Warwick hath too much cause
To be offended: in my poor opinion,
Whate'er you courtiers think, the best support
Of England's throne are equity and truth;
Nor will I hold that man my sov'reign's friend,
Who shall exhort him to forsake his word,
And play the hypocrite: what tie shall bind
The subject to obedience, when his king,
Bankrupt in honour, gives the royal sanction
To perfidy and falsehood?
Buck. It becomes
But ill the earl of Pembroke—
Edw. Good my lords,
Let us have no dissentions here; we meet
For other purposes—some few days hence
We shall expect your counsel in affairs
Of moment—for the present, urge no further
This matter—fare ye well.
[*The council break up and disperse.*
Edw. [*Comes to Warw.*] Lord Warwick, keep
In narrower bounds that proud impetuous temper;
It may be fatal: there are private reasons—
When time befits we shall impart them to you;
Meanwhile, if you have friendship, love, or duty,
No more of Bona—I'm determined. [*Exit Edw.*
Warw. So:
'Tis well, 'tis very well: I have deserved it;
I've borne this callow eagle on my wing,
And now he spurns me from him; 'tis a change
I little looked for, and sits heavy on me:
Alas, how doubly painful is the wound,
When 'tis inflicted by the hand we love!
Cruel, ungrateful Edward!——

Ha! who's here?
The captive queen! if she has aught to ask
Of me, she comes in luckless hour, for I
Am powerless now.

Enter MARGARET OF ANJOU.

Warw. Will Margaret of Anjou
Thus deign to visit her acknowledged foe?
Marg. Alas! my lord, inured to wretchedness
As I am, and familiar with misfortune,
I harbour no resentment; have long since
Forgot, that ever Warwick was my foe,
And only wish to prove myself his friend.
Warw. Talk not of friendship, 'tis an empty name,
And lives but in idea; once, indeed,
I thought I had a friend.——
Marg. Whose name was—Edward;
Read I aright, my lord, and am I not
A shrewd diviner! Yes, that down-cast eye
And gloomy aspect say I am: you look
As if the idol, made by your own hands,
Had fallen upon, and crushed you; is it not so?
Warw. Amazement! nought escapes thy piercing eye,
And penetrating judgment: 'tis too true,
I am a poor, disgraced, dishonoured slave,
Not worth thy seeking; leave me, for the tide
Of court preferment flows another way.
Marg. The feast, perhaps, you have provided, suits not
With Edward's nicer palate; he disdains,
How sweet soe'er, to taste a foreign banquet,
And relishes no dainties but his own:
Am I again mistaken?
Warw. Sure thou deal'st
With some all-knowing spirit, who imparts
Each secret purpose to thee; else how know'st thou,
That Edward had refused to wed the princess?
Marg. Oh! it requires no supernatural aid
To trace his actions, nor has Margaret trod
The paths of life with unobserving eye.
I could have told you this long since—for know,
The choice is made, the nuptial rites prepared,
Which, but for your return, as unexpected
As undesired, had been, ere this, complete;
And, as in duty bound, you then had paid
Your due obedience to our English queen.
Warw. Determined, say'st thou? Gracious Heaven! 'tis well
I am returned.
Marg. Indeed, my lord, you came
A little out of season; 'twas unkind
To *interrupt* your master's happiness,
To blast so fair a passion in its bloom,
And check the rising harvest of his love.
Warw. Margaret, I thank thee—yes, it must be so:
His blushes, his confusion, all confirm it;
And yet I am amazed, astonished.
Marg. Wherefore?——
Is it so strange a youthful prince should love?
Is it so strange, a mind, unfraught with wisdom,
And lifted high with proud prosperity,
Should follow pleasure through the crooked paths
Of falsehood, should forsake a useless friend
For the warm joys of animating beauty?
Warw. No: but 'tis strange, that he, who knows how much
He owed to Warwick; he, who every hour
Tastes the rich stream of bounty, should forget
The fountain, whence it flowed.
Marg. Alas! my lord,
Had you been chastened in affliction's school,
As I have been, and taught by sad experience
To know mankind, you had not fallen a prey
To such delusion.
Warw. Was it like a friend,
Was it like Edward, to conceal his love?
Some base, insinuating, artful woman,
With borrowed charms, perhaps——
Marg. Hold, hold, my lord,
Be not too rash: who fights in darkness oft
May wound a bosom friend: perhaps you wrong
The best, and most accomplished of her sex.
Warw. Know you the lady?
Marg. But as fame reports,
Of peerless beauty and transcendent charms,
But for her virtue—I must ask of—you—
Warw. Of me! What virtues? Whose?
Marg. Elizabeth's.
Warw. Amazement! no: it must not, cannot be:
Elizabeth! he could not, dare not do it!
Confusion! I shall soon discover all. [*Aside.*
But what have I to do with Edward's choice,
Whoe'er she be, if he refuses mine?
Marg. Dissimulation sits but ill, my lord,
On minds like yours: I am a poor weak woman,
And so, it seems, you think me; but suppose
That same all-knowing spirit, which you raised,
Who condescends so kindly to instruct me,
Should whisper——Warwick knows the power of love
As well as Edward; that Elizabeth
Was his first wish, the idol of his soul;
What say you? Might I venture to believe it?
Warw. Margaret, you might; for 'tis in vain to hide
A thought from thee; it might have told you too,
If it be so, there is not such a wretch
On earth as Warwick; give me but the proof—
Marg. Lord Suffolk was last night dispatched to Grafton,
To offer her a share in Edward's throne.
Warw. Which she refused: did she not, Margaret? Say
She did!
Marg. I know not that, my lord; but crowns
Are dazzling meteors in a woman's eye;
Such strong temptations, few of us, I fear,
Have virtue to resist.

Warw. Elizabeth
Has every virtue! I will not doubt her faith.
Marg. Edward is young and handsome.
Warw. Curses on him!
Think'st thou he knew my fond attachment there?
Marg. O, passing well, my lord; and when 'twas urged
How deeply it would affect you, swore by Heaven,
Imperious Warwick ne'er should be the master
Of charms like hers; 'twas happiness, he said,
Beyond a subject's merit to deserve,
Beyond his hope to wish for, or aspire to,
Warw. But for that Warwick, Edward's self had been
A subject still—and—may be so—hereafter.
Thou smil'st at my misfortunes.
Marg. I must smile,
When I behold a subtle statesman thus
Duped and deluded by a shallow boy,
Sent on a fruitless errand to expose
His country and himself—it was indeed
A master-stroke of policy, beyond,
One should have thought, the reach of years so green
As Edward's, to dispatch the weeping lover,
And seize the glorious opportunity
Of tampering with his mistress here at home.
Warw. Did Nevil, Rutland, Clifford, bleed for this?
Marg. For this, doth Henry languish in a dungeon,
And wretched Margaret live a life of woe?
For this, you gave the crown to pious Edward,
And thus he thanks you for his kingdom.
Warw. Crowns
Are baubles, fit for children like himself
To play with; I have scattered many of them:
But thus to cross me in my dearest hope,
The sweet reward of all my toils for him
And for his country; if I suffer it,
If I forgive him, may I live the scorn
Of men, a branded coward, and old age,
Without or love or reverence, be my portion!
Henceforth, good Margaret, know me for thy friend:
We will have noble vengeance: are there not
Still left amongst the lazy sons of peace
Some busy spirits, who wish well to thee,
And to thy cause?
Marg. There are; resentment sleeps,
But is not dead. Beneath the hollow cover
Of loyalty, the slumbering ashes lie
Unheeded; Warwick's animating breath
Will quickly light them into flames again.
Warw. Then, Edward, from this moment I abjure thee:
Oh! I will make thee ample recompence
For all the wrongs, that I have done the house
Of Lancaster: go, summon all thy friends;
Be quick, good Margaret, haste, ere I repent,
And yield my soul to perjured York again.
The king, I think, gives you free liberty
To range abroad?
Marg. He doth, and I will use it,
As I would ever use the gift of foes,
To his destruction.
Warw. That arch-pander, Suffolk,
That minister of vice—but time is precious;
To-morrow, Margaret, we will meet in private,
And have some further conference; mean time
Devise, consult, use every means against
Our common foe: remember, from this hour,
Warwick's thy friend—be secret and be happy. [*Exit.*
Marg. What easy fools these cunning statesmen are,
With all their policy, when once they fall
into a woman's power! This gallant leader,
This blustering Warwick, how the hero shrunk
And lessened to my sight! Elizabeth,
I thank thee for thy wonder-working charms;
The time perhaps may come, when I shall stand
Indebted to them for—the throne of England.
Proud York, beware; for Lancaster's great name
Shall rise superior in the lists of fame:
Fortune, that long had frowned, shall smile at last,
And make amends for all my sorrows past. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter MARGARET, CLIFFORD, *and attendants.*

Marg. DISPATCH these letters straight to Scotland—this,
To the French envoy—these, to the earl of Pembroke. [*To a gentleman.*
Thus far, my friend, hath fortune favoured us [*Turning to Lady Clifford.*
Beyond our hopes: the soul of haughty Warwick
Is all on fire, and puling Edward loves
With most romantic ardour—O my Clifford,
You would have smiled to see how artfully
I played upon him: flattered, soothed, provoked,
And wrought him to my purpose: we are linked
In firmest bonds of amity and love.
Clif. Hath Warwick, then, so soon forgot his Edward?
Think'st thou the frantic earl will e'er exert
His ill-directed powers to pull down
The royal structure, which himself had raised?
Never.
Marg. What is there disappointed love
And unrestrained ambition will not do?
I tell thee, we are sworn and cordial friends.

Clif. Thou know'st he hates the house of Lancaster.
Marg. No matter——he has marvellous good skill
In making kings, and I have business for him.
Clif. And canst thou, then, forget the cruel wrongs,
The deep-felt injuries of oppressive Warwick,
To join the hand, that forged thy husband's chains,
And robbed thee of a crown?
Marg. But what—my Clifford,
If the same hand, that ravished, should restore it!
'Tis a court friendship, and may last as long
As interest shall direct: I've not forgot,
No, nor forgiven; I hate, abhor, detest him;
But I will use him as my instrument,
My necessary tool; I will make him draw
His traitorous sword, to sheath it in the breast
Of him he loves, then point it to his own.
Yes, Clifford, I have twined me round his heart;
Like the fell serpent crept into his bosom,
That I might sting more surely: he shall perish;
I keep him for the last dear precious morsel,
To crown the glorious banquet of revenge.
Clif. 'Tis what he merits from us; yet the attempt
Were dangerous; he is still the people's idol.
Marg. And so, perhaps, shall Margaret be; applause
Waits on success; the fickle multitude,
Like the light straw, that floats along the stream,
Glide with the current still, and follow fortune.
Our prospect brightens every hour: the people
Are ripe for a revolt: by civil wars,
Long time inured to savage scenes of plunder
And desolation, they delight in war:
These English heroes, when once fleshed with slaughter,
Like the keen mastiff, lose not soon the track
Of vengeance, nor forget the taste of blood.
Clif. What further succours have we to depend on,
Beside earl Warwick's?
Marg. O, his name alone,
Will be an army to us.
Clif. If we have it:
Resentment is a short-lived passion—what
If Warwick should relent, and turn again
To Edward?
Marg. Then I have a bosom friend,
That shall be ready to reward him for it.
But I have better hopes: without his aid,
We are not friendless: Scotland's hardy sons,
Who smile at danger, and defy the storm,
Will leave their barren mountains to defend
That liberty they love; add to the aid
Of gallant Pembroke, and the powers, which France
Will send to vindicate her injured honour:
Ere Edward can collect his force and take
The field, we shall be thirty thousand strong.
Clif. But what becomes of the young prince?
Marg. Aye; there
I am, indeed, unhappy! O my child!
How shall I set him free? hear, Nature, hear
A mother's prayer! O guide me with thy counsel,
And teach me how to save my darling boy!
Aye, now I have it: monitress divine,
I thank thee: yes; I wait but for the means
Of his escape, then fly this hated palace,
Nor will return till I can call it mine. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter EDWARD *and* SUFFOLK.

Edw. I fear, we've gone too far: the indignant Warwick
Ill brooked our steady purpose; marked you, Suffolk,
With what an eye of scorn he turned him from us,
And lowered defiance—that prophetic woman!
Half of her curse already is fulfilled,
And I have lost my friend.
Suf. Some friends, perhaps,
Are better lost: you'll pardon me, my liege;
But, were it fitting, I could tell a tale
Would soon convince you—Warwick is as weak—
Edw. As Edward, thou would'st say.
Suf. But 'twill distress
Thy noble heart too much; I dare not, sir;
Yet one day you must know it.
Edw. Then by thee
Let it be told me, Suffolk; thy kind hand
Will best administer the bitter draught:
Go on, my Suffolk, speak, I charge thee, speak,
Suf. That rival, whom you wished me to discover——
Edw. Aye, what of him! quick, tell me, hast thou found
The happy traitor? give me but to know,
That I may wreak my speedy vengeance on him,
Suf. Suppose that rival were the man, whom most
You loved, the man, perhaps, whom most you feared;
Suppose 'twere—Warwick.
Edw. Ha! it cannot be:
I would not think it for a thousand worlds——
Warwick in love with her, impossible!
Now, Suffolk, do I fear thou speak'st from envy,
And jealous hatred of the noble Warwick,
Not from the love of justice or of Edward;
Where didst thou learn this falsehood?
Suf. From the lips
Of truth; from one, whose honour and whose word
You will not question; from Elizabeth.
Edw. From her! nay, then, I fear it must be so.
Suf. When last I saw her, for again I went
By your command, though hopeless of success,
With all the eloquence that I
Was master of, I urged your ardent passion,

Told her how much, how tenderly you loved her,
And pressed with eagerness to know the cause
Of her unkind refusal; till at length,
Reluctantly, with blushes, she confessed
There was a cause; she thanked you for your goodness,
'Twas more, she said, much more than she deserved;
She ever should revere her king: and if
She had a heart to give, it should be Edward's.
Edw. So kind, and yet so cruel! well, go on.
Suf. Then told me all the story of her love,
That Warwick long had wooed her——that her hand
Was promised; soon as he returned from France,
Though once her father cruelly opposed it,
They were, by his consent, to be united.
Edw. O never, Suffolk, may I live to see
That dreadful hour! designing hypocrite!
Are these his arts? is this the friend I loved?
By Heaven! she shall be mine; I will assert
A sovereign's right, and tear her from him; what
If he rebel? another civil war!
'Tis terrible! O that I could shake off
This cumbrous garb of majesty, that clings
So close around me, meet him man to man,
And try who best deserves her! but, when kings
Grow mad, their guiltless subjects pay the forfeit.
Horrible thought! good Suffolk, for a while
I would be private; therefore wait without;
Let me have no intruders; above all,
Keep Warwick from my sight. [*Exit Suffolk.*

Enter WARWICK.

Warw. Behold him here;
No welcome guest, it seems, unless I ask
My lord of Suffolk's leave; there was a time,
When Warwick wanted not his aid to gain
Admission here.
Edw. There was a time, perhaps,
When Warwick more desired, and more deserved it.
Warw. Never; I have been a foolish faithful slave;
All my best years, the morning of my life,
Have been devoted to your service: what
Are now the fruits? disgrace and infamy;
My spotless name, which never yet the breath
Of calumny had tainted, made the mock
For foreign fools to carp at: but 'tis fit
Who trust in princes, should be thus rewarded.
Edw. I thought, my lord, I had full well repaid
Your services with honours, wealth, and power
Unlimited: thy all-directing hand
Guided in secret every latent wheel
Of government, and moved the whole machine;
Warwick was all in all, and powerless Edward
Stood, like a cypher, in a great account.
Warw. Who gave that cypher worth, and seated thee
On England's throne? thy undistinguished name
Had rotted in the dust from whence it sprang,
And mouldered in oblivion, had not Warwick
Dug from its sordid mine the useless ore,
And stamped it with a diadem. Thou know'st
This wretched country, doomed, perhaps, like Rome,
To fall by its own self-destroying hand,
Tost for so many years in the rough sea
Of civil discord, but for me had perished.
In that distressful hour I seized the helm,
Bade the rough waves subside in peace, and steered
Your shattered vessel safe into the harbour.
You may despise, perhaps, that useless aid,
Which you no longer want; but know, proud youth,
He, who forgets a friend, deserves a foe.
Edw. Know, too, reproach, for benefits received,
Pays every debt, and cancels obligation.
Warw. Why, that indeed is frugal honesty,
A thrifty saving knowledge, when the debt
Grows burthensome, and cannot be discharged,
A sponge will wipe out all, and cost you nothing.
Edw. When you have counted o'er the numerous train
Of mighty gifts your bounty lavished on me,
You may remember next the injuries,
Which I have done you: let me know them all,
And I will make you ample satisfaction.
Warw. Thou canst not; thou hast robbed me of a jewel
It is not in thy power to restore:
I was the first, shall future annals say,
That broke the sacred bond of public trust
And mutual confidence; ambassadors,
In after times, mere instruments, perhaps,
Of venal statesmen, shall recall my name
To witness, that they want not an example,
And plead my guilt, to sanctify their own.
Amidst the herd of mercenary slaves,
That haunt your court, could none be found but Warwick,
To be the shameless herald of a lye?
Edw. And wouldst thou turn the vile reproach on me?
If I have broke my faith, and stained the name
Of England, thank thy own pernicious counsels,
That urged me to it, and extorted from me
A cold consent to what my heart abhorred.
Warw. I've been abused, insulted, and betrayed;
My injured honour cries aloud for vengeance;
Her wounds will never close!
Edw. These gusts of passion,
Will but inflame them; if I have been right
Informed, my lord, besides these dangerous scars
Of bleeding honour, you have other wounds
As deep, though not so fatal: such perhaps
As none but fair Elizabeth can cure.
Warw. Elizabeth!

Edw. Nay, start not, I have cause
To wonder most: 'I little thought, indeed,
When Warwick told me I might learn to love,
He was himself so able to instruct me;
But I've discovered all.———
Warw. And so have I;
Too well I know thy breach of friendship there,
Thy fruitless base endeavours to supplant me.
Edw. I scorn it, sir—Elizabeth hath charms,
And I have equal right with you to admire them:
Nor see I aught so godlike in the form,
So all-commanding in the name of Warwick,
That he alone should revel in the charms
Of beauty, and monopolize perfection.
I knew not of your love.
Warw. By Heaven, 'tis false!
You knew it all, and meanly took occasion,
Whilst I was busied in the noble office,
Your grace thought fit to honour me withal,
To tamper with a weak unguarded woman,
To bribe her passions high, and basely steal
A treasure, which your kingdom could not purchase.
Edw. How know you that? but be it as it may,
I had a right, nor will I tamely yield
My claim to happiness, the privilege
To choose the partner of my throne and bed:
It is a branch of my prerogative.
Warw. Prerogative!—what's that? the boast of tyrants:
A borrowed jewel, glittering in the crown
With specious lustre, lent but to betray.
You had it, sir, and hold it—from the people.
Edw. And therefore do I prize it; I would guard
Their liberties, and they shall strengthen mine:
But when proud faction and her rebel crew
Insult their sovereign, trample on his laws,
And bid defiance to his power, the people,
In justice to themselves, will then defend
His cause, and vindicate the rights they gave.
Warw. Go to your darling people, then; for soon,
If I mistake not, 'twill be needful; try
Their boasted zeal, and see if one of them
Will dare to lift his arm up in your cause,
If I forbid them.
Edw. Is it so, my lord!
Then mark my words: I've been your slave too long,
And you have ruled me with a rod of iron;
But henceforth know, proud peer, I am thy master,
And will be so: the king, who delegates
His power to others' hands, but ill deserves
The crown he wears.
Warw. Look well, then, to your own;
It sits but loosely on your head; for know,
The man, who injured Warwick, never passed
Unpunished yet.
Edw. Nor he, who threatened Edward—
You may repent it, sir—my guards there—seize
This traitor, and convey him to the tower!
There let him learn obedience.
[*Guards enter, seize* WARWICK, *and endeavour to disarm him.*
Warw. Slaves, stand off!
If I must yield my sword, I'll give it him,
Whom it so long has served; there's not a part
In this old faithful steel, that is not stained
With English blood in grateful Edward's cause.
Give me my chains, they are the bands of friendship,
Of a king's friendship; for his sake awhile
I'll wear them.
Edw. Hence! away with him———
Warw. 'Tis well:
Exert your power, it may not last you long;
For know, though Edward may forget his friend,
That England will not.—Now, sir, I attend you.
[*Exit.*
Edw. Presumptuous rebel—ha! who's here?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My liege,
Queen Margeret, with the prince her son, are fled;
In a few hours she hopes—for so we learn
From those, who have pursued her—to be joined
By the earl of Warwick; in his name, it seems,
She has already raised three thousand men.
Edw. Warwick in league with her! O Heaven! 'tis well
We've crushed the serpent, ere his poison spread
Throughout our kingdom—guard the palace gates;
Keep double watch; summon my troops together:
Where is my brother Clarence, Buckingham,
And Pembroke? we must check this foul rebellion.
[*Exit Mess.*

Enter the EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Suf. My liege, the duke of Clarence———
Edw. What of him?
Suf. Hath left the court; this moment I beheld him
In conference with Pembroke, who, it seems,
Is Margaret's firmest friend: 'tis whispered, both
Will join the queen.
Edw. Well: 'tis no matter; I
Have deeper cause for grief; he cannot feel
A brother's falsehood, who has lost a friend,
A friend like Warwick—Suffolk, thou behold'st me
Betrayed, deserted by the man I loved;
Treated with cold indifference by her,
Whom I adored; forsaken by my brother,
And threatened by the subjects I protect;
Oppressed on every side: but, thou shalt see,
I have a soul superior to misfortunes.
Though rebel Clarence wrings my tortured heart,

And faithless Warwick braves me, we will yet
Maintain our right——Come on, my friend! thou know'st,
Without his boasted aid, I could have gained
The crown; without him, now, I will preserve it.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Tower.*

Enter the EARL OF WARWICK.

Warw. MISTAKEN mortals plan delusive schemes
Of bliss, and call futurity their own,
Yet are not masters of a moment—This
Was the appointed time, the very day,
Which should have joined me to Elizabeth
In nuptial bonds. O cruel memory,
Do not torment me!—If there be a crime
Of deeper dye, than all the guilty train
Of human vices, 'tis——ingratitude.
'Tis now two years since Henry lost the crown;
And here he is, even in this very prison,
A fellow captive now. Disgraceful thought!
How will he smile to meet his conqueror here!
O for that stoic apathy, which lulls
The drowsy soul to sweet forgetfulness!
But 'twill not be:—Elizabeth, where art thou?
Perhaps with Edward——Oh! that thought distracts me:
It is, I fear, as Margaret said; she's false.
But, when I look around me, can I hope
To find one virtue left in human kind?
My Pembroke, too! am I so soon forgotten?
O no; he comes———

Enter the EARL OF PEMBROKE,

Pemb. My friend!
Warw. My Pembroke, welcome!
Thee I have found most just and kind;
But, in the darkness of adversity,
The jewel, friendship, shines with double lustre.
Pemb. I am not of the insect train, that bask
In fortune's sunshine, and when evening damps
Arise, are seen no more: no, Warwick; what
I speak, I mean: you have been hardly treated.
Warw. Oh! Pembroke, didst thou know but half the wrongs,
That I have suffered, thou wouldst pity me.
Pemb. I would do more, much more, my Warwick: he,
Who only pities, but insults the wretched;
I come with nobler views; I come to tell thee,
That I have felt thy injuries as my own,
And will revenge them too.
Warw. How kind thou art
To feel for Warwick!
Pemb. Every honest breast
Must feel the injuries, that a good man suffers:
Thine is the common cause of all: adieu
To English freedom, when our liberty
Shall be dependent on a sovereign's nod;
When years of honest service shall be paid
With infamy and chains!
Warw. I've not deserved them.
Pemb. Nor shalt thou wear them long: for thou hast great
And powerful friends—the noble duke of Clarence,
Behold his signet—this, my Warwick, gained me
Admission here———we must be secret.
Warw. Ha!
Then I am not forsaken: Clarence!———
Pemb. Yes:
The gallant youth, with honest zeal, declared
He loved his brother much, but justice more.
Warw. Then, Edward, I defy thee: generous Clarence!
Thou know'st, the man, who thus could treat a friend,
Would soon forget a brother—But say, Pembroke,
How stands the duke of Buckingham?
Pemb. Fast bound
To Edward; he, and that smooth courtier Suffolk,
Are the two rotten pillars, that support
His tottering throne: but Margaret———
Warw. Aye; how fares
My new ally? has she escaped the tyrant?
Pemb. She has: and by some wondrous means contrived
To free her captive son.
Warw. Though I abhor,
I must admire that enterprising woman:
Her active mind is ever on the wing
In search of fresh expedients, to recover
The crown she lost.
Pemb. Already she has raised
A powerful army; all the secret foes
Of York's ambitious line rush forth in crowds,
And join her standard: ere to-morrow's sun
Shall dawn upon us, she will set thee free.
Warw. Oh! Pembroke, nothing wounds the generous mind
So deep as obligations to a foe.
Is there no way to liberty, my friend,
But through the bloody paths of civil war?
Pemb. I fear there is not.
Warw. Then it must be so:
I could have wished—but freedom and revenge,
On any terms, are welcome.
Pemb. Here, then, join we
Our hands———
Warw. Our hearts.
Pemb. Now, Warwick, be thou firm
In thy resolves; let no unmanly fears,
No foolish fond remembrance of past friendship,
Unnerve thy arm, or shake thy steady purpose.
Warw. No; by my wrongs it shall not: once, thou know'st,

I loved him but too well, and this vile prison
Is my reward! O! give me but the use
Of this once powerful arm, and thou shalt see
How it shall punish falsehood.—Are thy forces
Prepared?

Pemb. They are, and wait but for my orders:
Clarence will join us soon: our first great end
Is to secure thy liberty; that done,
We haste to seize the palace, and redeem
The fair Elizabeth.

Warw. Redeem her, ha!
Is she a captive too?

Pemb. A willing slave;
A gay state prisoner, left to roam at large
O'er the young monarch's palace.

Warw. Aye, my Pembroke,
That's more inviting than a prison. Oh,
She's false, she's false!—Who sent her there?

Pemb. She came,
It seems, to thank him for his royal bounties
To her good father, the new earl of Rivers,
Who will, no doubt, persuade her to accept——

Warw. Of Edward's hand—distraction! fly, my friend;
Haste thee to Margaret; tell her, if she hopes
For Warwick's aid, she must release him now,
Ere Edward's ill-timed mercy shall prevent her.

Pemb. I go: my friend, adieu! when next we meet,
I hope to bring thee liberty. [*Exit.*

Warw. Farewell.
She's lost! she's gone! that base seducer, Edward,
Hath wrought on her weak mind! it must be so.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord,
The lady Elizabeth.

Warw. Amazement! sure
It cannot be! Admit her, sir—why, what
Could bring her here? Edward has sent her hither,
To see if I will crouch to him for pardon.
Be still, my jealous heart. [*Exit Mess.*

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. My Warwick!

Warw. 'Tis a grace I looked not for,
That a fair favourite, who so late had tasted
The pleasures of a court, should condescend
To visit thus a poor abandoned captive.

Eliz. I come to take my portion of misfortune,
To pour the balm of comfort in, and heal,
If possible, the wounds, which I had made.
Too well, I know, I was the fatal cause
Of all thy sorrows—but the noble Edward,
For so, indeed, he is———

Warw. And art thou come,
To plead the cause of him, who sent me hither?

Eliz. I came to be the messenger of peace,
To calm thy troubled soul, and give thee rest,
To teach my Warwick to forget his wrongs.

Warw. Forget my wrongs! was that thy errand here,
To teach me low submission to a tyrant?
To ask forgiveness, kneel, and deprecate
The wrath of blustering Edward? If thou com'st,
On terms like these, to bring me freedom, know
It will not be accepted: Now I see
Through all your arts; by Heaven! I'd rather lose
A thousand lives, than owe one to his bounty.

Eliz. Either my Warwick is much changed, and so,
I fear, he is, or he would never talk
Thus coldly to me, never would despise
A life so precious, if he knew how much
Elizabeth had suffered to preserve it.
The gallant Edward, won by my entreaties——

Warw. Entreaties! didst thou, then, descend so low,
As to entreat him for me?

Eliz. Hadst thou seen,
When I implored him to forgive my Warwick,
How kind he looked, how his repenting heart
Heaved with the pangs of agonizing friendship,
Thou wouldst have pitied him.

Warw. Deceitful woman!
I see thy falsehood now; I am betrayed;
And thou art leagued with Edward to destroy me.
Go to your royal lover, and unite
Those only fit companions for each other,
A broken friendship, and a perjured love!
Give up discarded Warwick, and, to make
The compact firm, cement it with my blood.

Eliz. I thought the soul of Warwick far above
Such mean suspicions. Shall the man, whose truth,
Whose constancy, and love, have been so long
My bright example, shall he stoop so low,
As thus to listen to an idle tale,
Told by some prating courtier? if indeed
Thou couldst believe it, I should pity thee.

Warw. Where is your father, the new earl of Rivers?
Why sends he not his forces to our aid?

Eliz. He cannot: honour, gratitude, forbid,
That he should lift up his rebellious arm
Against his benefactor! well thou know'st,
Of late, when civil discord reigned amongst us,
He fought with Henry, and with Henry fell:
When injured Edward generously forgave,
Restored his forfeit lands, and late advanced him
To rank and title.

Warw. Infamy and shame;
The common nets, which fearful knavery spreads
To catch ambition's fools: mean sordid bribes.
We know the treasure they were meant to purchase.

Eliz. Unkind suggestion! how have I deserved it?
Have I for this refused a youthful monarch,
And spurned his offered sceptre at my feet,
To be reproached at last by cruel Warwick?

Had I once listened to him; had these eyes
Been dazzled with the splendour of a court,
I need not thus have changed it for a dungeon.
But, since I am suspected, witness Heaven,
And witness Warwick to my vows! henceforth,
Dear as thou art, I cast thee from my love;
Elizabeth will never wed—a traitor.

Warw. Am I awake, and did Elizabeth
Say she would never wed her faithful Warwick?
Then bear me witness too, all-judging Heaven!
Here yield I up all visionary dreams
Of future bliss, of liberty, or life.
Even the sweet hope of vengeance, that alone
Sustained my spirit, loses all its charms;
I wished for freedom but to purchase thine:
For life, but to enjoy it with my love,
And she disclaims me.

Eliz. Heaven forbid! O Warwick,
Let not the tide of passion thus o'erwhelm
Thy reason.

Warw. Canst thou pardon me? thou know'st
The unguarded warmth, the weakness of my nature.
I would not wrong thee, but I've been so oft,
So cruelly deceived!

Eliz. I know thou hast;
But never by Elizabeth.

Warw. O no!
It is impossible, that perfidy
Should wear a form like thine. [*Looking at her.*
I wonder not,
That Edward loved; no; when I look on thee,
All beauteous, all enchanting as thou art,
By Heaven! I think I could almost forgive him.

Eliz. Then, wherefore not be reconciled?

Warw. To whom?
The author of my wrongs? It cannot be:
Know, I have promised Margaret to destroy him.

Eliz. Destroy thy friend! ungenerous, cruel Warwick!
Is't not enough, that thou hast triumphed here?
Already we have pierced his noble heart
With the keen pangs of disappointed love:
And would'st thou wound his breast with added sorrows;
Would'st thou involve a nation in his ruin?

Warw. Elizabeth, no more: alas! too well
Thou know'st, there is a powerful advocate
In Warwick's breast, that pleads for perjured Edward.

Eliz. Cherish the soft emotion: O my Warwick!—

Warw. That angel form can never plead in vain;
But then, my friends—where is my solemn vow
To Margaret, and to Pembroke? There's the tie;
My honour's dearer to me——

Eliz. Than thy love;
Dearer, much dearer, than Elizabeth!
But I have done: farewell, my lord; I see
Thy deep resentment is not to be moved
By my weak influence o'er thee. [*Going.*

Warw. Stay, I charge thee.

Eliz. What is this phantom, Honour, this proud idol,
That tramples thus on every humble virtue?
This cruel, bloody Moloch, that delights
In human sacrifice! O! would to Heaven
I were its only victim! but, with me,
You offer up your country and your king.

Warw. Think on my vow, think on my promise given.

Eliz. Thy league with Margaret must be fatal:
We should succeed, and Lancaster once more
Assume the throne; how dear the victory,
That's purchased with our fellow-subjects' blood!
Alas! such triumphs make the conqueror weep.
But if we fail!——

Warw. Impossible.

Eliz. O! think
Betimes! what dreadful punishments await
The vanquished rebel: thou, perhaps, my love,
Shalt then be doomed on the ignominious block
To fall inglorious; and, when thou art gone,
Who shall defend thy poor Elizabeth?

Warw. Alarming thought! It staggers my firm purpose,
And makes me half a villain.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Madam, the king demands your presence: I
Have orders to convey you to the palace.

Warw. And wilt thou leave me?

Eliz. This, my Warwick, this
Is the decisive moment; now determine,
Accept of mercy, ere it be too late;
Ere hasty Edward—Shall I say thou wilt
Return to thy obedience, and receive
Thy pardon? Shall I? Speak, my love.

Warw. Perhaps
I may accept it, if 'tis brought by thee.

Eliz. Then we shall meet in happiness—

Warw. Farewell! [*Exit Eliz.*

Warw. Now to those worst companions in affliction,
My own sad thoughts again; they're gloomy all,
And, like my habitation, full of horror.
I like not Edward's message—if he hears
My league with Margaret, he still has power
To make me feel his rage: I have deserved it—
[*A trampling heard without.*
Methought I heard a noise—this way they come;
Perhaps it is the messenger of death——

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. The messenger of vengeance—see her sword;
Accept it, and be free. [*Offers the sword.*

Warw. First let me know,
To whom I am indebted for it.

Pemb. To me.
Soon as the rumour of thy foul disgrace

Had reached the public ear, the impatient people,
Uncertain of thy fate, tumultuous thronged
Around the palace, and demanded thee;
'Give us our Warwick! give us back,' they cried,
'Our hero, our deliverer!'—I stepped forth,
And bade them, instant, if they wished to save
The best of men from infamy and death,
To follow me: transported they obeyed:
I led them hither: forced the prison gates,
And brought thee this—direct it as thou wilt.
[*Gives the sword.*

Warw. Welcome, once more, thou dearest gift of Heaven,
Immortal liberty! my friend, I thank thee.
O Pembroke, would thou hadst been here! my love,
My dear Elizabeth is true.

Pemb. At least
You think so.

Warw. She has told me such sweet truths!
Edward repents him sorely, he is grieved
At his ingratitude.

Pemb. And well he may;
I fear thou art betrayed: alas, my Warwick,
Thy open, generous, unsuspecting virtue,
Thinks every heart as honest as thy own.
Thou know'st not Edward—nor Elizabeth.
The kingdom is in arms, and every hour,
It is expected France will join the queen:
England will want its great protector's aid.
Edward and Rivers have conspired to chent
Thy credulous ear, and who so fit to spread
The flimsy web as thy Elizabeth,
Their fair ambassadress? I see thou'rt caught.

Warw. By Heaven, it may be so! I am the sport
Of fortune and of fraud.

Pemb. Away, my friend:
It is not now a time to think of her:
Margaret, supported by thy powerful name,
And joined by Clarence, waits us, at the head
Of fifteen thousand men, who, eager all
To crush a tyrant, and pull down oppression,
Attend thy wished-for presence; not a soldier
Will act or move, till Warwick shall direct them.
Edward and England's fate depend on thee.

Warw. Away, my friend, I'll follow thee.
[*Exit Pembroke.*
Yet stop
A moment—let not passion hurry me
To base dishonour—if my country calls
For Warwick's aid, shall I not hear her voice,
And save her? Pembroke may have private views,
And subtle Margaret too—Elizabeth!
I must not lose thee—O! direct me, Heaven!
[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. THE royal pardon came too late, and Pembroke
Already has released him; he is gone—
Elizabeth may never see him more.
A thousand terrors haunt me; a fond father,
A guiltless sovereign, a distracted lover,
Fame, fortune, friends, and country, all depend
On one eventful moment—hark! the sound
Of distant groans; perhaps the king—perhaps
My Warwick bleeds. O! agonizing thought!
Great God of armies, whose all-guiding hand
Directs the fate of nations, O! look down
On thy own image! let not cruel discord
Divide their kindred souls! in pity hear,
Pour thy benignant spirit o'er their hearts,
And once more knit them in the bonds of peace!

Enter SUFFOLK.

Suff. The prayer of innocence is always heard.

Eliz. Ha! Suffolk, whither hast'st thou? art thou come—

Suff. I come to heal thy sorrows, lovely fair one,
To tell thee, Edward, and thy much-loved Warwick,
Once more are friends.

Eliz. Indeed! O welcome news!
My joy's too great for utterance: tell me, Suffolk,
How was it? Speak, is Warwick safe? O Heaven!

Suff. A moment's patience, and I'll tell thee all.
Margaret, thou know'st, had raised a powerful force,
That doubled Edward's troops; elate with pride,
And almost sure of victory, she urged
The tardy spearmen; on they rushed, as if
Secure of conquest: the unhappy king
Stood nobly firm, and seemed to brave his fate,
When Warwick, like a guardian god, appeared:
His noble mien, and all commanding look,
Struck deep attention; every eye was bent
Upon him, and an awful silence reigned
O'er either host. He raised his voice on high,
And 'stop,' he cried, 'your sacrilegious hands,
'Nor touch my friend: who pierces Edward's breast,
'Must pass through mine: I raised him to the throne,
'And will support him there: to you I gave,
'From you, my fellow soldiers, I expect him:
'Howe'er the cruel wrongs have wounded me,
'He never injured you, and I forgive him.'
He spake, and instant through the gazing crowd
A murmur ran; down dropped their nerveless arms,
As if enchanted by some magic power,

And with one voice they cried, long live king Edward!
Eliz. How powerful is the tongue of eloquence,
When in the cause of virtue!—well, what followed?
Suff. Encouraged by the shouting soldiers, Edward
On like a modest virgin wishing came,
Yet fearful. Warwick, with a bridegroom's speed,
To meet him flew; into each other's arms
They ran with speechless joy: the tender scene
Affected every heart, and the rough soldier,
Unused to melting sympathy, forgot
His ruthless nature, and dissolved in tears.
Eliz. Sweet reconcilement! then, Elizabeth,
Thou didst not plead in vain; but, say, how brooked
The haughty queen this unexpected change?
Suff. Abashed, confounded, for a while she strove
To stem the torrent, but in vain; then fled
Precipitate.
Eliz. But where, O where's my Warwick?
Suff. With a few chosen squadrons he pursues
The disappointed Margaret.
Eliz. O my fears!
I know not why, but at that hateful name
I tremble ever; my foreboding heart
Presages something dreadful.
Suff. Do not vex
Thy tender mind with visionary dangers.
Eliz. O! would to Heaven, that he were sheltered here,
And safe within these arms!
Suff. Be not alarmed:
He is the care of Heaven; all good men love,
All bad ones fear, him.
Eliz. Such superior merit
Must have a thousand foes, the constant mark
Of envy's poisoned darts.
Suff. There Suffolk feels
The keen reproach; with blushes I confess
There was a time, when, urged by fond ambition,
I looked on Warwick with a jealous eye:
But this last noble deed hath won my heart,
And I am now a convert to his virtues;
But see, the king approaches.

Enter KING EDWARD.

Edw. Health and peace,
And happiness to fair Elizabeth!
Thou art no stranger to the joyful news;
The lustre of those speaking eyes declares it.
Eliz. Suffolk, even now, hath blessed me with the tidings.
Edw. Oh! 'tis amazement all: Elizabeth,
When last we met, thou wert the suppliant; now
'Tis I must ask forgiveness; I, who injured
The dearest, best of men. Oh! thou hast saved
Edward from shame, and England from destruction.
Eliz. Did I not say my Warwick would be just?
Edw. Thou didst, and on those beauteous lips fair truth
And soft persuasion dwell; long time he stood
Inflexible, and, deaf to friendship's voice,
Listened to nought but all-subduing love.
In after-times, thy name shall be enrolled
Amongst the great deliverers of their country.
Eliz. I have no title to the lavish praise
Thy generous heart bestows; I only said
What duty prompted, and what love inspired:
Indulgent Heaven has crowned it with success.
Edw. Thou hast done all: I am indebted to thee
For more, much more, than I can e'er repay.
Long time, with shame, I own hath Warwick soared
Above me, but I will not be outdone
For ever by this proud aspiring rival:
Poor as I am, there yet is one way left
To pay the debt of gratitude I owe him,
One great reward for such exalted virtues;
Thyself, Elizabeth.
Eliz. What means my lord,
My royal master?
Edw. Yes; when next we meet,
I will bestow it on him, will resign
All my fond claim to happiness and thee;
Though thy dear image ne'er can be effaced
From Edward's breast, though still I doat upon thee,
Though I could hang for ever on thy beauties,
Yet will I yield them to their rightful lord;
Warwick has earned, Warwick alone deserves them.
Eliz. Would he were here to thank thee for this goodness!
Know, generous prince, Elizabeth has long
Admired thy virtues, and, could love admit
Of a divided heart, the noble Edward
Would share it with his friend.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My royal liege,
The rebels are dispersed, queen Margaret's son
Was slain in the pursuit, and she——
Edw. I hope
Secured——
Mess. Is taken prisoner, and will soon
Be here——
Edw. But where's lord Warwick?
Mess. Sir—the queen.

Enter MARGARET, *prisoner.*

Marg. Once more I am your prisoner.
Edw. 'Twill be prudent
Henceforth to keep you so.
Marg. You dare not!
Thou thinkst, perhaps, that I shall sue to thee
For mercy: no; in Margaret of Anjou,
Thou seest the wife, and daughter of a king.

A spirit not to be subdued; though fallen,
Triumphant still; and, though a prisoner, free.
For know, I bear a mind above the reach
Of fortune or of Edward——I have lost
All I could wish to live for, in my child;
And gained, what most I wished to gain, revenge!
Or life or death are now indifferent to me.
Edw. For thy unbounded goodness, power supreme,
Accept our praise!
Eliz. [*Kneeling.*] Accept our humble prayer!
Marg. Insulting piety! the common trick
Of hypocrites and slaves: when ye shall know
What Margaret knows, ye may not be so thankful.
Methinks 'tis pity Warwick is not here
To join in your devotion.
Eliz. Would to Heaven
He were!
Marg. That monster, that perfidious slave,
Who broke his faith to Margaret, and to thee!
Thy coward soul, unable to defend
The treasure thou hadst stolen, could meanly stoop
To court the traitor whom thou dar'st not punish.
Not so the injured Margaret—she repelled
The wrongs she felt, and the deceiver met
The fate he merited.
Edw. What fate? Even now,
Crowned with immortal wreaths, the hero comes
To bless his friends, and punish guilt like thine.
Marg. Proud and deluded wretches! I look down
With pity on you: captive as I am,
'Tis mine to judge and punish; be it yours
To hear and tremble.
Edw. Ha!
Eliz. What can this mean?
Marg. If I mistake not, Warwick is your friend,
Your lover too, I think.
Eliz. My lord, my husband.
Marg. Know then, that friend, that lover, perjured Warwick,
Has not an hour to live.
Edw. What murtherous hand——
Marg. Mine, tyrant, mine: think not I mean to hide
The noble deed; it is my happiness,
My glory: thou wilt call me base,
Blood-thirsty, cruel, savage, and revengeful.
Yet here I stand acquitted to myself,
And every feeling heart that knows my wrongs.
Unborn posterity dethroned queens,
And weeping mothers, shall applaud my justice.
Edw. Justice! on whom?
Marg. Can Edward ask me? Who
Poisoned Henry, robbed me of a crown,
And placed it on a proud usurper's head?
Who gave his sacred promise to a queen,
And broke it? Who—for which indignant Heaven
Chastised him—basely murthered my sweet boy?
Bereft of honour, fortune, husband, child,
Deprived of every comfort, what remained
For me but vengeance, what for him but death?
Edw. What hast thou done? When? Where! Speak, murtheress, speak!
Marg. Pressed by surrounding multitudes, and made
A slave, they dragged me to the conqueror's tent;
There the first horrid object I beheld,
Was the pale corpse of my poor bleeding child:
There, as the insulting Warwick stood, and seemed
To triumph o'er him—from my breast I drew
A poniard forth, and plunged it in his heart.
The astonished soldiers thronged around him, seized
And brought me here——now to your prayers again. [*Elizabeth faints.*
Edw. She faints, good Suffolk; help there! help! support!
Assist her. Lead her in. [*Exit Elizabeth.*
If it be true,
As much I fear it is, a thousand deaths
Were punishment too little for thy guilt:
Thou shalt be tortured.
Marg. Tyrant, I defy thee!
Thy threats appal not me: prepare your tortures!
Let them be sharp and cruel as thyself,
All that ingenious malice can suggest,
Or power inflict, 'twill be my comfort still,
They cannot be so great as those you feel.
Edw. Guards, take the monster hence! let her be chained
In some deep dungeon, dark as her own thoughts;
There let her perish—hence, away with her!
Marg. Despair and horror visit thee——farewell——
He comes, my triumph is complete; look there! [*Exit.*

Enter WARWICK, *leaning on two soldiers.*

Warw. Where is he? Lead me, lead me to my king.
Edw. My Warwick! my preserver! she shall bleed
For this in every vein.
Warw. Think not of her,
She has no power to hurt thee! and with guilt
Like her's, 'tis punishment enough to live:
This is no time for vengeance; death comes on
With hasty strides—'tis but a little while—
A few short moments, and we part for ever.
My friend——
Edw. I am not worthy of the name,
For I disgraced, dishonoured, murdered thee;
Edward's unkindness was the cause of all:
Canst thou forgive me?
Warw. O! may Warwick's crimes
Ne'er meet forgiveness from offended Heaven,

If from my soul I do not pardon, love,
And honour thee!
Edw. Away, let me support him!
'Tis the last office I shall e'er perform
For thee, my Warwick——Wilt thou lean upon me,
And seal my pardon with one kind embrace?
Warw. We never hated.
Edw. But my love was blind.
Warw. And blinder my resentment.
Edw. I forgot
Thy services.
Warw. And I remembered not
Thou wert my king——My sweet Elizabeth,
Where is she? Edward, do not keep her from me;
We are no rivals now.
Edw. Shocked at the news
Of thy untimely fate, she sunk beneath it,
And fainted in these arms: I seized the occasion,
And bade her weeping maidens bear her hence:
This would have been a dreadful sight indeed.
Eliz. [*Without.*] I can, I will support it.
Warw. Ha! that voice——
Sure 'tis Elizabeth's!

Enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. O! give me way,
For I must see him—O! my Warwick!
Warw. O!
This is too much! the bitterness of death
Is to be severed thus from those we love.
Edw. Why would you bring her here?
[*To the Attendants.*
Warw. Elizabeth,
Be comforted.
Eliz. O no, it is my doom
Never to taste of joy or comfort more:
No; from this hateful world will I retire,
And mourn my Warwick's fate, imploring Heaven,
That I may soon wear out my little store
Of hopeless days, and join thee in the tomb.
Warw. That must not be: I've done my friend a wrong,
And only thou canst make atonement for it.
Thy hand, Elizabeth; if e'er thou loved'st,
Observe me now—thine, Edward. For my sake
Cherish this beauteous mourner, take her from me,
As the last present of a dying friend.
Edw. If aught could make the precious gift more dear,
It would be, Warwick, that it came from thee.
O! I will guard her with a parent's care
From every ill, watch over and protect her;
And, when the memory of thee shall awake,
As oft it will, her poignant griefs, repel
The rising sigh, wipe off the flowing tear,
And strive to charm her to forgetfulness.
Warw. Wilt thou indeed? Then I shall die in peace.
Eliz. Yet thou mayst live.
Warw. Impossible: I feel
The hand of death press cold upon my heart,
And all will soon be o'er; I have lived to save
My falling country, to repent my crimes,
Redeem my honour, and restore my king.
Edw. Alas! my friend, the memory of thee
Will poison every bliss.
Warw. All healing time,
That closes every wound, shall pour its balm
O'er thine. Meanwhile, remember Warwick's fate.
I gave my word to Margaret, and broke it;
Heaven is not to be mocked, it soon o'ertakes us,
And in our crime we meet our punishment.
O, Edward! if thou hop'st that length of days,
And fair prosperity, shall crown thy wishes,
Beware of passion and resentment; make
Thy people's good and happiness thy own;
Discourage faction, banish flatterers, keep
Thy faith inviolate, and reign in peace.
I can no more—My love! Have mercy, Heaven!
[*Dies.*
Edw. He's gone!——
Eliz. And with him all my hopes of bliss.
Edw. Let every honour, to a soldier due,
Attend the hero to his tomb—meanwhile,
Deep in the living tablet of my heart,
Will I engrave thy words—illustrious shade!
Living, thou wert my counsellor and friend,
And, dead, I will remember and obey thee.
Eliz. Warwick, farewell! I shall not long survive thee.
Edw. I hope thou wilt—Elizabeth, remember
His dying charge, think on thy promise given.
Thou shalt remain with me, with me lament
Our common benefactor; we will sit
And talk together of my Warwick's virtues,
For I will try to emulate them all,
And learn, by copying him, to merit thee.
His great example shall inspire my breast
With patriot zeal, shall teach me to subdue
The power of faction, vanquish party rage,
And make me, what alone I wish to be,
The happy king of an united people.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ZENOBIA.

BY

MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

PHARASMANES, *Usurper of Iberia.*
RHADAMISTUS, TERIBAZUS, } *his sons.*
ZOPIRON, TIGRANES, } *courtiers.*
MEGISTUS, *a shepherd, preserver of Zenobia's life.*

WOMEN.

ZENOBIA, *wife to Rhadamistus.*
ZELMIRA, *wife of Zopiron.*
Attendants, Guards, &c.

Scene—Lies in Pharasmanes' camp, on the banks of the Araxes.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.

Zelm. THROUGH the wide camp 'tis awful solitude!
On every tent, which, at the morning's dawn,
Rung with the din of arms, deep silence sits,
Adding new terrors to the dreadful scene!
My heart dies in me!—hark! with hideous roar
The turbulent Araxes foams along,
And rolls his torrent through yon depth of woods!
'Tis terrible to hear!—who's there?—Zopiron!

Enter ZOPIRON.

Zelm. My lord; my husband!—help me; lend your aid!
Zop. Why didst thou leave thy tent?—Why thus afflict
Thy anxious breast, thou partner of my heart?
Why wilt thou thus distract thy tender nature
With groundless fears? Ere yonder sun shall visit
The western sky, all will be hushed to peace.
Zelm. The interval is horrid; big with woe,
With consternation, peril, and dismay!
And oh! if here, while yet the fate of nations,
Suspended, hangs upon the doubtful sword,
If here the trembling heart thus shrink with horror,
Here in these tents, in this unpeopled camp,
Oh! think, Zopiron, in yon field of death,
Where numbers soon in purple heaps shall bleed,
What feelings there must throb in every breast?
How long, ambition, wilt thou stalk the earth,
And thus lay waste mankind!———
Zop. This day, at length,
The warlike king, victorious Pharasmanes,
Closes the scene of war. The Roman bands
But ill can cope with the embattled numbers
Asia pours forth, a firm, undaunted host!
A nation under arms! and every bosom
To deeds of glory fired!—Iberia then———
Zelm. Perish Iberia!—may the sons of Rome
Pour rapid vengeance on her falling ranks,
That he, who tramples on the rights of nature,
May see his vassals overwhelmed in ruin,
May from yon field be led in sullen chains,
To grace the triumph of imperial Rome,
And from the assembled senate humbly learn
The dictates of humanity and justice!

Zop. Thy generous zeal, thy every sentiment
Charms my delighted soul. But thou be cautious,
And check the rising ardour that inflames thee!
The tyrant spares nor sex nor innocence.——
Zelm. Indignant of controul, he spurns each law,
Each holy sanction, that restrains the nations,
And forms 'twixt man and man the bond of peace.
Zop. This is the tyger's den; with human gore
For ever floats the pavement; with the shrieks
Of matrons weeping o'er their slaughtered sons,
The cries of virgins, to the brutal arms
Of violation dragged, with ceaseless groans
Of varied misery, for ever rings
The dreary region of his cursed domain.
Zelm. To multiply his crimes, a beauteous captive,
The afflicted Ariana—she—for her,
For that fair excellence my bosom bleeds!
She, in the prime of every blooming grace,
When next the glowing hour of riot comes,
Shall fall a victim to his base desires——
Zop. The bounteous gods may succour virtue still!
In this day's battle, which perhaps ere now
The charging hosts have joined, should Roman valour
Prevail o'er Asia's numbers——
Zelm. That event
Is all our hope. And lo! on yonder rampart,
Trembling with wild anxiety, she stands,
Invokes each god, and bids her straining eye
Explore the distant field.
Zop. Yes, there she's fixed
A statue of despair!——That tender bosom
Heaves with no common grief—I've marked her oft,
And, if I read aright, some mighty cause
Of hoarded anguish, some peculiar woe
Preys on her mind unseen!—But, ha! behold,
She faints; her fears, too powerful for her frame,
Sink that frail beauty drooping to the earth.
[*Exit hastily.*
Zelm. Haste, fly, Zopiron, fly with instant succour;
Support her; help her;—lo! the attendant train
Have caught her in their arms!—Assist her, Heaven,
Assuage the sorrows of her gentle spirit!
Her fluttering sense returns;—and now this way
The virgins lead her. May the avenging gods,
In pity of the woes such virtue feels,
In pity of the wrongs a world endures,
With power resistless arm the Roman legions,
That they may hurl, in one collected blow,
Assured destruction on the tyrant's head!

Enter ZENOBIA, *leaning on two attendants.*

Zen. A little onward, still a little onward
Support my steps——
Zelm. How fares it, madam, now?
Zen. My strength returns—I thank ye, generous maids,
And would I could requite you—fruitless thanks
Are all a wretch can give.
First attend. The gentle office
Of mild benevolence our nature prompts—
Your merit too commands:—on Ariana
We tend with willing, with delighted care,
And that delight o'erpays us for our trouble.
Zen. Your cares for me denote a heart that feels
For others' woes. Methinks, with strength renewed,
I could adventure forth again.
Second attend. 'Twere best
Repose your wearied spirits—we will seek
Yon rising ground, and bring the swiftest tidings
Of all the mingled tumult.
Zen. Go, my virgins;
Watch well each movement of the marshalled field;
Each turn of fortune;—let me know it all;
Each varying circumstance.
Zel. And will you thus,
Be doomed for ever, Ariana, thus
A willing prey to visionary ills,
The self-consuming votarist of care?
Zen. Alas! I'm doomed to weep—the wrath of Heaven,
With inexhausted vengeance, follows still,
And each day comes with aggravated woes.
Zel. Yet, when Iberia's king, when Pharasmanes,
With all a lover's fondness——
Zen. Name him not!
Name not a monster horrible with blood,
The widow's, orphan's, and the virgin's tears!
Zel. Yet, savage as he is, at sight of thee
Each fiercer passion softens into love.
To you he bends; the monarch of the east,
Dejected, droops beneath your cold disdain,
And all the tyranny of female pride.
Zen. That pride is virtue; virtue, that abhors
The tyrant reeking from a brother's murder!
Oh, Mithridates! ever honoured shade!
Peaceful he reigned, dispensing good around him,
In the mild eve of honourable days!
Through all her peopled realm Armenia felt
His equal sway: The sunset of his power,
With fainter beams, but undiminished glory,
Still shone serene; while every conscious subject,
With tears of praise, beheld his calm decline,
And blessed the parting ray!—yet then, Zelmira,
Oh, fact accursed!—yes, Pharasmanes then—
Detested perfidy! nor ties of blood,
Nor sacred laws, nor the just gods, restrain him—
In the dead midnight hour, the fell assassin
Rushed on the slumber of the virtuous man;
His life blood gushed! The venerable king
Waked, saw a brother armed against his life—
Forgave him, and expired!
Zel. Yet wherefore open

Afresh the wounds, which time long since hath closed?
This day confirms the sceptre in his hand——
Zen. Confirms his sceptre—his!——indignant gods!
Will no red vengeance, from your stores of wrath,
Burst down to crush the tyrant in his guilt?
His sceptre, saidst thou?——urge that word no more——
The sceptre of his son!—the solemn right
Of Rhadamistus! Mithridates' choice,
That called him to his daughter's nuptial bed,
Approved him lineal heir; consenting nobles,
The public will, the sanction of the laws,
All ratified his claim—yet curst ambition,
Deaf to a nation's voice, a nation's charter,
Not satisfied to fill Iberia's throne,
Made war, unnatural war, against a son,
Usurped his throne, and, with remorseless rage,
Pursued his life!
Zel. Can Ariana plead
For such a son?—Means she to varnish o'er
The guilt of Rhadamistus?
Zen. Guilt, Zelmira!
Zel. Guilt that shoots horror through my aching heart!
Poor lost Zenobia!
Zen. And do her misfortunes
Awaken tender pity in your breast?
Zel. Ill-fated princess! in her vernal bloom
By a false husband murdered!—from the stem
A rose-bud torn, and in some desert cave
Thrown by, to moulder into silent dust!
Zen. You knew not Rhadamistus!——Pharasmanes
Knew not the early virtues of his son.
As yet an infant, in his tenderest years
His father sent him to Armenia's court,
That Mithridates' care might form his mind
To arts, to wisdom, and to manners, worthy
Armenia's sceptre, and Zenobia's love.
The world, delighted, saw each dawning virtue,
Each nameless grace, to full perfection rising!—
Oh! he was all the fondest maid could wish—
All truth, all honour, tenderness and love!
Yet from his empire thrown! with merciless fury
His father following—slaughter raging round,
What could the hero in that dire extreme!
Zel. Those strong impassioned looks!—some fatal secret
Works in her heart, and melts her into tears.
[*Aside.*
Zen. Driven to the margin of Araxes' flood—
No means of flight—aghast, he looked around—
Wild throbbed his bosom with conflicting passions——
And must I, then'—tears gushed and choaked his voice———
And must I leave thee, then, Zenobia?—must
Thy beauteous form'—he paused, then aimed a poniard
At his great heart—But, oh! I rushed upon him,
And with these arms, close-wreathing round his neck,
With all the vehemence of prayers and shrieks,
Implored the only boon he then could grant,
To perish with him in a fond embrace!
The foe drew near—time pressed—no way was left——
He clasped me to his heart—together both,
Locked in the folds of love, we plunged at once,
And sought a requiem in the roaring flood.
Zel.—This wondrous tale—this sudden burst of passion—
Zen. Ha! whither has my frenzy led me!—hark!
That sound of triumph! lost, for ever lost!
Ruined Armenia——oh! devoted race!
[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter TIGRANES, *Soldiers, and some Prisoners.*

Zen. Thy looks, Tigranes, indicate thy purpose!
The armies met, and Pharasmanes conquered;
Is it not so?
Tig. As yet with pent up fury
The soldier pants to let destruction loose.
With eager speed we urged our rapid march,
To where the Romans, tented in the vale,
With cold delay protract the lingering war.
At our approach their scanty numbers form
Their feeble lines, the future prey of vengeance.
Zen. And wherefore, when thy sword demands its share
Of havock in that scene of blood and horror,
Wherefore returnest thou to this lonely camp?
Tig. With cautious eye as I explored the forest,
Which rises thick near yonder ridge of mountains,
And stretches o'er the interminable plain,
I saw these captives in the gloomy wood,
Seeking, with silent march, the Roman camp.
Impaled alive 'tis Pharasmanes' will
They suffer death in misery of torment.
Zen. Unhappy men! and must they——ha? that face,
That aged mien! that venerable form!
Immortal powers! is it my more than father!
—Is that Megistus?
Meg. Ariana here!
Gods! could I ever hope to see her more?
Thou virtuous maid! thou darling of my age!
Zen. It is—it is Megistus! once again,
Thus let me fall and clasp his reverend knee,
Print the warm kiss of gratitude and love
Upon this trembling hand, and pour the tears,
The mingled tears of wonder and of joy!
Meg. Rise, Ariana, rise—almighty gods!
The tide of joy and transport pours too fast
Along these withered veins—it is too much
For a poor weak old man, worn out with grief
And palsied age, it is too much to bear!
Oh! Ariana, daughter of affliction,

Have I then found thee? do I thus behold thee!
Now I can die content!
Zen. Thou best of men!
These joys our tears and looks can only speak.
Meg. Yet they are cruel joys—mysterious heaven!
You bid the storm o'ercast our darksome ways;
You gild the cloud with gleams of cheering light;
Then comes a breath from you, and all is vanished!
Zen. Wherefore dejected thus———
Meg. Alas! to meet thee
But for a moment, and then part for ever!
To meet thee here, only to grieve thee more,
To add to thy afflictions, wound that bosom
Where mild affection,——where each virtue dwells,
Just to behold thee, and then close my eyes
In endless night, while you survey my pangs
In the approaching agony of torment———
Zen. Talk not of agony; 'tis rapture all!
And who has power to tear thee from my heart?
Meg. Alas! the charge of vile imputed guilt—
Zen. I know thy truth, thy pure exalted mind———
Thy sense of noble deeds—imputed guilt!
Oh! none will dare—hast thou, Tigranes? what,
What is his crime? blush, foul traducer, blush!
Oh! [*to Meg.*] the wide world must own thy every virtue.
Tig. If in the conscious forest I beheld
Their dark complottings———
Zen. Peace, vile slanderer, peace!
Thou knowest who captivates a monarch's heart———
'Tis I protect him——Ariana does it!———
Thou, venerable man! in my pavillion
I'll lodge thee safe from danger——oh! this joy,
This best supreme delight the gods have sent,
In pity for whole years of countless woe.
[*Exit Zen. with Meg.*
Tig. With what wild fury her conflicting passions
Rise to a storm, a tempest of the soul!
I know the latent cause—her heart revolts,
And leagues in secret with the Roman arms.
Zel. Beware, Tigranes! that excess of joy,
Those quick, those varied passions strongly speak
The stranger has an interest in her heart.
Besides, thou knowest o'er Pharasmanes' will
She holds supreme dominion———
Tig. True, she rules him
With boundless sway——
Zel. Nay, more to wake thy fears——
The youthful prince, the valiant Teribazus,
In secret sighs, and feels the ray of beauty
Through every sense soft-thrilling to his heart.
He too becomes thy foe.
Tig. Unguarded man!
Whate'er he loves or hates, with generous warmth,
As nature prompts, that dares he to avow,
And lets each passion stand confessed to view;
Such too is Ariana; bold and open,
She kindly gives instructions to her foe,
To mar her best designs.
Zel. Her foe, Tigranes!
That lovely form enshrines the gentlest virtues,
Softest compassion, unaffected wisdom,
To outward beauty lending higher charms,
Adorning and adorned! the generous prince,
He too—full well thou knowest him—he unites
In the heroic mould of manly firmness,
Each mild attractive art—oh! surely none
Envy the fair renown that's earned by virtue.
Tig. None should, Zelmira. Ha! those warlike notes!

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Each weary soldier rest upon his arms,
And wait the king's return—Zelmira, say,
In these dark moments of impending horror,
How fares thy beauteous friend? her tender spirit
But ill supports the fierce alarms of war.

Enter ZENOBIA.

Zen. Where is he? let me fly—oh! Pharasmanes———
Methought those sounds bespoke the king's approach——
Oh! Teribazus, tell me—have the fates—
This horrible suspense———
Ter. I came, bright maid,
To hush the wild emotions of thy heart.
Devouring slaughter for a while suspends
Its ruthless rage; as either host advanced
In dread array, and from the burnished arms
Of Asia's ranks redoubled sunbeams played,
Burning with bright diversities of day,
Came forth an herald from the Roman camp
With proffered terms—my father deigned for once
To yield to mild persuasion—in his tent
The ambassador of Rome will soon attend him,
To sheathe the sword, and give the nation peace.
Zen. But oh! no peace for me, misfortune's heir!
The wretched heir of misery! But now
A more than father found, yet cruel men
Would tear him from me—generous, generous prince,
Spare an old man, whose head is white with age,
Nor let them wound me with the sharpest pang,
That ever tortured a poor bleeding heart!
Ter. Arise, my fair; let not a storm of grief
Thus bend to earth my Ariana's beauties;
Soon shall they all revive———
Zen. They brought him fettered,
Bound like a murderer! Tigranes, he,
This is the author of the horrid charge——
He threatens instant death—but oh! protect,
Protect an innocent, a good old man,
Or stretch me with him on the mournful bier!

Ter. By Heaven, whoe'er he is, since dear to you,
He shall not suffer—quick, direct me to him—
My guards shall safe inclose him.
Zen. In my pavillion
He waits his doom——
Ter. Myself will bear the tidings
Of life, of joy, and liberty restored.——
And thou, artificer of ill, thou false,
Thou vile defamer! leave thy treacherous arts,
Nor dare accuse whom Ariana loves. [*Exit Ter.*
Zen. Zelmira, this is happiness supreme!
Oh! to have met with unexampled goodness,
To owe my all, my very life itself,
To an unknown but hospitable hand,
And thus enabled by the bounteous gods,
To pay the vast, vast debt——'tis ecstacy
That swells above all bounds, till the fond heart
Ache with delight, and thus run o'er in tears.
Zel. What must Zelmira think? at first, your tongue
Grew lavish in the praise of Rhadamistus,
With hints obscure touching your high descent;
And now, this hoary sage——is he your father?
My mind is lost in wonder and in doubt.
Zen. Then, to dispel thy doubts, and tell, at once,
What deep reserve has hid within my heart,
——I am Zenobia—I that ill-starred wretch!
The daughter of a sceptered ancestry,
And now the slave of Mithridates' brother!
Zel. Long lost Zenobia, and restored at length!
I am your subject; oh! my queen! my sovereign!
Zen. Thou generous friend! rise, my Zelmira, rise.
That good old man!—oh! it was he beheld me
Borne far away from Rhadamistus' arms,
Just perished, just lost!——
He dashed into the flood, redeemed me thence,
And brought me back to life. My opening eyes
Just saw the light, and closed again to shun it.
Each vital power was sunk; but he, well skilled
In potent herbs, recalled my fluttering soul.
Zel. May the propitious gods reward his care!
Zen. With me he saved a dear, a precious boy,
Then in the womb concealed; he saved my child
To trace his father's loved resemblance to me,
The dear, dear offspring of our bridal loves.
Zel. Oh! blessings on him, blessings on his head!
Zen. Resigned and patient I since dwelt with him,
Far in the mazes of a winding wood,
Midst hoary mountains, and deep caverned rocks.
But oh! the fond idea of my lord
Pursued me still, or in the caverned rock,
The mountain's brow, or pendent forest's gloom.
The sun looked joyless down; each lonely night
Heard my griefs echoing through the woodland shade.
My infant Rhadamistus! he is lost;
He, too, is wrested from me!—Midst the rage,
And the wide waste of war, the hell-hound troops
Of Pharasmanes sought my lone retreat,
And, from the violated shades, from all
My soul held dear, the barbarous ruffians tore me,
And never shall the wretched mother see
Her child again!
Zel. Heaven may restore him still——
May still restore your royal husband too——
Who knows but some protecting god——
Zen. No god,
No guardian power was present!—he is lost!—
Oh, Rhadamistus! oh, my honoured lord!
No pitying eye beheld thy decent form——
The rolling flood devoured thee! thou hast found
A watry grave, and the last dismal accents,
That trembled on thy tongue, came bubbling up,
And murmured lost Zenobia!
Zel. Yet be calm;
The gods may bring redress—even now they give,
To misery like thine, the heartfelt joy
Of shielding injured virtue.
Zen. Yes, Zelmira,
That pure delight is mine, a ray from heaven
That bids affliction smile—All-gracious powers!
Make me your agent, here, to save Megistus;
I'll bear the load of life, bear all its ills,
Till you shall bid this sad world-weary spirit
To peaceful regions wing her happy flight,
And seek my lord in the dark realms of night;
Seek his dear shade in every pensive grove,
And bear him all my constancy and love.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter TIGRANES.

Tig. A FALSE accuser deemed!—artificer of fraud!
Those words, intemperate boy—thy phrenzy, too,
Deluded fair! shall cost you dear atonement.
Yet, till occasion rise—the king approaches.
[*Grand warlike music.*

A military procession. Enter PHARASMANES, *&c.*

Phar. At length, the fame of Pharasmanes' arms
Hath awed the nations round. Rome shrinks aghast
With pale dismay, recalls her trembling legions,
And deprecates the war. Oh! what a scene
Of glorious havoc had yon field beheld,

If peaceful counsels had not checked my fury!
Valiant Tigranes, those rebellious slaves,
Thy care detected, have they suffered death?
Tig. Your pardon, sir—their doom, as yet, suspended——
The generous prince—I would not utter aught
Should injure Teribazus——
Phar. Ha! proceed,
And give me all the truth.
Tig. By his command—
His tender nature deemed it barbarous rigour
To urge their sentence—
Phar. Vain aspiring boy!
Tell Teribazus—

Enter ZENOBIA.

Tell the unthinking prince,
The rash presumptuous stripling, these his arts,
These practices of popular demeanour,
Are treason to his father. Let him know,
Through wide Armenia and Iberia's realm
My will is fate—the slaves shall meet their doom.
Zen. Oh! mighty king, thus bending lowly down,
An humble suppliant———
Phar. Ariana here!
Thou beauteous mourner, let no care molest
Thy tender bosom; rise, and bid thy charms
Beam forth thy gentlest lustre, to adorn
The glories of my triumph.
Zen. Oh! a wretch like me
It best befits, thus grovelling on the earth,
To bathe your feet with tears.
Phar. It must not be——— [*He raises her.*
By Heaven, renown in arms in vain attends me,
If the loved graces of thy matchless form
Are thus depressed and languish in affliction,
Like flowers that droop and hang their pining heads
Beneath the rigour of relentless skies.
Zen. If thou wouldst raise me from the depths of woe,
Forgive those captives, whom thy fatal anger
Adjudged to death, nor let ill-timed resentment
Fall on the prince your son—'twas I—my tears—
My piercing lamentations won his heart
To arrest their doom——
Phar. For traitors to my crown
Does Ariana plead?
Zen. For mild humanity
My suppliant voice is raised—I point the means
To add new glory to your fame in arms.
In nought so near can men approach the gods,
As the dear act of giving life to others.
In feats of war the glory is divided,
To all imparted, to each common man,
And fortune too shall vindicate her share.
But, of sweet mercy, the vast, vast renown
Is all your own; nor officer, nor soldier
Can claim a part—the praise, the honoured praise,
Adorns the victor; nor is the echo lost
'Midst shouts of armies, and the trumpet's sound.
He conquers even victory itself,
Than hero more—a blessing to the world!
Phar. Thy eloquence disarms my stubborn soul.
But wherefore urgent thus? Amidst the band,
Is there who claims thy soft solicitude?
Zen. A hoary sage—alas! a more than father——
The best of men—preserver of my being——
A blameless shepherd! void of fraud and guilt,
Innoxious through his life—Oh! mighty king,
Spare an old man, a venerable sire!
Nought has your fortune greater than the power
To serve humanity!—shew that your heart
Has the sweet grace, the generous virtue too!
Phar. My soul relents, and yields to thy entreaty,
Thy violence of prayer—release him straight——
My brightest honours wait him; honours fit
For him who gave thee birth; for him whose virtue
Thy generous soul deems worthy its esteem.
Zen. Our humble station seeks nor pomp nor splendour;
We only ask, unenvied and obscure,
To live in blameless innocence; to seek
Our calm retreat, embraced in depth of woods,
And dwell with peace and humble virtue there.
Phar. That cold disdain, which shuns admiring eyes,
Attracts the more, exalting every charm.
No more of humble birth; thy matchless beauty,
Like gems, that in the mine conceal their lustre,
Was formed to dignify the eastern throne.
My sceptre, that strikes terror to each heart,
Graced by thy decent hand, shall make each subject
Adore thy softer sway. The glorious æra
Of Pharasmanes' love, his date of empire
With Ariana shared, henceforth begins,
And leads the laughing hours; but, first, the storm
Of war and wild commotion must be hushed——
That mighty care now calls me to my throne,
To give the Roman audience; audience fit
To strike a citizen of Rome with awe,
When he beholds the majesty of kings. [*Going.*

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Dread sir, the Roman embassy approaches.
From yonder rampart, that invests your camp,
I heard their horses hoofs, with eager speed,
Beat the resounding soil.
Phar. Let them approach———
And thou, whose arrogance—but I forbear——
When Ariana pardons, my resentment
Yields to her smiles, and looks away its rage.
As when the crimes of men Jove's wrath demand,
And the red thunder quivers in his hand;
The queen of love his vengeance can disarm
With the soft eloquence of every charm;

Controul his passions with resistless sway,
And the impending storm smile to serenest day.
[*Exit with his train.*
Ter. And may I, then, once more, thou bright perfection,
May Teribazus once again approach thee,
While thus my father, my ambitious father,
At sight of thee forgets his cruel nature,
And wonders how he feels thy beauty's power?
Oh! may I—but I am too importunate——
Your looks rebuke me from you, and I see
How hateful I am grown!
Zen. Mistake me not,
Nor rashly thus arraign the looks of one,
Whose heart lies bleeding here——thy generous worth
's oft the live-long day my favourite theme.
But oh! for me, for wretched Ariana,
The god of love long since hath quenched his torch,
And every source of joy lies dead within me.
Ter. That cold averted look! but I am used
'o bear your scorn; your scorn that wounds the deeper,
Masked as it is with pity and esteem.
Yet love incurable, relentless love,
Burns here a constant flame, that rises still,
And will to madness kindle, should I see
That hoard of sweets, that treasury of charms,
Yield to another, to a barbarous rival,
Who persecutes a son to his undoing.
Zen. If Ariana's happiness would wound thee,
Thou wilt ne'er have cause to murmur or repine.
Thought can divorce me from the black despair
To which I have long been wedded.
Ter. Calm disdain,
Scant you, well becomes the tyrant fair
Whom Pharasmanes destines for his throne.
But oh! in pity to this breaking heart,
Give me, in mercy, give some other rival,
Whom I may stab—without remorse may stab,
Midst his delight, in all his heaven of bliss,
And spurn him from the joys, that, scorpion-like,
Shoot anguish here—here, through my very soul.
Zen. Alas! too generous prince, the gods long since,
Between us both, fixed their eternal bar.
Ter. What say'st thou, Ariana? ha! beware,
For urge me to distraction—love like mine,
Fierce, generous, wild——with disappointment wild,
May rouse my desperate rage to do a deed
Will make all nature shudder. Love despised,
Not always can respect the ties of nature!
Driven to extremes, the tenderest passion scorned,
May hate at length the object it adores,
And stung to madness—no! inhuman fair,
You still must be—in all vicissitudes,
In all the scenes misfortune has in store,
You still must be the sovereign of my soul.
But for the favoured, for the happy rival,
By Heaven, whoe'er he be, despair and phrensy
May strike the blow, and dash him from your arms,
A sacrifice to violated love.
Zen. Why thus distract yourself with vain suspicions?
You have no rival, whom your rage can murder——
None in the power of fate—Oh! Teribazus,
The wretched Ariana—long, long since——
My heart swells o'er—I cannot speak—a duty,
A rigorous duty bids me ne'er accept
Thy proffered love; a duty, which, if known,
Would in eternal silence seal thy vows,
Turn all thy rage to tears, and, Oh! my prince!
Bid thee respect calamities like mine. [*Exit Ter.*
Ter. Yet, Ariana, stay—turn, turn and hear me—
She's gone, the cruel, unrelenting fair!
And leaves me thus to misery of soul.

Enter ZOPIRON.

Zop. Flamminius from the Romans is arrived,
And bears the olive branch; the king, your father,
Assembles all his nobles——
Ter. Say, Zopiron,
Does Rome yield up Armenia?
Zop. Rome is still
The scourge of lawless power—a people's rights
The conscript fathers have resolved to shield,
And to the lineal heir assert the crown.
Ter. May the stern god of battles aid their arms,
And fight with the deliverers of mankind!
Unnatural father! that would seize my sceptre,
Mine, as my brother's heir, and ravish, with it,
The idol of my soul—but now, no more
His tyranny prevails—to empire raised,
'Twill be the pride of my exulting heart
To lay my crown at Ariana's feet. [*Exit Ter.*
Zop. Unhappy prince! should Pharasmanes know
His ardent passion for the captive maid,
Alas! his fatal rage—propitious powers!
May these events—may Rome's ambassador—
Oh! may he come with concord in his train,
And far avert the ills my heart forebodes!
But lo! Flamminius——

Enter RHADAMISTUS.

Welcome to these tents,
The harbinger of peace!
Rhad. Does your king know
Flamminius waits his leisure?
Zop. He prepares
To hear you, Roman!
Rhad. As I tread his camp,
There is, I know not what, of horror shoots
Through all my frame, and disconcerted reason
Suspends her function—a black train of crimes,
Murders and lust, and rapine, cities sacked,

Nations laid waste by the destructive sword,
A thousand ruthless deeds all rise to view,
And shake my inmost soul, as I approach
The author of calamity and ruin.
Zop. Then, from a Roman, from a son of freedom,
Let the fell tyrant hear the voice of truth,
The strong resistless strain, which liberty
Breathes in her capitol, till his proud heart
Shudder with inward horror at itself.
Rhad. In Pharasmanes' camp that honest style!
Thy visage bears the characters of virtue.
Wilt thou impart thy name and quality?
Zop. In me you see Zopiron! deem me not
A vile abettor of the tyrant's guilt.
To me Armenia trusts her sacred rights;
Hither her chosen delegate she sends me,
At the tribunal of Iberia's king,
To plead her cause; an injured people's cause!
Oh! never, never shall my native land
Yield to a vile usurper.
Rhad. Rome has heard
Thy patriot toil for freedom—Rhadamistus
Has heard thy generous ardour in his cause,
And pants to recompence thy truth and zeal.
Zop. Oh! name not Rhadamistus——now no more
The god-like youth shall bless Armenia's realm.
The fates just shewed him to the wondering world,
And then, untimely, snatched him from our sight!
Rhad. And did'st thou know the prince?
Zop. My lot severe
Denied that transport; but the voice of fame
Endears his memory.
Rhad. A time may come
When you may meet, and both in friendship burn.
Still Rhadamistus lives!
Zop. Said'st thou, Flamminius!
Lives he?
Rhad. Still he survives; from death and peril
Saved by a miracle! and now for him
Rome claims Armenia.
Zop. Claims Armenia for him!
For Rhadamistus claims! and will ye, gods!
Still will ye give him to a nation's prayers?
Rhad. Alas! he lives; heart-broken, desolate,
In sorrow plunged; abandoned to despair!
Zop. The righteous gods will vindicate his cause.
His loved Zenobia, Mithridates' daughter,
That every excellence—does she, too, live?
Have the indulgent powers watched o'er her fate,
And saved her for her people?
Rhad. There, Zopiron,
There lies the wound that pierces to his soul,
The sharpest pang—that rends—that cleaves his heart.
Oh! never more shall lovely lost Zenobia,
That angel form, that pattern of all goodness,
No, never more—she's gone, for ever gone!
Thou would'st not think——her barbarous, cruel husband—
With his own hand—the recollected tale
Of horror shakes my frame to dissolution!
Her husband!—he!—that dear, that tender form——
Oh!—poor Zenobia—oh!— [*Falls into a swoon.*
Zop. He faints! he falls!
Can Roman stoicism thus dissolve
In tender pity? Rise, Flamminius, rise;
He stirs; he breathes; and life begins to wander
O'er his forsaken cheek. Resume thy strength,
And, like a Roman, triumph o'er your tears.
Rhad. I will not be forced back to a wretched world.
No; let me—let me die.—
Zop. His eyes reject
The cheerful light—what can this anguish mean?
Rhad. You do but waste your pains; it is in vain;
Away! and leave a murderer to his woes.
Zop. Why thus accuse thyself? I'll not believe it—
Thus let me raise thee from the earth—
Rhad. Alas!—[*Rising.*]—
Despair weighs heavy on me.
Zop. Still I must
Controul this sudden phrenzy——
Rhad. Oh! Zopiron,
Here, here it lies——
Zop. Unburden all, and ease
Your loaded heart—it cannot be—thou never wert
A murderer!
Rhad. Yes! the horror of the world!
A murderous wretch! the fatal Rhadamistus!
'Twas I—these felon hands! with treacherous love
I clasped her in this cursed embrace—I bore her
In these detested arms, and gave that beauty,
That tender form, to the devouring waves.
Plunge me, ye furies, in your lakes of fire!
Here fix, fix all your vultures in my heart!
And lo! they rush upon me. [*Starts up.*] See! see there!
With racks and wheels they come; they tear me piece-meal—
'Tis just, Zenobia! I deserve it all——
[*Falls upon Zopiron.*
Zop. Assist him, guardian powers! your own high will
Guides these events—revive, my prince, revive!
Rhad. Why thus recal me to despair and horror?
To bid me hate the light, detest myself,
Traitor to nature, traitor to my love!
And yet, Zopiron, yet I am not plunged
So far in guilt, but thou may'st pity me!
Heaven, I attest, yes, you can witness, gods!
I meant to perish with her—but the fates
Denied that comfort—from her circling arms
The torrent bore me far—expiring, senseless,

Gasping in death, the overflowing tide
Impetuous drove me on the unwished-for shore.
There, soon deserted by the merciless stream,
A band of Romans, as from Syria's frontier
They ranged the country round, descried me, stretched,
Pale and inanimate; with barbarous pity,
They lent their aid, and chained me to the rack
Of inauspicious life!

Zop. For wond'rous ends
Mysterious Providence has still reserved you,
To circulate the happiness of millions,
A patriot prince——

Rhad. Would they had let me perish!
What has a wretch, like me, to do in life,
When my Zenobia's lost? 'tis true, my friend,
She begged to die—but that pathetic look,
Her tears, embraces, and those streaming eyes,
Still beauteous in distress! each winning grace,
Her every charm should have forbid the deed,
And pleaded for her life!

Zop. And yet, my prince,
When self-acquitting conscience——

Rhad. Self-condemned,
My soul is racked, is tortured—not her child,
Her unborn infant, the first fruit of love,
Not even her babe could, with the voice of nature,
Plead for itself, or for its wretched mother.
They perished both; she and her little one,
And I survive to tell it.

Zop. Let not grief
O'erwhelm your reason thus—What! when your father,
Your cruel father, reeking from the blood
Of Mithridates—

Rhad. Nought but death was left;
Yet even that last, sad refuge was debarred me!
Ever since, I've lived in misery; my days
Were coloured all with anguish and despair!
Long from the Romans I concealed my name,
At length revealed me to a chosen friend;
Journeyed with him to Rome; and, in full senate,
Told all the dismal story of my woes.
The conscript fathers heard, and dropt a tear—
Then, to quick vengeance fired, dispatched their legions
To wage the war; Paulinus leads them on,
And now to me commits this embassy,
With fully delegated powers from Rome.

Zop. With one united voice Armenia calls
For Mithridates' heir; convinced by rumour
That thou art lost, the general cry demands
Your brother Teribazus——

Rhad. He, Zophiron,
Is to these eyes a stranger.

Zop. Hapless prince!
A cloud of woes lies brooding o'er his head.
A fair, a lovely captive rules his heart;
Her name is Ariana; and, indeed,
No wonder she attracts his soft regard,
And kindles all the vehemence of love.
The tyrant eyes her, too, with fierce desire,
And ruin nods o'er Teribazus' head.

Rhad. By Heaven it shall not be! Alas! I know
The pang of losing whom the heart adores.
I'll yield him up Armenia—what are crowns
But toys of vain ambition, when the loved,
The dear partaker of my throne is lost?

Enter TIGRANES.

Zop. What would Tigranes?

Tig. Pharasmanes calls
Flamminius to his presence——

Rhad. I attend him;
So tell your king——

Tig. Instant he waits thee, Roman. [*Exit Tig.*

Rhad. How my heart trembles at the awful meeting!

Zop. Then summon all your strength—the lapse of time
From early youth, when Pharasmanes saw you,
Affliction's inward stroke, that Roman garb,
All will protect, and cloak you from detection.

Rhad. Zopiron, yes; in this important crisis,
When violated laws, and injured men,
When my own wrongs are labouring in my heart,
The great occasion calls for firmest vigour.
Yes, in this interview I will maintain
A Roman's part; in Pharasmanes' soul
I'll wake the furies of detested guilt,
And pour the rapid energy of truth,
Till even to himself his crimes are known,
And the usurper tremble on his throne.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—PHARASMANES *on his throne;* TIGRANES, ZOPIRON, *Officers, &c.*

Phar. WHERE is this bold republican from Rome?
This enemy of kings? Tigranes, thou
Bid the plebeian enter———Pharasmanes
Vouchsafes him audience.

Enter FLAMMINIUS.

Phar. Now, Flamminius, say,
What motive brings you to Araxes' banks,
To wage this slow, this philosophic war?

Rhad. By me, unworthy of the important charge,
By me, unequal to the arduous theme,

The conscript fathers here explain their conduct,
And justify the ways of Rome to kings.
Phar. Roman, thou may'st declaim with all thy pomp
Of idle eloquence.
Rhad. No power of words,
No graceful periods of harmonious speech
Dwell on my lip—the only art I boast
Is honest truth, unpolished, unadorned:
Truth, that informs you, to usurp a crown,
For dire ambition to unpeople realms,
Are violations of each sacred law,
And bid the Roman eagle, winged with vengeance,
To the Araxes' margin bend her flight,
To tell destruction it shall rage no more.
Phar. And dares Paulinus' soldier, darest thou, slave,
Thus offer vile indignity, and mouth
The language of your forum to a king?
Rhad. Rome knows, and owns you as Iberia's king,
But not Armenia's.
Phar. Ha!
Rhad. The assembled senate
Acknowledges your vast renown in arms,
And honours the unshaken fortitude
Even of a foe—but, sir, the fortitude,
Whose brutal rage lays nations desolate,
It is the glory of imperial Rome
To humble and subdue—it is the glory
Of Rome, that spares the vanquished, 'tis her pride
To set the nations free; to fix the bounds
Of the fell tyrant's power; to trace the circle
From which he must not move. These are the arts,
The bright prerogative of Rome—of Rome,
The mistress of the world, whose conquering banners
O'er Asia's realms so oft have waved in triumph,
And made even kings her subjects——
Phar. Ha! vain boaster!
Rhad. Made oriental kings, short by the knee
Accept their crown, with tears of joy accept it,
And be the viceroys of a Roman senate.
Phar. And this to Pharasmanes? has not 'yet
A train of conquests taught you to revere
This good right arm in war? This arm the Parthians
Have felt with fatal overthrow—no spoil,
No trophies won from me have graced their triumphs;
No friends of mine were harnessed to their chariots;
No captive chief, like your own mangled Crassus,
There roams a sullen ghost, and calls for vengeance,
For vengeance still unpaid, and calls in vain
For the sad funeral rites. Would Rome presume
To wrest Armenia from me—lo! my banners,
From frosty Caucasus to Phasis' banks,
Wave high in air, and shadow all the land.
Call your embattled legions—or does Rome,
All-conquering Rome, that mistress of the world,
Does she at length, by her ambassadors,
Negotiate thus the war?
Rhad. Rome, sir, commands
The subject world, for she adores the gods,
And their all-powerful aid.
Phar. Would'st thou dispute
My lawful claim,—arm thee with sword and fire,
Not with vain subtleties and idle maxims.
Armenia's crown is mine,—derived to me,
Heir to a brother, and a son deceased.
Rhad. And can a murderer, can the midnight ruffian
Prove himself heir—by the assassin's stab?
Phar. Thou base reviler!
[*Comes forward, and draws his sabre.*
Tig. Moderate your fury. [*holding him.*]
It were unjust—
Zop. The character he bears——
The laws of nations——
Phar. Thou base insolent!
Who dar'st to wound the ear of sacred kings
With a black crime, that's horrible to nature!
Rhad. Yes, horrible to nature!—yet the world
Has heard it all—thou art the man of blood!
A brother's blood yet smokes upon thy hand—
Not his white age, his venerable looks,
Not even his godlike virtues could withhold thee!
Gashed o'er with wounds, he falls,—he bleeds, he dies.
Without a groan he dies!—that is thy work;
Thine, murderer! thine!
Phar. No more—the hand of heaven
Shook from the blasted tree the withered fruit.
Rhad. Forbear the impious strain—it is the stile
Ambition speaks, when for a crown it stabs,
Then dares, with execrable mockery, dares
Traduce the governing, all-righteous mind.
Phar. He harrows up my soul!—and dost thou think
A madman's ravings——
Rhad. Since that hour accursed
Hast thou not plunged thee deeper still in guilt?
Your son—your blameless son——
Phar. His crimes provoked
A father's wrath—his and Zenobia's crimes!
Rhad. She too—untimely lost—unbidden tears,
Forbear to stream, nor quite unman me thus!
Phar. In tears!—by Heaven, thou woman-hearted slave,
Those coward symptoms have some latent spring
That lies concealed within that treacherous heart.
Rhad. They are the tears humanity lets fall,
When soft-eyed beauty dies, untimely slain.
But to avenge her death, arrayed in terror,
The Roman legions——
Phar. Lead them to the charge.
Thou, quit my camp: I, when yon sun descends

Thou lingerest here, the title of ambassador
Shall nought avail to save thee from my fury.
Rhad. E'er that, resign Armenia. Till the close
Of day, I give thee leisure to revolve
The vengeance Rome prepares—Thou know'st
With what a ponderous arm her hardy sons
Lift the avenging spear. Be timely wise,
Nor dare provoke your fate. [*Exit Rhad.*
Phar. Roman, farewell!
Do thou, Tigranes, issue forth my orders
From tent to tent, that each man stand prepared
For the dead midnight hour—with silent march
Then will I pour, with ruinous assault,
Upon the astonished foe; my horses hoofs
Imbrue in blood, and give to-morrow's sun
A spectacle of horror and destruction.
He ascends his throne, and the back scene closes.

SCENE II.

Enter ZENOBIA *and* MEGISTUS.

Zen. Oh! tell me all, Megistus; let me hear
All that concerns my child, my blooming boy,
My little Rhadamistus—is he safe?
Give me the truth—do not deceive a mother,
Who doats upon her babe—is my child safe?
Meg. Dry up your tears—I cannot bear to see you
Afflicted thus—your infant hero's safe—
You may believe your faithful, old Megistus——
Zen. I do believe thee; but excuse my weakness.
My fluttering fears for ever paint him to me
By ruffians seized, and, as he sees the knife
Aimed at his little throat, in vain imploring
For me, by name, and begging my assistance,
While far, far off, his miserable mother
No aid can give, nor snatch him to her heart.
Meg. I never yet deceived you——by yon heaven
The prince still lives—when I regained my cottage,
After the toils of many a weary day,
I found him there—but grieved, and wondering much
Where his dear mother was.
Zen. Megistus, tell me,
Oh! tell me each particular; his looks,
All his apt questions, his enchanting words;
For I could hear of him for ever—lovely youth!
His father's image blooming in his boy!
Through seven revolving years my only comfort!
When from my eyes the sudden sorrows gushed,
How would he look, and ask his wretched mother
What meant those falling tears?——alas! even now
I see him here before me—did my child
Think his poor mother lost?
Meg. At first he seemed
To pine in thought at your long, weary absence,
And many a look he cast, that plainly spoke
His little bosom heaved with various passions.
Still would he seek you in each well-known haunt,
Each bower, each cavern, like the tender fawn,
That through the woodland seeks its mother lost,
Exploring all around with anxious eye,
And looking still unutterable grief,
Lonely and sad, and stung with keen regret.
Zen. Did my child weep?—not much, I hope——
Meg. With soothing tales
I laboured to beguile him from his sorrow;
I promised your return; a gentle smile
Brightened his anxious look; he sighed content,
And then I led him to a safer dwelling,
Among the shepherds of the Syrian vale,
Who all have sworn to guard him as their own,
And in due season lead him to the Romans.
Zen. Oh, may those shepherds know the kindest influence
Of the indulgent heavens! Yet, why not stay
To guard him? but I'll not complain; on me
Your cares were fixed. Oh! tell me how the gods
Watched over all thy ways, and brought thee to me!
Where hast thou lived these many, many days?
Meg. In bitterness of soul I've lived, thy fate,
Thy tender form deep imaged in my breast!
I ranged the banks where the Araxes flows,
But bring, alas! no tidings of your lord.
Heart-broken, wearied out, I measured back
My feeble steps, but thou wert ravished thence!
For thee, I traversed hills and forests drear;
Thee I invoked, that every caverned rock,
Each vale, each mountain echoed with thy name.
Zen. And here at length you find me; here, encompassed
With all the worst of ills; hence let us fly
To the blessed Syrian valley, where my child
Wins with his early manhood every heart,
And calls for me, and chides this long delay.
Meg. Vain the attempt; one only way is left:
Reveal thee to the ambassador of Rome.
Safe in his train, thou may'st escape this place,
And gain Paulinus' camp; Zenobia, known,
Will meet protection there.
Zen. The gods inspire
The happy counsel. Ha! Tigranes comes!
Retire, Megistus. [*He goes out.*] A gay dawn of hope
Beams forth at length, and lights up day within me.
Tig. Hail princess, destined to imperial sway,
To grace with beauty Pharasmanes' throne!
By me, the impatient king requests you'll fix
The happy nuptial hour.
Zen. Thou might'st as well
Command me wed the forked lightning's blaze,
That gilds the storm, and be in love with horror.
Tig. Take heed, rash fair! an eastern monarch's love,
Ardent as his, must not be made the sport

Of tyrant beauty. When a rival dares
Oppose his sovereign's wish——
Zen. Does Pharasmanes,
Say, does your king permit his spies of state,
That curse of human kind, to breathe their whispers
In his deluded ear?
Tig. Full well 'tis known
That Teribazus bids you thus revolt,
And draws your heart's allegiance from your king.
Zen. Thou vile accuser!—if the prince's virtues
Have touched my bosom, what hast thou to urge?
What if a former hymeneal vow
Has bound my soul?—what if a father, sir,
A father, dear as my heart's purple drops,
Enjoin a rigid duty ne'er to share
The throne of Mithridates with a murderer?
Tig. Madam, those words——
Zen. Thou instrument of ill!
Who still art ready with a tale suborned,
And if thou art not perjured, dar'st betray:—
Away, and let thy conscience tell the rest. [*Exit.*
Tig. Vain haughty fair!—thou hast provoked my rage
By wrongs unnumbered; but for all those wrongs,
Soon shall inevitable ruin seize thee.

Enter RHADAMISTUS.

Rhad. Perhaps, ere this, your king's tumultuous passions
Sink to a calm, and reason takes her turn.
Then seek him, sir, and bear a Roman's message,
The terms of peace humanity suggests.
Tell him, Flamminius wishes to prevent
The rage of slaughter, and the streams of blood,
Which else shall deluge yonder crimson plains.
Tig. Already, Roman, his resolve is fixed.
War, horrid war impends.
Rhad. And yet, in pity
To human kind, to the unhappy millions
Who soon shall die, and with their scattered bones,
Whiten the plains of Asia; it were best
To sheathe the sword, and join in Rome's alliance.
Wilt thou convey my message?
Tig. I obey. [*Exit.*
Rhad. May some propitious power inspire his heart,
And touch the springs of human kindness in him.
Else, against whom, amidst the charging hosts,
Must Rhadamistus' sword be levelled?—ha!—
Spite of his crimes, he is my father still;
And must this arm, against the source of life,
Nay, more, perhaps against a brother too—
A brother still unknown!—he, too, may die
By this unconscious hand!—this hand, already
Inured to murder whom my heart adores!
My brother, then, may bleed! and when in death,
Gasping he lies, and pours his vital stream,
Then, in that moment, shall the generous youth
Extend his arms, and, with a piteous look,
Tell me, a brother doth forgive his murderer!
Gods! you have doomed me to the blackest woe,
To be a wretch abhorred, author of crimes
From which my tortured breast revolts with horror!—
Who's there?—A youth comes forward.—Now be firm,
Be firm my heart, and guard thy fatal secret!

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Illustrious Roman, if misfortune's son,
A wretched, ruined, miserable prince,
May claim attention.
Rhad. Ha, can this be he!
The graces of his youth, each feeling here,
Here, at my heartstrings, tell me 'tis my brother! [*Aside.*
Ter. I see you are moved, and I intrude too far.
Rhad. Pursue your purpose; warmest friendship for you
Glows in this breast.
Ter. Though Pharasmanes' fury
Maintains a fixed hostility with Rome,
Blend not the son with all a father's crimes.
Rhad. Go on; I pant to hear.
Ter. My father's cruelty
Each day breaks out in some new act of horror,
Nor lets the sword grow cool from human blood.
First, in his brother's breast he plunged it; then,
Inflamed to fiercer rage, 'gainst his own son.
Oh, Rhadamistus! thou much injured prince!
Rhad. And didst thou love that brother?
Ter. Generous Roman,
He lived far hence remote; I ne'er beheld him,
But the wide world resounded with his fame.
Rhad. Hold, hold my tears!—Oh! they will burst their way
At this his virtuous tenderness and love! [*Aside.*
Ter. And dost thou weep too, Roman?
Rhad. From such horror,
And so much cruelty, my nature shrinks.
Whatever purpose rolls within thy breast,
Boldly confide it. Shall I, armed with vengeance,
Assault the purple tyrant in his camp?
Or wilt thou join my steps? then, in the front
Of a brave veteran legion, head the war,
Seek the usurper 'midst his plumed troops,
And thus avenge mankind?
Ter. No; far from me,
Far be the guilt of meditating aught
Against the life from whence my being sprung.
Let him oppress me,—he's a parent still!
Rhad. He rives my heart! Oh! what a lot is mine! [*Aside.*
Ter. Not for myself I fear; but oh! Flamminius,
A lovely captive,—'tis for her I tremble;
For Ariana, for that sweet perfection;
She is her sex's boast!—her gentle bosom
Fraught with each excellence!—her form and feature

Touched by the hand of elegance; adorned
By every grace, and cast in beauty's mould!
Her, Pharasmanes means to ravish from me.
But thou convey her hence—'tis all I ask.

Rhad. By Heaven I will!—do thou, too, join our flight;
Armenia shall be thine, and that sweet maid
Reward thy goodness with connubial love,
Adorn thy throne, and make a nation blessed!

Ter. Make Ariana happy! bear her hence,
And save those bright unviolated charms
From Pharasmanes' power! When wished-for peace
Settles a jarring world, Flamminius, then,
Then will I seek thee. Wilt thou then resign her?

Rhad. Yes, then; as pure as the unsullied snow,
That never felt a sunbeam; then I'll give her
Back to thy faithful love.

Ter. Thou generous Roman!
In gratitude I bow—she's here at hand;
A moment brings her to you, while at distance
I watch each avenue, each winding path,
That none intrude upon your privacy. [*Exit.*

Rhad. At length I've seen my brother; know how much
He differs from his father: he shall seek
The Roman tents; I'll there disclose myself;
There will embrace him with a brother's love.
Oh! how the tender transport heaves and swells,
Till, thus, the fond excess dissolves in tears!

Enter MEGISTUS, *leading* ZENOBIA.

Zen. Alas! my heart forebodes I know not what.

Meg. Dispel each doubt—this is your only refuge.

Zen. Thou generous Roman—if distress like mine—
If an unhappy captive may approach thee——

Rhad. To me affliction's voice—ye powers of Heaven!
That air! those features! that remembered glance!

Zen. If thus a wretch's presence can alarm you——

Rhad. The music of that voice! such once she looked!
And if I had not plunged her in the stream,
I could persuade myself——

Zen. Those well known accents!
Those tender soft regards!—nay, mock me not!—
I could not hope to see thee! tell me, art thou
That once adored!—oh!
[*Faints into Megistus' arms.*

Meg. Ah! her strength forsakes her—
Support her, Heaven!—[*Catches her in his arms.*

Rhad. Ye wonder-working gods!
Is this illusion all? or does your goodness
Indeed restore her?—if I do not dream,
If this be true,—oh! let those angel eyes
Open to life, to love, and Rhadamistus.

Meg. What further miracles doth Heaven prepare?

Zen. Forgive my weakness—the air-painted image
Of my loved lord—and see!—again 'tis present!—
That look, that speaks the fond impassioned soul!
Yes, such he was!—oh! art thou—tell me—say—
Art thou restored me?—art thou Rhadamistus?

Rhad. I have not murdered her!—beniguant gods!
I am not guilty—my Zenobia lives!

Zen. It is my lord! Oh! I can hold no longer,
But, thus delighted, spring to his embrace,
Thus wander o'er him with my tears and kisses,
And thus, and thus,—speak my enraptured soul.

Rhad. She lives! she lives! what kind protecting god,
Long lost, and long lamented, gives thee back,
Gives me to view thee, and to hear thy voice,
With joy to ecstacy, with tears to rapture?

Zen. This good old man—'twas he preserved me for you.

Meg. Oh! day of charms! Oh! unexpected hour!
I have not lived in vain—these gushing eyes
Have seen their mutual transports!

Rhad. Generous friend!
Come to my heart—Zenobia's second father!

Zen. Thou art indebted more than thou can'st pay him;
Indebted for our infant babe preserved,
The blossom of our joys! thou can'st not think
How much he looks, and moves, and talks like thee.

Rhad. Oh! mighty gods! it is too much of bliss,
Too exquisite to bear! these barbarous hands
Had well nigh murdered both my wife and child!
Wilt thou forgive me! Oh! my best delight,
Wilt thou receive a traitor to your arms?
Wilt thou, Zenobia?

Zen. Will I? gracious Heaven!
Thou source of all my comfort!

Meg. Ha! beware,
Beware my prince! but now with hasty step
I saw Tigranes circling yonder tent.

Rhad. The ambassador of Rome he seeks, on business
Of import high—I will prevent his speed—
And must I, then, so soon depart, Zenobia?

Zen. Hence, quickly hence! anon we'll meet again—

Rhad. Yes, we will meet; the gods have given thee to me,
And they will finish their own holy work. [*Exit.*

Meg. My prayers are heard at length—Zenobia still
Shall be Armenia's queen.

Zen. Oh! good Megistus,
Heaven has been bounteous, and restored my lord.

With him I'll fly, wrapt in the gloom of night;
And thou, Megistus, thou shalt join our flight;
Placed near his throne, thy generous zeal shall share
The bright reward of all thy toil and care;
While I, redeemed at length from fierce alarms,
Forget my woes in Rhadamistus' arms. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter RHADAMISTUS *and* TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Thou art a friend indeed, thou generous man!
The best of friends, to save such innocence,
That lovely virgin bloom! the pious act
Shall to remotest time transmit thy name,
Ennobled by humanity and virtue.
Rhad. Alas! no praise I merit; 'tis a deed
That loses virtue's name—
Ter. Flamminius, no!
Thou shalt not derogate from worth like thine.
But oh! beware, my friend, and steel thy heart
Against the sweet illapse of gentler passions.
To love her were such treachery! By Heaven!
It were a fraud of a more damned hue—
A fraud to sacred friendship! but my soul
Rejects the mean suspicion—thou art just,
And Ariana shall be mine again!
Rhad. If, when the tumult of the war is passed,
You then persist to claim her——
Ter. Then persist!
When I do not persist—whene'er my heart
Forgets the fond idea—ha! take heed—
Your colour dies by fits, and now, again,
It flushes o'er your cheek—if beauty's power
Can waken soft desire—and sure such beauty
May warm the breast of stoic apathy—
If thou can'st love, resign the trust at once.
For Oh! to lose her, to behold those charms,
That all-perfection yielded to another,
Were the worst agony, the keenest stab
That ever pierced a lover to the soul.
The thought, the very thought inflames to madness!
Rhad. [*Aside.*] Not till the fever of his mind subsides,
Must I reveal me—the disclosure, now,
Would to his phrenzy give a whirlwind's wing,
And bury all in ruin—let her, then,
Yes, Teribazus, let the blooming maid,
Still in this camp, a voluntary captive—
Since you will have it so—since weak mistrust
Can taint a noble spirit—let her here
Teach that rare beauty to display its charms,
Its various graces; bid those radiant eyes
Dart their quick glances to the tyrant's soul,
Inflame his hot desires, and half absolve them.
Ter. Madness and horror! no! haste, fly, begone,
And give her hence safe conduct; I can trust
To Roman continence—your Scipio's praise
Shall be the theme of fame's eternal lip!
Rhad. Thou, too, attend her steps; watch all her ways;
When we have reached the Roman sanctuary,
Then shall such wonders to thy listening ear—
The web which fate has wove——beware my friend—
Tigranes comes—what would'st thou, sir?

Enter TIGRANES.

Tig. The king
Grants you one parley more——even now, this way
He bends his steps——remote from all, he means
To hold a private conference——
Rhad. Rome's ambassador
Attends his pleasure. [*Exit Tigranes.*
Ter. I must hence, Flamminius——
Farewell! yet, ere thou goest, I still must crave
Another interview—farewell! remember,
My love, my life, my all, depend on thee. [*Exit.*
Rhad. Ah! luckless prince! how lost in error's maze!
Blindly he wanders, and love's sweet delusion
Infuses its enchantment through his heart!
But when removed from Pharasmanes' power,
He learns my prior claim, his generous friendship
Will bound with transport at a brother's joys,
And with a warmth of sympathy partake them.
But ha! My father! Grant me strength, ye powers,
To meet the dread encounter!

Enter PHARASMANES.

Phar. Once again,
Ere you depart, if Pharasmanes deign
To treat, and thus expostulate with Rome,
'Tis to thy prayers I grant it.
Rhad. Rome had rather
Persuade than conquer; her well-balanced justice—
Phar. No more of Roman justice——blame not
Virtues you ne'er have practised——with the name,
The specious name of love for human kind,
You sanctify the insatiate rage of conquest,
And where the sword has made a solitude,
That you proclaim a peace. Even now your views
Stand manifest to sight—to thee 'tis known
That Rhadamistus lives!

Rhad. How, Sir! can he—
Does that unhappy prince—
Phar. Thou false dissembler!—
Yes, in thy heart the fatal secret's lodged!
Rhad. Sir, if your son—if you will search his heart—
Phar. From certain fugitives I have learned it all—
In yonder camp, concealed from vulgar eyes,
To war against his father still he lives!
Why dost thou droop dejected? something lurks
Beneath that burning blush—
Rhad. That burning blush
Glows on my cheek for thee—I know your son,
And know him unsusceptible of guilt.
Phar. Then, Roman, mark my words; would'st thou prevent
The carnage fate prepares on yonder plains,
Go, tell Paulinus I will treat of terms
With him, who brings me Rhadamistus' head.
Rhad. Your own son's head!
Phar. Why dost thou gaze so earnest?
Why those emotions struggling for a vent?
Rhad. Amazement checks my voice, and, lost in wonder,
I view the unnatural father, who would bathe
His hands in blood, in a son's blood—a son
Who pants, with ardour pants, on terms of peace,
To sheathe the sword, and with a filial hand
To throw a veil over a father's crimes.
Phar. By Heaven 'tis false—has he not dared to league
With my determined foes? even to the senate,
To every region where his voice could pierce,
Has he not fled with the delusive story?
With grief and loud complaints inflamed the world?
And even now, does not the stripling come
To the Araxes' banks with Rome in arms?
Rhad. Though urged by dire constraint, yet Heaven can witness
His strong reluctance.
Phar. Let the rebel know
He never shall ascend Armenia's throne.
Rhad. And shall destruction, with her horrid train,
Stalk o'er the land?
Phar. Yes! let destruction loose!
'Tis Pharasmanes' glory.
Rhad. Can the rage,
And the wild tumult of destructive havoc
Administer delight? alas! the day
That deluges the land with human blood,
Is that a day of glory?———
I, sir, have traversed o'er the field of death,
Where war had spent its rage. Had'st thou beheld
That scene of horror, where unnumbered wretches,
In mangled heaps, lay weltering in their gore;
Where the fond father, in the gasp of death,
Wept for his children; where the lover sighed
For her, whom never more his eyes should view;
Where various misery sent forth its groans:
Had'st thou beheld that scene, the touch of nature
Had stirred within thee, and the virtuous drop
Of pity gushed unbidden from thy eye.
Phar. Enervate slave! here ends all further parley.
Go tell your general, tell your Roman chiefs,
The father claims his son.—Have we not heard
How your own Brutus to the lictor's sword
Condemned his children? and would Rome dispute
A king's paternal power? let them yield up
The treacherous boy, or, terrible in arms,
Shall Pharasmanes overwhelm their legions,
Mow down their cohorts, and their mangled limbs
Give to the vulture's beak.
Rhad. And yet reflect—
Phar. Roman, no more.
Rhad. Unwilling, I withdraw;
A father's stern resolve the son shall mourn,
And with a pang of nature shall behold
The Roman eagle dart like thunder on thee.
[*Exit.*
Phar. Away, and leave me, slave! to-morrow's sun
Shall see my great revenge—mean time, I give
The gentle hours to love and Ariana.
What, ho! Tigranes!

Enter TIGRANES.

Phar. Does the subborn fair
Yield to my ardent vows?
Tig. She mocks your passion,
And gives to Teribazus all her smiles.
Phar. By Heaven! even love itself shall be my slave!
Yet love like mine requires her soft consent,
And will not riot o'er her plundered charms.
Quick, bring her father to me———
Tig. By your orders
At hand Megistus waits your sovereign will.
[*Exit.*
Phar. Bring him before us—wise and prudent age
Will plead my cause, and second my desires.

Enter MEGISTUS.

Meg. Dread sir—a blameless, a distressed old man,
Of guilt unconscious——
Phar. Whatsoe'er thy guilt,
A smile from Ariana expiates all.
Meg. Believe me, sir, I never have offended;
She was my sole delight; my age's comfort;
For her I felt more than a parent's love——
But 'midst the troubles that distract the land
I lost her. In despair, with yearning heart,
I ranged the country round in fond pursuit.
This is my crime; sure 'tis no crime to love
Such blooming innocence!

Phar. Dispel thy fears,
Thy love for Ariana speaks thy virtue.
That graceful form, that symmetry of shape,
That bloom, those features, those love-darting eyes,
All, all attract, that there each fond admirer
Could ever gaze, enamoured of her charms.
Meg. Alas! whate'er the symmetry of shape,
Whate'er the grace that revels in her features,
Glows in her bloom, or sparkles in her eye,
They all are transient beauties, soon to fade,
And leave inanimate that decent form.
Inward affliction saps the vital frame,
Incurable affliction! fixed in woe
Her eyes for ever, motionless and dim,
Gaze on the fancied image of her husband.
Phar. Her husband!
Meg. Yes; a husband severed from her
By fatal chance! him she for ever sees
With fancy's gushing eye, and seeks him still
In fond excursions of delusive thought,
She pines each hour, and even in blooming dies;
As drooping roses, while the worm, unseen,
Preys on their fragrant sweets, still beauteous look,
And waste their aromatic lives in air.
Phar. The rose, transplanted to a warmer sky,
Shall raise its languid head, and all be well.
Meg. Her husband still survives, and far remote
He wanders in Armenia's realm——
Phar. No more
To call her his! by all my promised joys,
His doom is fixed! do thou straight seek thy daughter,
My loveliest Ariana; in her ear
Breathe the mild accents of a father's voice,
And reconcile her heart to love and me.
Meg. Your pardon, sir; it were not fit my voice
Should teach her to betray her holy vows.
Phar. When Pharasmanes speaks—
Meg. My life is his,
And when he wills it, 'tis devoted to him——
But, sir, though poor, my honour still is mine;
'Tis all that Heaven has given me, and that gift
The gods expect I never should resign.
Phar. And dost thou hesitate? what, when a crown
Invites thy daughter to imperial splendour!
Meg. Oh! not for me such splendour! I have lived
My humble days in virtuous poverty.
To tend my flock, to watch each rising flower,
Each herb, each plant that drinks the morning dew,
And lift my praise to the just gods on high—
These were my habits, these my only cares;
These hands sufficed to answer my desires,
And having nought, yet nought was wanting to me.
Phar. Away, thou slave! I would not quite despise thee——
Or yield your daughter, or my swiftest vengeance
Falls on thy hoary head—a monarch's love
Shall seize her trembling to his eager arms,
Then spurn her back a prey to wan despair,
Till bitter anguish blast each withered charm,
And rave in vain for love and empire scorned!
[*Exit.*
Meg. Fell monster, go! inexorable tyrant!
Perhaps I should have soothed his lion rage
With feigned complaisance—ha!—why sudden thus——

Enter ZENOBIA.

Zen. The important hour, Megistus, now approaches.
Lo! the last blushes of departing day
But feebly streak yon dim horizon's verge.
My Rhadamistus comes to guide my steps——
Through devious paths seek thou Zopiron's tent;
Thus we shall lull suspicion.
Meg. I obey;
May guardian angels spread their wings around thee! [*Exit.*
Zen. Yes, the blessed gods, who, through the maze of fate,
Have led us once again to meet in life,
Will prove the friends of virtue to the last.
Ha! Teribazus comes!

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. And is it given
Once more to see thee here? dost thou avoid me?
Dost thou despise me in this tender moment,
When my soul bleeds with anguish at the thought
Of parting with thee? Ariana!
Zen. Oh!
Unhappy prince! Oh! fly me; shun me; death
And ruin follow—one short moment's stay
Will rouze your father's rage.
Ter. My father's rage
Already has undone me—ah! in tears!
And do they fall for me? does that soft sigh
Heave for the lost, afflicted Teribazus?
Zen. Yes, the tear falls, and the sigh heaves, for thee;
Thy elegance of mind, the various graces
That bloom around thee, and adorn the hero,
Nay, other ties there are which strongly plead,
And bid me tremble for thee.
And yet—sad recompense for all thy friendship,
To warn thee hence, to bid thee shun my ways,
Is all the gratitude I now can offer.
Ter. Thus must we part?
Zen. A rival is at hand,
Here in the camp—an unexpected rival,
Sent by the gods—the idol of my soul!
Ter. What say'st thou, Ariana? has another
Usurped thy heart? Unkind, relentless maid!
Since first thy beauty dawned upon my sight,
How have I loved, repented, yet loved on!
Even against you, against myself I struggled—
Present I fled you—absent I adored,—

I fled for refuge to the forest's gloom,
But in the forest's gloom thy image met me!
The shades of night, the lustre of the day,
All, all retraced my Ariana's form.
Thy form pursued me in the battle's rage,
'Midst shouts, and all the clangor of the war.
It stole me from myself!- my lonely tent
Re-echoes with my groans, and in the ranks
The wondering soldier hears my voice no more.

Zen. Yet leave me, Teribazus—generous youth!
Remembrance oft shall dwell upon thy praise;
But, for my love, 'tis all another's claim.

Ter. Another's claim! why wilt thou torture thus
A fond, despairing wretch?—oh! not for me
Those sorrows fall—they are another's tears;—
Another claims them from me—name this rival,
That my swift fury—tell me, has Flamminius,
Has the base Roman broke his promised faith?
Will not the barbarous man afford you shelter?

Zen. Why wilt thou force me speak? the fate of all,
Thine, Teribazus—mine—the fate of one,
Whom, were he known—thy heart holds ever dear,
s now concerned—Flamminius claims my love;
ong since he won my heart——

Ter. Vindictive gods!
'lamminius claims thy love! not Cæsar's self
hall dare to wrest thee from me—Ariana!
Thus on my knees—would I could perish here,
That even in death I still might gaze upon thee,
Till the last pang divide thee from my heart.

Enter RHADAMISTUS.

Rhad. It was the voice of anguish and despair!
Vhy thus, illustrious prince——

Ter. [*Starting up.*] Thou treacherous Roman!
Vho com'st to violate each sacred tie,
'he laws of honour, and the laws of love!
Vho com'st beneath the mask of public faith
'o do a robber's work!

Rhad. When to your camp
bring a heart that longs to serve you, prince,
Vhy this intemperate rage?

Ter. To do the work
)f perfidy and fraud! but first by rapine,
y violated maids, your city grew;
nd do you come to emulate your sires,
nwilling to degenerate in vice?

Rhad. Mistaken youth!—Oh! if you did but know me!
' you but knew the justice Rome intends—

Ter. Justice and Rome! and dost thou dare to join
'wo names so opposite?—have we not heard
)f frugal consuls, and of stoic chiefs,
Vho soon forgetting here their Sabine farms,
Iade war a trade, and then returned to Rome,
ich with the plunder of the rifled east?
gain some new Lucullus leads them on,
ired with the love of rapine.

Rhad. Fired with zeal
To break a nation's chains—would'st thou but hear me—
It is a friend implores—

Zen. A generous friend!
Then listen to him—let these streaming eyes,
These earnest prayers, this supplicating form——

Ter. Leagued with my foe, behold her!—— mighty gods!
Have I deserved it of her?

Rhad. Yet be calm——
Yet listen to me—Oh! I could unfold——
Yet stay—I'll prove myself a brother to thee.

Ter. Roman, expect me in the battle's front—
Instant depart—but leave thy prey behind;—
Dare not—I charge thee dare not, tempt her; hence!
To-morrow's sun shall see me, clothed in terror,
Pursue thy steps through all the ranks of war,
Till my spear fix thee quivering to the ground.
[*Exit.*

Zen. Yet, Rhadamistus, call him—let him know——

Rhad. Thou lovely trembler! banish every fear——
The time now bids us hence—and lo! the moon
Streams her mild radiance on the rustling grove.
I will conduct thee—ha! Zopiron——

Enter ZOPIRON.

Come,
Thou best of men! let me once more embrace thee.

Zop. Oh! speed thee hence—each moment's big with death——

Rhad. Farewell! farewell! when I've escaped your camp,
Seek thou my brother; soothe his troubled spirit;
Explain these wonders; tell him Rhadamistus
Esteems and loves, and honours all his virtues.
Farewell, Zopiron!—in Armenia's court
Thy king shall thank thy goodness—my Zenobia,
Oh! let me guide thee from this place of danger,
To life, to love, to liberty and joy.
[*Exit with Zenobia.*

Zop. Lo! the heavens smile with gentlest aspect on them!—
This calm serene, that every planet sheds,
To light their steps—this glad ætherial mildness,
Is sure the token of encircling gods,
That hover anxious o'er the solemn scene!

Enter PHARASMANES, TIGRANES *following.*

Phar. Let Teribazus straight attend our presence——

Tig. But now, with glaring eye and fierce demeanour,
He entered yonder tent——

Phar. Bid him approach us.
Then do thou round the midnight watch, and see
That Rome's ambassador has left my camp.
[*Exit Tigranes.*
This war, Zopiron, shall be soon extinguished

In Roman blood, and yield Armenia to me.
Zop. Armenia, sir, still obstinately mourns
Lost Mithridates, father of his people.
Her hardy sons, with one consenting voice,
Demand a king from Rome; all leagued and sworn
Never to crouch beneath the conqueror's yoke.
Phar. But, when the Roman eagle bites the ground,
They'll shrink aghast, and own my sovereign sway.

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Phar. Thou base confederate with thy father's foes!
Ter. The accusation, sir, if proof support it,
Gives you my forfeit life, and I resign it,
Freely resign—if destitute of proof,
It is a stab to honour, and the charge
Should not be lightly urged.
Phar. This arrogance
That dictates to a father——
Ter. 'Tis the spirit
Of injured innocence—if Pharasmanes
Suspect my truth, send me where danger calls;
Bid me this moment carry death and slaughter
To rage in yonder camp; yes, then, your son
Shall mark his hatred of the Roman name.
Phar. Hast thou not dared to thwart my tenderest passion,
And to seduce my Ariana's love?
Ter. And, if this youthful heart, too prone to melt
At beauty's ray, received the gentle flame,
'Tis past—the charm is o'er—no longer now
I walk a captive in her haughty triumph!
In vain she now may call forth all her graces,
Instruct her eyes to roll with hidden fires,
And practise all the wonders of her face.
Ambition calls, and lights a nobler flame.

Enter TIGRANES.

Tig. The ambassador of Rome, and that old traitor,
The false Megistus——
Phar. Speak; unfold thy purpose.
Tig. Together left the camp, and in their train
Bear Ariana with them——
Ter. Ariana!
Have the slaves dared—detested treachery!
Now, now, my father, now approve my zeal!
Phar. Haste! fly! pursue her! bring the traitress back!
Ter. My rapid vengeance shall o'ertake their flight,
And bring the Roman plunderer bound in chains.
[*Exit.*
Phar. Do thou, Tigranes, with a chosen band
Circle yon hills, and intercept their march.
And thou, Zopiron, send my swiftest horse
To range the wood, and sweep along the vale.
[*Exit Tigranes.*
Zop. Ye guardian deities, now lend your aid!
[*Exit.*
Phar. [*Alone.*] Has the perfidious, yet adored deceiver,
Thus has she left me? from a monarch's smile,
Fled with a lawless ravager from Rome?
Oh! give me vengeance; give Flamminius to me,
That he may die in agony unheard of.
The traitress, then—spite of each winning art,
Spite of her guilt, she triumphs in my heart.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter PHARASMANES.

Phar. Not yet returned! I am tortured on the rack—
By Heaven, to-morrow's dawn——distracting thought!
Ere that, the Roman ravager enjoys
Her heaven of bliss, and riots in delight.
My soul's on fire—this night I'll storm his camp,
And dash his promised joys; let loose my rage,
[*A flourish of trumpets.*
And bury all in ruin—ha! what means
This new alarm?

Enter TERIBAZUS, *Soldiers, &c.*

Ter. The treacherous slave is taken!
My speed outstripped him, and this arm, that seized,
Hath well secured the traitor.
Phar. Great revenge,
The measure of thy joys is full!
Ter. At first
They made a feeble stand; but, hemmed around,
And close encircled by the sons of Asia,
They saw death threatening at each javelin's point.
I rushed upon Flamminius—much he courted
A secret parley, but my soul disdained
All further conference—he and his complotter,
The base Megistus, with the fair deserter,
Remeasure back their steps, and clank their chains
In bitterness of heart.
Phar. A father's thanks,
Shall well requite thee—lo! the traitors come.

Enter RHADAMISTUS, ZENOBIA, MEGISTUS, *in chains.*

Phar. Thou base perfidious! thou Italian plunderer!
Rhad. I do not mean to wage a war of words.
Repent thee of this insult, of these chains
On him, who represents a people here.

Phar. Anon thou'lt see how I respect that people.
My just revenge shall tell thee; on thy head
And thine, Megistus, sudden vengeance falls.
Meg. Alas! worn out with age and misery,
I long to lay me in the shroud of death.
Phar. I grant thy wish—what words, fair fugitive,
Can colour thy deceit?
Zen. The heart resolved
Wants no excuse, no colouring of words.
I found my husband, flew to his embrace;
This, this is he! the lord of my desires—
With him, content, I'll traverse o'er the world.
Phar. Dost thou avow it too?
Zen. Do I avow it?
Yes, I exult, I glory in it—Think'st thou
I'll prove so meanly false to honour's cause,
As to apologize for being faithful?
Ter. I see Flamminius has already schooled her
In Roman maxims——
Rhad. Miserable prince!
I will not answer thee—too soon thy heart
For this last feat will bitterly reproach thee!
Ter. Away with thy delusive arts—if ever
I form alliance with that haughty people,
Those ravagers of earth, if e'er again
I hold communion with thee, may the gods—
May Pharsamanes—but it cannot be—
My heart, high-beating in my country's cause,
Vows an eternal enmity with Rome. [*Exit.*
Rhad. Thee, Pharasmanes, thee my voice addresses—
Thou know'st my title to her—Hymen's rites
Long since united both——Then loose these chains;
'Tis in the name of Rome I ask it——
Phar. Slave!
Thy title, by the rights of war, is now extinguished.
Captivity dissolves her former ties,
And now the laws of arms have made her mine.
Zen. And are there laws to change the human heart?
To alter the affections of the soul?
Know that my heart is ruled by other laws,
The laws of truth, of honour, and of love.
This is my husband! source of all my comfort!
With him I'll live—with him will dare to die!
Phar. By Heaven, some mystery—thou treacherous fair!
Mark well my words——unfold thy birth and rank—
My mind, uncertain, wanders in conjecture—
Who, and what art thou? Vain is every guess—
Resolve my doubts, or else the Roman's doom
Shall be determined straight——
Zen. And my resolve,
Tyrant, is fixed to share my husband's fate.
That I unfold—that sentiment reveal—
To Heaven and earth reveal it—for the rest,
Guess if you can, determine if you dare.
Phar. Quick, drag Flamminius hence—
Rhad. Slaves, hold your hands—
My character protects me here——
Phar. Dispatch!
Instant dispatch, and seize Megistus, too!
[*Megistus is led off.*
Zen. Horror! call back the word—it shall not be—
Here will I hold him—barbarous ruffians hold—
Murder! my life! my lord! my husband! oh!
[*Rhadamistus is dragged off.*
Phar. Give him the torture; let your keenest pangs
Extort each secret from him——
Zen. Pharasmanes!
Thus lowly humbled, prostrate in the dust,
Washing your feet with tears—have mercy! this
Will be the blackest, worst of all your murders.
Phar. There's but one way to mitigate his doom.
Zen. Give me to know it—spare him—spare his life.
Phar. Abjure the slave, and, by connubial vows,
This instant make thee partner of my throne.
Zen. My faith, my love, my very life is his—
My child is his—oh! think thou see'st my infant
Lifting his little hands—
Phar. I'll hear no more;
Or yield this moment, or the traitor dies.
[*Exit Pharasmanes.*
Zen. [*Alone.*] Inhuman tyrant! madness seize my brain!
Swallow me earth! here shall these desperate hands
Strike on thy flinty bosom, here my voice
Pierce to thy centre, till, with pity touched,
Your caverns open wide to hide a wretch
From hated men, from misery like this.

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Afflicted mourner, raise thee from the earth.
Zen. What voice is that? I know thee well—thou art
That fiend accurst, the murderous Teribazus!
Yes, thou art welcome! [*Rising.*] Thou delight'st in blood—
I am your willing victim; plunge your sword
Deep in my heart; I'll thank thee for the stroke,
Since thou hast murdered all my soul held dear.
Ter. Assuage this storm of grief, nor blame a lover
That dotes, like me——could I behold that form
Snatched from my arms?
Zen. You know not what you've done—
Your blameless brother—
Ter. How!
Zen. You've murdered him——
Your brother Rhadamistus——
Ter. Rhadamistus!
Zen. By thee he dies—that is your splendid deed——

Ter. What say'st thou? he my brother—urge me not
To instant madness—is he—tell me—say—
Art thou Zenobia?
Zen. Yes, that fatal wretch!
Ter. If this be so——what had I done, ye powers!
To merit this extremity of woe—
Why did'st thou hide the awful secret from me?
Zen. Could I betray him—could I trust your father,
Whose fell ambition, whose relentless rage,
Has fixed a price on our devoted heads?
Ter. Then shall this hated being—no! I'll live
To save a brother still—he shall not die—
Oh! let me seek him, throw me at his feet,
Implore forgiveness, and protract his days.
[*Exit Teribazus.*
Zen. It is in vain—he's lost—we both must perish——
And then my child—who then shall guard his youth?
No more these eyes shall see him—my sweet boy
Will break his heart, and unregarded die!

Enter ZOPIRON.

Zop. All's lost! all ruined!—to the cave of death
Even now the guards lead Rhadamistus forth.
Zen. Thou see'st the sad reverse!—immortal spirits,
Ye winged virtues, that, with pitying eye,
Watch the afflicted! will ye not inspire
In this sad hour, one great, one glorious thought,
Above the vulgar flight of common souls,
To save, at once, my husband and my child?—
The inspiration comes! the bright idea
Expands my heart, and charms my glowing soul.
Zop. My gracious queen, let not a blind despair——
Zen. Talk not, Zopiron, when the god inspires!
The god! the god!—my heart receives him all—
My lord, my Rhadamistus still shall live. [*Exit.*
Zop. Yet, I conjure thee, hear thy faithful slave! [*Follows her out.*

SCENE II.

Enter RHADAMISTUS *and Guards.*

Rhad. Say, whither do you lead me?—does your tyrant
Repent this horrid outrage?

Enter TERIBAZUS.

Ter. Guards, withdraw
To a remoter ground. [*Exeunt Soldiers.*
Rhad. Mistaken prince!
My heart bleeds for thee———
Ter. Oh! too well I know
The depth of guilt in which the fates have plunged me.
I cannot look upon thee.
Rhad. Oh! my brother,
Thus, let me, even in ruin, thus embrace thee.
Ter. Dost thou forgive me?—could I e'er have thought
To see thee here? my rashness has undone thee!
Rhad. No, thou art innocent—the guilt is mine,
The guilt of mean, ungenerous policy,
Of selfish wisdom, disingenuous art,
That from a friend kept back the fatal secret,
When, with the ardour of unbounded confidence,
I should have rushed with transport to thy arms,
Unbosomed all, and wrapt thee in my heart.
Ter. Alas! I've heaped these horrors on your head—
I've sealed thy doom—that is a brother's gift—
The first essay of Teribazus' friendship!
But I am doomed to be a wretch abhorred,
Of men and gods abhorred! doomed, like my father,
To drench these murderous hands in brother's blood!
Rhad. Embitter not the pangs that rive my soul—
Where is Zenobia?—unrelenting powers!
Was it for this your persecuting wrath
Gave me to meet her, gave that angel-sweetness
To these delighted eyes, these eager arms?
Ter. I'll give you freedom still—by Heaven I will—
Rhad. Was she but given me to afflict her more?
To wake in that dear breast a gleam of joy,
A mockery of joy—joy, scarce, ye powers!
Divided by the moment of delight
From black despair, from agony and death?
Ter. I will protect her, will restore her to thee,
Or do a deed shall strike mankind with horror!
Not even a father shall retard my sword—
In his own blood I'll drench it.
Rhad. Ha!——
Ter. This hand,
Ere thou shalt fall a victim to his fury,
Shall to the heart, the inhuman heart of him
Who dares—
Rhad. No more of that—can I consent,
That a brave generous youth, a much-loved brother,
For every virtue famed, shall thus debase,
By an atrocious deed, his fair renown,
And perpetrate a dark insidious work?
Oh! I should well deserve the worst of ills—
I then should justify a father's cruelty!
Ter. He has undone thee, has undone us all,
But yet thou shalt not die—by Heaven I swear—
Yes, take me, horror! pour into my heart
Thy blackest purpose—nerve my lifted arm
To dash him headlong from his glittering throne,
A terrible example to the world.
Rhad. Beware, beware, my brother—yet reflect—
You would strike vice with terror—tell me, then,

Would not the act of rash impetuous zeal,
Would not the example arm the ruffian's hand?
Thy virtue thus inflames thy generous ardour—
But oh! my brother, let it not be said,
That virtue ever held the murderer's knife!

Ter. Gods! have I ruined such unheard-of goodness?
Swift I'll dispatch a message to Paulinus,
And call his legions to assault the camp.

Enter TIGRANES, *and Guards.*

Tig. Guards, seize your prisoner—in a dungeon's gloom
Plunge him sequestered from the light of heaven.
Tis Pharasmanes' will——

Ter. Thou meddling fiend!
I will attend his steps; will still protect him
From men like thee——

Rhad. Should Pharasmanes dare
To violate the rights of public law,
Rome is at hand, and will have ample vengeance.
[*Exit with Teribazus.*

Tig. My thirst of vengeance shall be sated first.
Yes, guard him, prince; it makes thy ruin sure!
Thy Ariana, too, while fate is busy,
Shall meet her doom, and leave my road to glory
All smooth and level to ambition's wish.

Enter ZOPIRON.

Zop. 'Gainst Rome's ambassador, the king, Tigranes,
Suspends his sentence till his further orders.
The queen commands it, too.

Tig. The queen! what queen?

Zop. The beauteous Ariana; now your sovereign.

Tig. Has she relented? is she married to him?

Zop. She is—the scene with various passions burned!
Her tresses all unbound, with faded charms,
Yet lovely even in sorrow, through the ranks
Eager she flew, with shrieks, with outstretched arms,
Invoking every god! the wondering soldier,
With softened sinews, dropt the sword to earth,
And gazed, with mixed emotions, as she passed.
Prone to the ground, at Pharasmanes' feet
He fell—he raised her soon, and smiled consent—
To the king's tent she pressed with eager speed—
The exulting monarch called his priests around him,
And soon, with solemn march and festive song,
In his pavilion sought the blooming bride.

Tig. This sudden change, Zopiron, this rash haste,
Like it not.

Zop. Nor I, Tigranes: doubt,
Suspicion, fear, and wonder, and mistrust,
Rise in each anxious thought.

Tig. But, didst thou see
The ceremony closed?

Zop. I did: at first
All pale and trembling Ariana stood:
Then, more collected, with undaunted step,
She to the altar bore the nuptial cup.
There reverent bowed, and 'hear, ye gods!' she said,
'Hear! and record the purpose of my soul!'
With trembling lips then kissed the sacred vase,
And, as our country's solemn rites require,
Drank of the hallowed liquor. From her hand
The king received it, and, with eager joy,
As to his soul he took the nectared draught,
With stedfast eye she viewed him, whilst a smile
Of sickly joy gleamed faintly o'er her visage.

Tig. Well, she's our queen——the diadem is her's——

Zop. How long to wear it, Heaven alone can tell.

SCENE II.—*The back scene draws, and discovers the king's pavilion, with an altar, and fire blazing on it; soft music is played, and they come forward.*

Enter PHARASMENES *and* ZENOBIA.

Phar. At length my Ariana's soft compliance
Endears the present bliss, and gives an earnest
Of joy, to brighten a long train of years.

Zen. Alas! fond man expatiates oft in fancy,
Unconscious of the fates, and oft, in thought,
Anticipates a bliss he ne'er enjoys.

Phar. Away with gloomy care, for thou art mine;
Thou, Ariana! all our future days
Shall smile with gay, with ever-young desire,
And not a cloud o'er-cast the bright serene.

Zen. And does thy penetrating eye pervade
What time has yet in store?

Phar. Why dost thou ask?

Zen. I have been used to grief——release the Roman,
And give him hence safe conduct to his friends;
I then shall be at peace.

Phar. Beware, beware!
Nor rouse again the pangs, that fire a soul,
Which fiercely dosts like mine.

Zen. Dismiss him hence;
Give him his life—it was your marriage vow
He should not suffer—let me see him first;
Grant me one interview, one little hour;
In that poor space I can crowd all that's left me
Of love, and tenderness, and fond concern,
Before we part for ever—

Phar. Fond concern!
And love, and tenderness! and shall the Roman
Usurp a monarch's due? that look betrays
The secret workings of a heart estranged!
And shall the man, who dares dispute my love,
Shall the slave breathe a moment? Haste, Tigranes,

And see immediate execution on him.
[*Exit Tigranes.*
Zen. Oh! stay, Tigranes——barbarous man, recall
The horrid mandate——
Phar. By immortal love,
I see the slave still triumphs in your heart.
Zen. Oh! spare him, spare him! by the vital air,
By your own promised faith— [*Kneels to him.*
Phar. Since loved by thee,
His doom is doubly sealed.
Zen. You shall not fly me—
Now tear me, drag me, grovelling in the dust,
Tear off these hands—tear, tear me piece-meal first—
Phar. Nay, then, since force must do it—
[*Shakes her off.*
Zen. Barbarous tyrant!
[*She lies stretched on the ground.*
Phar. I go to see the minion of your heart
Expire in pangs before me—ha! what means
This more than winter's frost that chills my veins?
Zen. [*Looking up.*] That groan revives, and calls me back to life!
Phar. I cannot move—each vital function's lost—
The purple current of my blood is stopt—
I freeze—I burn—Oh! 'tis the stroke of death—
[*Falls on the ground.*
Zen. [*Rising.*] Yes, tyrant, yes; it is the stroke of death,
And I inflict it—I have done it all—
Phar. Pernicious traitress! thou!
Zen. My vengeance did it—
Zenobia's vengeance! 'tis Zenobia strikes!
Zenobia executes her justice on thee!
Phar. Oh! dire, accurst event! art thou Zenobia?
Zen. Yes, thou fell monster, know me for Zenobia!
Know, the ambassador is Rhadamistus!
Haste thee, Zopiron, and proclaim him king.
[*Exit Zopiron.*
Phar. May curses light upon thee——Oh! I die!
And racks and wheels disjoint me—
Zen. Writhe in torment,
In fiercer pangs than my dear father knew.
But I revenge his death—I dashed the cup
With precious poison!—[*A flourish of trumpets*]—ha! now, tyrant, wake,
And hear those sounds—my Rhadamistus reigns!
Phar. What, and no help! it is too late—the fates,
The fiends surround me—more than Ætna's fires
Burn in my veins—yet Heaven—no—'tis in vain—
I cannot rise—my crimes—my ten-fold crimes—
They pull me! oh!— [*Dies.*
Zen. There fled the guilty spirit!
Shade of my father, view your daughter now!
Behold her struggling in a righteous cause!
Behold her conquering in the tyrant's camp!
Behold your murderer levelled in the dust!
[*A second flourish of trumpets.*
Rhad. [*Within the scenes.*] Where is Zenobia?
Zen. Rhadamistus, here!

Enter RHADAMISTUS, TERIBAZUS, MEGISTUS, ZOPIRON, *&c.*

Rhad. Oh! let me, let me thus—thus pour my soul,
Thus speak my joy—thus melt within thy arms!
Zen. My lord! my life! my Rhadamistus! come,
Grow to my heart—that bounds and springs to meet thee.
Rhad. Once more revived, and snatched again from death,
Thus do I see thee? these are speechless joys,
And tears alone express them—
Zen. Have I saved thee?
All-gracious gods! 'tis rapture in the extreme!
Rhad. My sweet deliverer! my all of bliss!
Zen. Oh! it is joy too exquisite! and yet
Grief will embitter ecstacy like this!
There lies your father!
Rhad. All his crimes
Be buried with him! nature will have way,
And o'er his corse thus sheds the filial tear.
Ter. Oh! that my tears could wash away his stains!
Zen. Wilt thou forgive his murderer?
Rhad. For thee,
Beset with wrongs, and injured as thou wert,
In every region fame shall clap her wings,
And the recording muse applaud thy virtue.
Zen. If thou forgiv'st me, I am blessed indeed!
Now we shall part no more—Megistus, too!
Thou good old man! Let me embrace thee——Ha!
Meg. The blood forsakes her cheek—her eyes are fixed!
Zen. Support me—help me—Oh! I die—I die— [*Falls in Megistus' arms.*
Rhad. She faints—her colour dies. Revive, Zenobia!
Revive, my love! thy Rhadamistus thus,
Thus calls your fluttering spirit back to life!
Zen. It will not be—the toil of life is o'er—
My Rhadamistus— [*Sinks down on the ground.*
Rhad. Must I lose thee, then?
Zen. Oh! the envenomed cup! the marriage rites
Required that I should drink it first myself—
There was no other way—I did it freely
To save thy life—to save thee for my child.——
Rhad. Art thou a victim for a wretch like me?
Is there no antidote to stop the course
Of this vile poison?
Zen. None—it rages now—

It rages through my veins——my eyes grow dim——
They are lost in darkness—oh! I cannot see thee—
Where art thou, Rhadamistus? must I breathe
Longer in life, and never see thee more!
And are my eyes forbid one dear farewell?
Oh! cruel stars! must they not fix on thee
The last expiring glance?

Rhad. Relentless powers!
There lies Zenobia! round that pallid beauty
Call your ætherial host, each winged virtue;
Call every angel down; bid them behold
That matchless excellence, and then refuse
Soft pity if they can!

Zen. Megistus, seek my child,
And bring him to his father—Rhadamistus,
Wilt thou protect him? My sweet orphan-babe,
I leave thee, too!—oh!—train him up in virtue—
Wilt thou be fond of him—a mother's fondness
My child should meet—oh! raise me, Rhadamistus—
Give me thy hand—my little infant—Oh!—

[*Dies.*

Rhad. Tears, you do well to stop—your wretched drops
Are unavailing at a sight like this!
And art thou gone? ah! thus defaced and pale,
Thus do I see thee? is that ghastly form
All that is left me of thee? give me daggers,
Give me some instant means of death, my friends,
That I may throw this load of life away,
And let our hearts be both inurned together!

Ter. Live, live my brother, for your infant son—
Let him prevail——

Rhad. Inhuman that thou art!
Think you I'll stay imprisoned here in life,
When there—behold her—how she smiles in death!—
When there that form——think ye I'll linger here?
Dead, dead Zenobia! still I have thee thus—
You ne'er shall part us——this at least I'll hold,
And cling for ever to these pale, pale charms;
Here breathe my last, and, faithful still in death,
Love shall unite us in one peaceful grave.

Meg. Now, old Megistus, gods! has lived too long!

Ter. Bring every aid, all medicinal skill,
To call a wretched brother back to life,
And give each lenient balm to woes like his.
From thee, ambition, what misfortunes flow?
To thee, what varied ills weak mortals owe?
'Twas this for years laid desolate the land,
And armed against a son the father's hand;
To black despair poor lost Zenobia drove;
The hapless victim of disastrous love!——

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

GRECIAN DAUGHTER.

BY

MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DIONYSIUS, *usurper of Syracuse.*
EVANDER, *the deposed king.*
PHILOTAS, } *employed in guarding Evander.*
ARCAS, }
Greek Herald.
CALIPPUS, *partizan of the usurper.*
Greek Soldier.
Officer

WOMEN.

EUPHRASIA, *daughter of Evander.*
ERIXENE, *her attendant.*

Scene—Syracuse.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter MELANTHON *and* PHILOTAS.

Melan. YET, a moment; hear, Philotas, hear me.
Phil. No more; it must not be.
Melan. Obdurate man!
Thus wilt thou spurn me, when a king distressed,
A good, a virtuous, venerable king,
The father of his people, from a throne,
Which long, with every virtue he adorned,
Torn by a ruffian, by a tyrant's hand,
Groans in captivity? In his own palace
Lives a sequestered prisoner? Oh! Philotas,
If thou hast not renounced humanity,
Let me behold my sovereign; once again
Admit me to his presence; let me see
My royal master.
Phil. Urge thy suit no further;
Thy words are fruitless; Dionysius' orders
Forbid access; he is our sovereign now;
'Tis his to give the law, mine to obey.
Melan. Thou can'st not mean it: his to give the law!
Detested spoiler!—his! a vile usurper!
Have we forgot the elder Dionysius,
Surnamed the Tyrant? To Sicilia's throne
The monster waded through whole seas of blood.
Sore groaned the land beneath his iron rod,
Till, roused at length, Evander came from Greece,
Like Freedom's genius came, and sent the tyrant,
Stripped of the crown, and to his humble rank
Once more reduced, to roam, for vile subsistence,
A wandering sophist through the realms of Greece.
Phil. Melanthon, yes: full clearly I remember
The splendid day, when all rejoicing Sicily
Hailed her deliverer.
Melan. Shall the tyrant's son

Deduce a title from the father's guilt?
Philotas, thou wert once the friend of goodness;
Thou art a Greek; fair Corinth gave thee birth;
I marked thy growing youth; I need not tell,
With what an equal sway Evander reigned,
How just, how upright, generous, and good!
From every region bards and sages came;
Whate'er of science Egypt stored,
All that the east had treasured, all that Greece
Of mortal wisdom taught, and Plato's voice,
Was heard in Sicily. Shall Dionysius
Extinguish every virtue from the land,
Bow to his yoke the necks of freeborn men,
And here perpetuate a tyrant's reign?

Phil. Whate'er his right, to him, in Syracuse,
All bend the knee; his the supreme dominion,
And death and torment wait his sovereign nod.

Melan. But soon that power shall cease: behold his walls
Now close encircled by the Grecian bands;
Timoleon leads them on; indignant Corinth
Sends her avenger forth, arrayed in terror,
To hurl ambition from a throne usurped,
And bid all Sicily resume her rights.

Phil. Thou wert a statesman once, Melanthon; now,
Grown dim with age, thy eye pervades no more
The deep-laid schemes which Dionysius plans.
Know then, a fleet from Carthage even now
Stems the rough billow; and, ere yonder sun,
That, now declining, seeks the western wave,
Shall to the shades of night resign the world,
Thou'lt see the Punic sails in yonder bay,
Whose waters wash the walls of Syracuse.

Melan. Art thou a stranger to Timoleon's name?
Intent to plan, and circumspect to see
All possible events, he rushes on
Resistless in his course! Your boasted master
Scarce stands at bay; each hour the strong blockade
Hems him in closer, and, ere long, thou'lt view
Oppression's iron rod to fragments shivered!
The good Evander then——

Phil. Alas! Evander
Will ne'er behold the golden time you look for!

Melan. How! not behold it! Say, Philotas, speak;
Has the fell tyrant, have his felon murderers—

Phil. As yet, my friend, Evander lives.

Melan. And yet,
Thy dark half-hinted purpose—lead me to him;
If thou hast murdered him——

Phil. By Heaven, he lives!

Melan. Then bless me with one tender interview!
Thrice has the sun gone down, since last these eyes
Have seen the good old king; say, why is this?
Wherefore debarred his presence? Thee, Philotas,
The troops obey, that guard the royal prisoner;
Each avenue to thee is open; thou
Can'st grant admittance; let me, let me see him!

Phil. Entreat no more; the soul of Dionysius
Is ever wakeful; rent with all the pangs
That wait on conscious guilt.

Melan. But when dun night——

Phil. Alas! it cannot be: but mark my words,
Let Greece urge on her general assault.
Dispatch some friend, who may o'erleap the walls,
And tell Timoleon, the good old Evander
Has lived three days, by Dionysius' order,
Locked up from every sustenance of nature,
And life, now wearied out, almost expires.

Melan. If any spark of virtue dwells within thee,
Lead me, Philotas, lead me to his prison.

Phil. The tyrant's jealous care hath moved him thence.

Melan. Ha! moved him, say'st thou?

Phil. At the midnight hour,
Silent conveyed him up the steep ascent,
To where the elder Dionysius formed,
On the sharp summit of the pointed rock,
Which overhangs the deep, a dungeon drear:
Cell within cell, a labyrinth of horror,
Deep caverned in the cliff, where many a wretch,
Unseen by mortal eye, has groaned in anguish,
And died obscure, unpitied, and unknown.

Melan. Clandestine murderer! Yes, there's the scene
Of horrid massacre. Full oft I've walked,
When all things lay in sleep and darkness hushed.
Yes oft I've walked the lonely sullen beach,
And heard the mournful sound of many a corse
Plunged from the rock into the wave beneath,
That murmurs on the shore. And means he thus
To end a monarch's life? Oh! grant my prayer;
My timely succour may protect his days;
The guard is yours——

Phil. Forbear; thou plead'st in vain;
And though I feel soft pity throbbing here,
Though each emotion prompts the generous deed,
I must not yield; it were assured destruction.
Farewell! dispatch a message to the Greeks;
I'll to my station; now thou know'st the worst.
[*Exit.*

Melan. Oh, lost Evander! Lost Euphrasia too!
How will her gentle nature bear the shock
Of a dear father, thus in lingering pangs
A prey to famine, like the veriest wretch,
Whom the hard hand of misery hath griped!
In vain she'll rave with impotence of sorrow;
Perhaps provoke her fate: Greece arms in vain;
All's lost; Evander dies!

Enter CALIPPUS.

Cal. Where is the king?
Our troops, that sallied to attack the foe,
Retire disordered; to the eastern gate

The Greeks pursue; Timoleon rides in blood!
Arm, arm, and meet their fury.
Melan. To the citadel
Direct thy footsteps; Dionysius, there,
Marshals a chosen band.
Cal. Do thou call forth
Thy hardy veterans; haste, or all is lost! [*Exit.*
[*Warlike music.*
Melan. Now, ye just gods! now look propitious down;
Now give the Grecian sabre tenfold edge,
And save a virtuous king! [*Warlike music.*

Enter EUPHRASIA.

Euph. War on, ye heroes,
Ye great assertors of a monarch's cause!
Let the wild tempest rage. Melanthon, ha!
Did'st thou not hear the vast tremendous roar?
Down tumbling from its base, the eastern tower
Burst on the tyrant's ranks, and on the plain
Lies an extended ruin.
Melan. Still new horrors
Increase each hour, and gather round our heads.
Euph. The glorious tumult lifts my towering soul.
Once more, Melanthon, once again, my father
Shall mount Sicilia's throne.
Melan. Alas! that hour
Would come with joy to every honest heart,
Would shed divinest blessings from its wing;
But no such hour in all the round of time,
I fear, the fates averse will e'er lead on.
Euph. And still, Melanthon, still does pale despair
Depress thy spirit? Lo! Timoleon comes,
Armed with the power of Greece; the brave, the just,
God-like Timoleon! ardent to redress,
He guides the war, and gains upon his prey.
A little interval shall set the victor
Within our gates triumphant.
Melan. Still my fears
Forebode for thee. Would thou had'st left this place,
When hence your husband, the brave Phocion, fled,
Fled with your infant son!
Euph. In duty fixed,
Here I remained, while my brave generous Phocion
Fled with my child, and from his mother's arms
Bore my sweet little one. Full well thou know'st
The pangs I suffered in that trying moment.
Did I not weep? Did I not rave and shriek,
And by the roots tear my dishevelled hair?
Did I not follow to the sea-beat shore,
Resolved with him, and with my blooming boy,
To trust the winds and waves?
Melan. Deem not, Euphrasia,
I e'er can doubt thy constancy and love.
Euph. Melanthon, how I loved! the gods, who saw
Each secret image that my fancy formed,
The gods can witness how I loved my Phocion.
And yet I went not with him. Could I do it?
Could I desert my father? Could I leave
The venerable man, who gave me being,
A victim here in Syracuse, nor stay
To watch his fate, to visit his affliction,
To cheer his prison hours, and, with the tear
Of filial virtue, bid even bondage smile?
Melan. The pious act, whate'er the fates intend,
Shall merit heart-felt praise.
Euph. Yes, Phocion, go;
Go with my child, torn from this matron breast,
This breast that still should yield its nurture to him,
Fly with my infant to some happier shore.
If he be safe, Euphrasia dies content.
Till that sad close of all, the task be mine
To tend a father with delighted care,
To smooth the pillow of declining age,
See him sink gradual into mere decay.
On the last verge of life watch every look,
Explore each fond unutterable wish,
Catch his last breath, and close his eyes in peace.
Melan. I would not add to my afflictions; yet
My heart misgives; Evander's fatal period——
Euph. Still is far off; the gods have sent relief,
And once again I shall behold him king.
Melan. Alas! those glittering hopes but lead a ray
To gild the clouds, that hover o'er your head,
Soon to rain sorrow down, and plunge you deeper
In black despair.
Euph. The spirit-stirring virtue,
That glows within me, ne'er shall know despair.
No, I will trust the gods. Desponding man!
Hast thou not heard with what resistless ardour
Timoleon drives the tumult of the war?
Hast thou not heard him thundering at our gates?
The tyrant's pent up in his last retreat;
Anon thou'lt see his battlements in dust,
His walls, his ramparts, and his towers in ruin;
Destruction pouring in on every side;
Pride and oppression at their utmost need;
And nought to save him in his hopeless hour.
[*A flourish of trumpets.*
Melan. Ha! the fell tyrant comes—Beguile his rage,
And o'er your sorrows cast a dawn of gladness.

Enter DIONYSIUS, CALIPPUS, *Officers, &c.*

Dion. The vain, presumptuous Greek! his hopes of conquest,
Like a gay dream, are vanished into air.
Proudly elate, and flushed with easy triumph
O'er vulgar warriors, to the gates of Syracuse
He urged the war, till Dionysius' arm
Let slaughter loose, and taught his dastard train
To seek their safety by inglorious flight.

Euph. O Dionysius, if distracting fears
Alarm this throbbing bosom, you will pardon
A frail and tender sex. Should ruthless war
Roam through our streets, and riot here in blood,
Where shall the lost Euphrasia find a shelter?
In vain she'll kneel, and clasp the sacred altar.
O let me, then, in mercy, let me seek
The gloomy mansion, where my father dwells;
I die content, if in his arms I perish.

Dion. Thou lovely trembler, hush thy fears to rest.
The Greek recoils; like the impetuous surge
That dashes on the rock, there breaks, and foams,
And backward rolls into the sea again.
All shall be well in Syracuse: a fleet
Appears in view, and brings the chosen sons
Of Carthage. From the hill that fronts the main,
I saw their canvass swelling with the wind,
While on the purple wave the western sun
Glanced the remains of day.

Euph. Yet till the fury
Of war subside, the wild, the horrid interval,
In safety let me soothe to dear delight
In a loved father's presence: from his sight,
For three long days, with specious feigned excuse
Your guards debarred me. Oh! while yet he lives,
Indulge a daughter's love: worn out with age,
Soon must he seal his eyes in endless night,
And with his converse charm my ear no more.

Dion. Why thus anticipate misfortune? Still
Evander mocks the injuries of time.
Calippus, thou survey the city round;
Station the centinels, that no surprise
Invade the unguarded works, while drowsy night
Weighs down the soldier's eye. Afflicted fair,
Thy couch invites thee. When the tumult's o'er,
Thou'lt see Evander with redoubled joy.
Though now, unequal to the cares of empire,
His age sequester him, yet honours high
Shall gild the evening of his various day.

Euph. For this benignity, accept my thanks.
They gush in tears, and my heart pours its tribute.

Dion. Perdiccas, ere the morn's revolving light
Unveil the face of things, do thou dispatch
A well-oared galley to Hamilcar's fleet;
At the north point of yonder promontory,
Let some selected officer instruct him
To moor his ships, and issue on the land.
Then may Timoleon tremble: vengeance, then,
Shall overwhelm his camp, pursue his bands,
With fatal havock, to the ocean's margin,
And cast their limbs to glut the vulture's famine,
In mangled heaps, upon the naked shore.
[*Exit Dionysius.*

Euph. What do I hear? Melanthon, can it be?
If Carthage comes, if her perfidious sons
Jest in his cause, the dawn of freedom's gone.

Melan. Woe, bitterest woe impends; thou would'st not think———

Euph. How?—Speak! unfold!

Melan. My tongue denies its office.

Euph. How is my father? Say, Melanthon—

Melan. He,
I fear to shock thee with the tale of horror!
Perhaps he dies this moment. Since Timoleon
First formed his lines round this beleaguered city,
No nutriment has touched Evander's lips.
In the deep caverns of the rock imprisoned,
He pines in bitterest want.

Euph. To that abode
Of woe and horror, that last stage of life,
Has the fell tyrant moved him?

Melan. There sequestered,
Alas! he soon must perish.

Euph. Well, my heart,
Well do your vital drops forget to flow!

Melan. Enough his sword has reeked with public slaughter;
Now, dark insidious deeds must thin mankind.

Euph. Oh! night, that oft hast heard my piercing shrieks
Disturb thy awful silence; oft has heard
Each stroke these hands, in frantic sorrow, gave,
From this sad breast resounding; now no more
I mean to vent complaints; I mean not now
With busy memory to retrace the wrongs
The tyrant heaped on our devoted race.
I bear it all; with calmest patience bear it:
Resigned and wretched, desperate and lost.

Melan. Despair, alas! is all the sad resource
Our fate allows us now.

Euph. Yet, why despair?
Is that the tribute to a father due?
Blood is his due, Melanthon; yes, the blood,
The vile, black blood, that fills the tyrant's veins,
Would graceful look upon my dagger's point.
Come, Vengeance, come! shake off this feeble sex,
Sinew my arm, and guide it to his heart.
And thou, O filial piety! that rul'st
My woman's breast, turn to vindictive rage;
Assume the port of justice; shew mankind
Tyrannic guilt had never dared in Syracuse,
Beyond the reach of virtue.

Melan. Yet beware;
Controul this frenzy that bears down your reason.
Surrounded by his guards, the tyrant mocks
Your utmost fury; moderate your zeal,
Nor let him hear these transports of the soul,
These wild upbraidings.

Euph. Shall Euphrasia's voice
Be hushed to silence, when a father dies?
Shall not the monster hear his deeds accurst?
Shall he not tremble, when a daughter comes,
Wild with her griefs, and terrible with wrongs,
Fierce in despair, all nature, in her cause,
Alarmed and roused with horror? Yes, Melanthon!
The man of blood shall hear me; yes! my voice
Shall mount aloft upon the whirlwind's wing,

Pierce yon blue vault, and at the throne of Heaven
Call down red vengeance on the murderer's head.
Melanthon, come; my wrongs will lend me force;
The weakness of my sex is gone; this arm
Feels tenfold strength; this arm shall do a deed
For heaven and earth, for men and gods, to wonder at!
This arm shall vindicate a father's cause.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A wild romantic scene amidst overhanging rocks; a cavern on one side.*

ARCAS. [*With a spear in his hand.*]

THE gloom of night sits heavy on the world;
And o'er the solemn scene such stillness reigns,
As 'twere a pause of nature; on the beach
No murmuring billow breaks; the Grecian tents
Lie sunk in sleep; no gleaming fires are seen;
All Syracuse is hushed: no stir abroad,
Save ever and anon the dashing oar,
That beats the sullen wave. And hark!—Was that
The groan of anguish from Evander's cell,
Piercing the midnight gloom?—It is the sound
Of bustling prows, that cleave the briny deep.
Perhaps, at this dead hour, Hamilcar's fleet
Rides in the bay.

Enter PHILOTAS, *from the cavern.*

Phil. What ho! brave Arcas! ho!
Arc. Why thus desert thy couch?
Phil. Methought the sound
Of distant uproar chased affrighted sleep.
Arc. At intervals the oar's resounding stroke
Comes echoing from the main. Save that report,
A death-like silence through the wide expanse
Broods o'er the dreary coast.
Phil. Do thou retire,
And seek repose; the duty of thy watch
Is now performed; I take thy post.
Arc. How fares
Your royal prisoner?
Phil. Arcas, shall I own
A secret weakness? My heart inward melts
To see that suffering virtue. On the earth,
The cold, damp earth, the royal victim lies;
And while pale famine drinks his vital spirit,
He welcomes death, and smiles himself to rest.
Oh! would I could relieve him! Thou withdraw;
Thy wearied nature claims repose; and now
The watch is mine.
Arc. May no alarm disturb thee. [*Exit.*
Phil. Some dread event is labouring into birth.
At close of day the sullen sky held forth
Unerring signals. With disastrous glare
The moon's full orb rose crimsoned o'er with blood;
And lo! athwart the gloom a falling star
Trails a long tract of fire!—What daring step
Sounds on the flinty rock? Stand there! what ho!
Speak, ere thou dar'st advance! Unfold thy purpose:
Who and what art thou?

Enter EUPHRASIA, *bearing a light in her hand.*

Euph. Mine no hostile step;
I bring no valour to alarm thy fears:
It is a friend approaches.
Phil. Ha! what mean
Those plaintive notes?
Euph. Here is no ambushed Greek,
No warrior to surprise thee on the watch.
An humble suppliant comes: Alas! my strength,
Exhausted, quite forsakes this weary frame.
Phil. What voice thus piercing through the gleam of night—
What art thou? what thy errand? quickly say
What wretch, with what intent, at this dead hour
Wherefore alarm'st thou thus our peaceful watch?
Euph. Let no mistrust affright thee—Lo! a wretch,
The veriest wretch that ever groaned in anguish,
Comes here to grovel on the earth before thee,
To tell her sad, sad tale, implore thy aid—
For sure the power is thine, thou canst relieve
My bleeding heart, and soften all my woes.
Phil. Ha! sure those accents—
[*Takes the light from her.*
Euph. Deign to listen to me.
Phil. Euphrasia!——
Euph. Yes; the lost, undone Euphrasia;
Supreme in wretchedness; to the inmost sense,
Here in the quickest fibre of the heart,
Wounded, transfixed, and tortured to distraction.
Phil. Why, princess, thus anticipate the dawn?
Still sleep and silence wrap the weary world;
The stars in mid career usurp the pole;
The Grecian bands, the winds, the waves are hushed;
All things are mute around us; all but you
Rest in oblivious slumber from their cares.
Euph. Yes, all; all rest: the very murderer sleeps;
Guilt is at rest: I, only, wake to misery.
Phil. How did'st thou gain the summit of the rock?
Euph. Give me my father; here you hold him fettered;
Oh! give him to me!—in the fond pursuit
All pain and peril vanish; love and duty
Inspired the thought; despair itself gave courage;
I climbed the hard ascent; with painful toil
Surmounted craggy cliffs, and pointed rocks—
What will not misery attempt?—If ever
The touch of nature throbbed within your breast,

Admit me to Evander; in these caves
I know he pines in want; let me convey
Some charitable succour to a father!
Phil. Alas! Euphrasia, would I durst comply!
Euph. It will be virtue in thee. Thou, like me,
Wert born in Greece:—Oh! by our common parent—
Nay, stay; thou shalt not fly; Philotas, stay;
You have a father too; think, were his lot
Hard as Evander's, if by felon hands
Chained to the earth, with slow consuming pangs
He felt sharp want, and with an asking eye
Implored relief, yet cruel men denied it,
Wouldst thou not burst through adamantine gates,
Through walls and rocks, to save him? Think, Philotas,
Of thy own aged sire, and pity mine.
Think of the agonies a daughter feels,
When thus a parent wants the common food,
The bounteous hand of nature meant for all!
Phil. 'Twere best withdraw thee, princess; thy assistance
Evander wants not; it is fruitless all;
Thy tears, thy wild entreaties, are in vain.
Euph. Ha!—thou hast murdered him; he is no more;—
I understand thee;—butchers, you have shed
The precious drops of life; yet, e'en in death,
Let me behold him; let a daughter close,
With dutcous hand, a father's beamless eyes;
Print her last kisses on his honoured hand,
And lay him decent in he shroud of death!
Phil. Alas! this frantic grief can nought avail.
Retire, and seek the couch of balmy sleep,
In this dread hour, this season of repose.
Euph. And dost thou, then, inhuman that thou art,
Advise a wretch, like me, to know repose?
This is my last abode: these caves, these rocks,
Shall ring for ever with Euphrasia's wrongs;
All Sicily shall hear me; yonder deep
Shall echo back an injured daughter's cause;
Here will I dwell, and rave, and shriek, and give
These scattered locks to all the passing winds;
Call on Evander lost; and, pouring curses,
And cruel gods, and cruel stars invoking,
Stand on the cliff in madness and despair!
Phil. Yet calm this violence! reflect, Euphrasia,
With what severe enforcement Dionysius
Exacts obedience to his dread command.
If here thou'rt found——
Euph. Here is Euphrasia's mansion,
[*Falls upon the ground.*
Her fixed eternal home; inhuman savages,
Here stretch me with a father's murdered corse!
Then heap your rocks, your mountains on my head!
It will be kindness in you; I shall rest
Entombed within a parent's arms.
Phil. By heaven,
My heart in pity bleeds.
Euph. Talk'st thou of pity?
Yield to the generous instinct; grant my prayer;
Let my eyes view him, gaze their last upon him,
And shew you have some sense of human woe!
Phil. Her vehemence of grief o'erpowers me quite.
My honest heart condemns the barbarous deed,
And if I dare—
Euph. And, if you dare! Is that
The voice of manhood! Honest, if you dare!
'Tis the slave's virtue! 'tis the utmost limit
Of the base coward's honour. Not a wretch,
There's not a villain, not a tool of power,
But, silence interest, extinguish fear,
And he will prove benevolent to man.
The generous heart does more: will dare to all
That honour prompts. How dost thou dare to murder?
Respect the gods, and know no other fear.
Phil. No other fear assails this warlike breast.
I pity your misfortunes; yes, by Heaven,
My heart bleeds for you. Gods! you've touched my soul!
The generous impulse is not given in vain.
I feel thee, Nature, and I dare obey.
Oh! thou hast conquered. Go, Euphrasia, go,
Behold thy father.
Euph. Raise me, raise me up;
I'll bathe thy hand with tears, thou generous man!
Phil. Yet mark my words; if aught of nourishment
Thou wouldst convey, my partners of the watch
Will ne'er consent.
Euph. I will observe your orders:
On any terms, oh! let me, let me see him!
Phil. Yon lamp will guide thee through the caverned way.
Euph. My heart runs o'er in thanks; the pious act
Timoleon shall reward; the bounteous gods,
And thy own virtue, shall reward the deed.
[*Goes into the cave.*
Phil. Prevailing, powerful virtue! Thou subduest
The stubborn heart, and mould'st it to thy purpose.
Would I could save them! But though not for me
The glorious power to shelter innocence,
Yet for a moment to assuage its woes,
Is the best sympathy, the purest joy,
Nature intended for the heart of man,
When thus she gave the social generous tear.
]*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The inside of the cavern.*

Enter ARCAS *and* EUPHRASIA.

Arc. No; on my life I dare not.
Euph. But a small,
A wretched pittance; one poor cordial drop

To renovate exhausted drooping age.
I ask no more.
Arc. Not the smallest store
Of scanty nourishment must pass these walls.
Our lives were forfeit else: a moment's parley
Is all I grant; in yonder cave he lies.
Evan. [*Within the cell.*] Oh, struggling nature! let thy conflict end.
Oh! give me, give me rest.
Euph. My father's voice!
It pierces here! it cleaves my very heart.
I shall expire, and never see him more.
Arc. Repose thee, princess, here; [*Draws a couch.*] here rest thy limbs,
Till the returning blood shall lend thee firmness.
Euph. The caves, the rocks, re-echo to his groans!
And is there no relief?
Arc. All I can grant
You shall command. I will unbar the dungeon,
Unloose the chain that binds him to the rock,
And leave your interview without restraint.
[*Opens a cell in the back scene.*
Euph. Hold, hold, my heart! Oh! how shall I sustain
The agonizing scene? [*Rises.*] I must behold him;
Nature, that drives me on, will lend me force.
Is that my father?
Arc. Take your last farewell.
His vigour seems not yet exhausted quite.
You must be brief, or ruin will ensue? [*Exit.*
Evan. [*Raising himself.*] Oh! when shall I get free? These lingering pangs—
Euph. Behold, ye powers, that spectacle of woe!
Evan. Dispatch me, pitying gods, and save my child!
I burn, I burn; alas! no place of rest!
[*Rises and comes out.*
A little air; once more a breath of air;
Alas! I faint—I die.
Euph. Heart-piercing sight!
Let me support you, sir.
Evan. Oh! lend your arm.
Who'er thou art, I thank thee: that kind breeze
Comes gently o'er my senses; lead me forward:
And is there left one charitable hand
To reach its succours to a wretch like me?
Euph. Well may'st thou ask it. Oh, my breaking heart!
The hand of death is on him.
Evan. Still a little,
A little onward to the air conduct me;
'Tis well; I thank thee; thou art kind and good,
And much I wonder at this generous pity.
Euph. Dost thou not know me, sir?
Evan. Methinks I know
That voice: art thou—alas! my eyes are dim!
Each object swims before me; No, in truth
I do not know thee.
Euph. Not your own Euphrasia?
Evan. Art thou my daughter?
Euph. Oh, my honoured sire!
Evan. My daughter, my Euphrasia? come to close
A father's eyes! Given to my last embrace!
Gods! do I hold her once again? Your mercies
Are without number. [*Falls on the couch.*
This excess of bliss
O'erpowers; it kills; Euphrasia—could I hope it?
I die content. Art thou, indeed, my daughter?
Thou art; my hand is moistened with thy tears:
I pray you do not weep; thou art my child:
I thank you, gods! in my last dying moments
You have not left me. I would pour my praise;
But, oh, your goodness overcomes me quite!
You read my heart; you see what passes there.
Euph. Alas, he faints; the gushing tide of transport
Bears down each feeble sense: restore him, Heaven!
Evan. All, my Euphrasia, all will soon be well.
Pass but a moment, and this busy globe,
Its thrones, its empires, and its bustling millions,
Will seem a speck in the great void of space.
Yet while I stay, thou darling of my age!——
——Nay, dry those tears.
Euph. I will, my father.
Evan. Where,——
I fear to ask it——where is virtuous Phocion?
Euph. Fled from the tyrant's power.
Evan. And left thee here
Exposed and helpless?
Euph. He is all truth and honour:
He fled to save my child.
Evan. My young Evander!
Your boy is safe, Euphrasia? Oh, my heart!
Alas! quite gone; worn out with misery;
Oh, weak, decayed old man!
Euph. Inhuman wretches!
Will none relieve his want? A drop of water
Might save his life, and even that's denied him!
Evan. These strong emotions——Oh! that eager air—
It is too much—assist me; bear me hence,
And lay me down in peace.
Euph. His eyes are fixed!
And those pale quivering lips! He clasps my hand:
What, no assistance! monsters, will you thus
Let him expire in these weak feeble arms?

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. Those wild, those piercing shrieks will give the alarm!
Euph. Support him; bear him hence; 'tis all I ask.
Evan. [*As he is carried off.*] O death! where art thou? Death, thou dread of guilt!
Thou wish of innocence, affliction's friend,
Tired nature calls thee; come, in mercy come,
And lay me pillowed in eternal rest.

My child—where art thou? give me—reach thy hand—
Why dost thou weep? My eyes are dry—alas!
Quite parched, my lips——quite parched, they cleave together.
Euph. Now judge, ye powers, in the whole round of time,
f e'er you viewed a scene of woe like this!
[*Exeunt.*

Enter ARCAS.

Arc. The grey of morn breaks through yon eastern clouds.
Twere time this interview should end: the hour
Now warns Euphrasia hence: what man could dare,
have indulged—Philotas! ha! the cell
eft void! Evander gone! What may this mean?
'hilotas, speak!

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. Oh! vile, detested lot,
lere to obey the savage tyrant's will,
nd murder virtue, that can thus behold
ts executioner, and smile upon him.
'hat pitéous sight!
Arc. She must withdraw, Philotas;
)elay undoes us both. The restless main
ilows with the blush of day. Timoleon's fleet,
'hat passed the night in busy preparation,
lakes from the shore. On the high craggy point
)f yonder jutting eminence, I marked
'heir haughty streamers curling to the wind.
le seeks Hamilcar's fleet. The briny deep
hall soon be dyed with blood. The fierce alarm
Vill rouse our slumbering troops. The time requires,
Vithout or further pause, or vain excuse,
'hat she depart this moment.
Phil. Arcas, yes;
ly voice shall warn her of the approaching danger. [*Exit.*
Arc. Would she had ne'er adventured to our guard!
dread the event; and hark! the wind conveys
1 clearer sound the uproar of the main.
he fates prepare new havock; on the event
)epends the fate of empire. Wherefore thus
)elays Euphrasia? Ha! what means, Philotas,
'hat sudden haste, that pale disordered look?

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. Oh! I can hold no more; at such a sight
ven the hard heart of tyranny would melt
'o infant softness. Arcas, go, behold
he pious fraud of charity and love;
ehold that unexampled goodness;
ee the expedient sharp necessity has taught her;
'hy heart will burn, will melt, will yearn to view
A child like her.
Arc. Ha! Say what mystery
Wakes these emotions?
Phil. Wonder-working virtue!
The father fostered at his daughter's breast!
O, filial piety! The milk designed
For her own offspring, on the parent's lip
Allays the parching fever.
Arc. That device
Has she then formed, eluding all our care,
To minister relief!
Phil. On the bare earth
Evander lies; and as his languid powers
Imbibe with eager thirst the kind refreshment,
And his looks speak unutterable thanks,
Euphrasia views him with the tenderest glance,
Even as a mother doating on her child:
And, ever and anon, amidst the smiles
Of pure delight, of exquisite sensation,
A silent tear steals down; the tear of virtue,
That sweetens grief to rapture. All her laws
Inverted quite, great nature triumphs still.
Arc. The tale unmans my soul.
Phil. Ye tyrants, hear it!
And learn, that while your cruelty prepares
Unheard of torture, virtue can keep pace
With your worst efforts, and can try new modes,
To bid men grow enamoured of her charms.
Arc. Philotas, for Euphrasia, in her cause,
I now can hazard all. Let us preserve
Her father for her.
Phil. Oh! her lovely daring
Transcends all praise. By Heaven he shall not die!
Arc. And yet we must be wary; I will go forth,
And first explore each avenue around,
Lest the fixed centinel obstruct our purpose.
[*Exit.*
Phil. I thank thee, Arcas; we will act like men
Who feel for other woes—she leads him forth,
And tremblingly supports his drooping age.
[*Goes to assist him.*

Enter EUPHRASIA *and* EVANDER.

Evan. Euphrasia, oh, my child! returning life
Glows here about my heart. Conduct me forward:
At the last gasp preserved! Ha! dawning light!
Let me behold; in faith I see thee now;
I do indeed: the father sees his child!
Euph. I have relieved him—Oh! the joy's too great;
'Tis speechless rapture!
Evan. Blessings, blessings on thee!
Euph. My father still shall live. Alas! Philotas,
Could I abandon that white hoary head,
That venerable form! Abandon him
To perish here in misery and famine?
Phil. Thy tears, thou miracle of goodness!

Have triumphed o'er me; these round gushing drops
Attest your conquest. Take him, take your father;
Convey him hence; I do release him to you.
Evan. What said Philotas? Do I fondly dream?
Indeed my senses are imperfect; yet
Methought I heard him! Did he say, release me?
Phil. Thou art my king, and now no more my prisoner;
Go with your daughter, with that wondrous pattern
Of filial piety to after times.
Yes, princess, lead him forth; I'll point the path,
Whose soft declivity will guide your steps
To the deep vale, which these o'er-hanging rocks
Encompass round. You may convey him thence
To some safe shelter. Yet a moment's pause;
I must conceal your flight from every eye.
Yes, I will save them—Oh, returning virtue!
How big with joy one moment in thy service!
That wretched pair! I'll perish in their cause.
[*Exit.*
Evan. Whither, oh! whither shall Evander go?
I am at the goal of life; if in the race
Honour has followed with no lingering step,
But there sits smiling with her laurelled wreath
To crown my brow, there would I fain make halt,
And not inglorious lay me down to rest.
Euph. And will you then refuse, when thus the gods
Afford a refuge to thee?
Evan. Oh! my child!
There is no refuge for me.
Euph. Pardon, sir:
Euphrasia's care has formed a safe retreat;
There may'st thou dwell; it will not long be wanted.
Soon shall Timoleon, with resistless force,
Burst yon devoted walls.
Evan. Timoleon!
Euph. Yes,
The brave Timoleon, with the power of Greece;
Another day shall make the city his.
Evan. Timoleon come to vindicate my rights!
Oh! thou shalt reign in Sicily! my child
Shall grace her father's throne. Indulgent Heaven!
Pour down your blessings on this best of daughters;
To her and Phocion give Evander's crown;
Let them, oh! let them both in virtue wear it,
And in due time transmit it to their boy!

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. All things are apt; the drowsy centinel
Lies hushed in sleep; I'll marshal thee the way
Down the steep rock.
Euph. Oh! let us quickly hence!
Evan. The blood but loiters in these frozen veins.
Do you, whose youthful spirit glows with life,
Do you go forth and leave this mouldering corpse.
To me had Heaven decreed a longer date,
It ne'er had suffered a fell monster's reign,
Nor let me see the carnage of my people.
Farewell, Euphrasia; in one loved embrace
To these remains pay the last obsequies,
And leave me here to sink to silent dust.
Euph. And will you, then, on self-destruction bent,
Reject my prayer, nor trust your fate with me?
Evan. Trust thee, Euphrasia? Trust in thee, my child?
Though life's a burden I could well lay down,
Yet I will prize it, since bestowed by thee.
Oh! thou art good; thy virtue soars a flight
For the wide world to wonder at; in thee—
Hear it all nature, future ages hear it—
The father finds a parent in his child! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A rampart near the harbour.*

Enter MELANTHON *and* PHILOTAS.

Melan. AND lives he still?
Phil. He does; and kindly aliment
Renews the springs of life.
Melan. And doth he know
The glorious work the destinies prepare?
Phil. He is informed of all.
Melan. That Greek Timoleon
Comes his deliverer, and the fell usurper
Pants in the last extreme?
Phil. The glorious tidings
Have reached his ear.
Melan. Lead on, propitious powers,
Your great design! second the Grecian arms,
And whelm the sons of Carthage in the deep.
Phil. This hour decides their doom; and lo! Euphrasia
Stands on the jutting rock, that rock, where oft
Whole days she sat in pensive sorrow fixed,
And swelled, with streaming tears, the restless deep.
There, now with other sentiments elate,
She views Timoleon, with victorious prow,
Glide through the waves, and sees the scattered navy
Of Carthage fly before him.
Melan. Blest event!
Evander, if thou mock'st me not, shall live

Once more to see the justice of the gods.
But wilt thou still protect my royal master?
Wilt thou admit me to his wished-for presence?

Phil. Let it suffice that no assassin's aim
Can now assault him: I must hence, Melanthon;
I now must mingle with the tyrant's train,
And, with a semblance of obsequious duty,
Delude suspicion's eye: My friend, farewell.
[*Exit.*

Melan. If he deceive me not with specious hopes,
I shall behold the sovereign, in whose service
These temples felt the iron casque of war,
And these white hairs have silvered o'er my head.

Enter EUPHRASIA.

Euph. See there; behold them; lo! the fierce encounter!
He rushes on; the ocean flames around
With the bright flash of arms; the echoing hills
Rebellow to the roar.

Melan. The gods are with us,
And victory is ours.

Euph. High on the stern
The Grecian leaders stand: they stem the surge;
Launched from their arm the missive lightnings fly,
And the Barbaric fleet is wrapt in fire.
And lo! yon bark, down in the roaring gulph;
And there, more, more are perishing—Behold!
They plunge, for ever lost.

Melan. So perish all,
Who from yon continent unfurl their sails,
To shake the freedom of this sea-girt isle!

Euph. Did I not say, Melanthon, did I not
Presage the glories of Timoleon's triumph!
Where now are Afric's sons? The vanquished tyrant
Shall look aghast; his heart shall shrink appalled,
And dread his malefactions! Worse than famine,
Despair shall fasten on him!

Enter DIONYSIUS, CALIPPUS, *&c.*

Dion. Base deserters!
Curse on their Punic faith! Did they once dare
To grapple with the Greek? Ere yet the main
Was tinged with blood, they turned their ships averse.
May storms and tempests follow in their rear,
And dash their fleet upon the Libyan shore!

Enter CALIPPUS.

Cal. My liege, Timoleon, where the harbour opens,
Has stormed the forts, and even now his fleet
Pursues its course, and steers athwart the bay.

Dion. Ruin impends; and yet, if fall it must,
I bear a mind to meet it, undismayed,
Unconquered even by fate.

Cal. Through every street
Despair and terror fly. A panic spreads
From man to man, and superstition sees
Jove armed with thunder, and the gods against us.

Dion. With sacred rites their wrath must be appeased.
Let instant victims at the altar bleed;
Let incense roll its fragrant clouds to heaven,
And pious virgins, and the matron train,
In slow procession to the temple bear
The image of their gods.

Euph. Ha!—Does the tyrant
Dare, with unhallowed step, with crimes and guilt,
Approach the sacred fane?—Alas! my father,
Where now thy sanctuary? What place shall hide
Thy persecuted virtue? [*Aside.*

Dion. Thou, Euphrasia,
Lead forth the pious band. This very moment
Issue our orders.

Euph. With consenting heart,
Euphrasia goes to waft her prayers to Heaven.
[*Exit.*

Dion. The solemn sacrifice, the virgin throng,
Will gain the popular belief, and kindle
In the fierce soldiery religious rage.
Away, my friends, prepare the sacred rites.
[*Exit Calippus, &c.*
Philotas, thou draw near: how fares your prisoner?
Has he yet breathed his last?

Phil. Life ebbs apace;
To-morrow's sun sees him a breathless corse.

Dion. Curse on his lingering pangs! Sicilia's crown
No more shall deck his brow; and if the sand
Still loiter in the glass, thy hand, my friend,
May shake it thence.

Phil. It shall, dread sir; that task
Leave to thy faithful servant.

Dion. Oh! Philotas,
Thou little know'st the cares, the pangs of empire.
The ermined pride, the purple, that adorns
A conqueror's breast, but serves, my friend, to hide
A heart that's torn, that's mangled with remorse.
Each object round me wakens horrid doubts;
The flattering train, the centinel that guards me,
The slave that waits, all give some new alarm,
And from the means of safety dangers rise.
Even victory itself plants anguish here,
And round my laurels the fell serpent twines.

Phil. Would Dionysius abdicate his crown,
And sue for terms of peace?

Dion. Detested thought!
No, though ambition teem with countless ills,
It still has charms of power to fire the soul.
Though horrors multiply around my head,
I will oppose them all. The pomp of sacrifice,
But now ordained, is mockery to Heaven.
'Tis vain, 'tis fruitless; then let daring guilt

Be my inspirer, and consummate all.
Where are those Greeks, the captives of my sword,
Whose desperate valour rushed within our walls,
Fought near our person, and the pointed lance
Aimed at my breast?

Phil. In chains they wait their doom.

Dion. Give me to see them; bring the slaves before me.

Phil. What, ho! Melanthon! this way lead your prisoners.

Enter MELANTHON, *with* PHOCION, *disguised as a Greek Officer, and Soldiers.*

Dion. Assassins, and not warriors! do ye come,
When the wide rage of battle claims your sword,
Thus do you come against a single life
To wage the war? Did not our buckler ring
With all your darts, in one collected volley,
Showered on my head? Did not your swords at once
Point at my breast, and thirst for regal blood?

Greek Offi. We sought thy life. I am by birth a Greek.
An open foe, in arms, I meant to slay
The foe of human kind. With rival ardour
We took the field; one voice, one mind, one heart;
All leagued, all covenanted: in yon camp
Spirits there are who aim, like us, at glory.
Whene'er you sally forth, whene'er the Greeks
Shall scale your walls, prepare thee to encounter
A like assault. By me the youth of Greece
Thus notify the war they mean to wage.

Dion. Thus, then, I warn them of my great revenge.
Whoe'er in battle shall become our prisoner,
In torment meets his doom.

Greek Offi. Then wilt thou see
How vile the body to a mind that pants
For genuine glory. Twice three hundred Greeks
Have sworn, like us, to hunt thee through the ranks;
Ours the first lot; we've failed; on yonder plain
Appear in arms, the faithful band will meet thee.

Dion. Vile slave, no more. Melanthon, drag them hence
To die in misery. Impaled alive,
The winds shall parch them on the craggy cliff.
Selected from the rest, let one depart
A messenger to Greece, to tell the fate
Her chosen sons, her first adventurers met.
[*Exit.*

Melan. Unhappy men! how shall my care protect
Your forfeit lives? Philotas, thou conduct them
To the deep dungeon's gloom. In that recess,
Midst the wild tumult of eventful war,
We may ward off the blow. My friends, farewell:
That officer will guide your steps.
[*All follow Philotas, except Phocion.*

Pho. Disguised
Thus in a soldier's garb, he knows me not.
Melanthon!

Melan. Ha!—Those accents!—Phocion here?

Pho. Yes, Phocion here! Speak, quickly tell me, say,
How fares Euphrasia?

Melan. Ha! beware—Philotas,
Conduct those prisoners hence; this soldier here
Shall bear the tidings to Timoleon's camp.

Pho. Oh! satisfy my doubts; how fares Euphrasia?

Melan. Euphrasia lives, and fills the anxious moments
With every virtue. Wherefore venture hither?
Why with rash valour penetrate our gates?

Pho. Could I refrain? Oh! could I tamely wait
The event of lingering war? With patience count
The lazy-pacing hours, while here in Syracuse
The tyrant keeps all that my heart holds dear?
For her dear sake, all dangers sink before me;
For her I burst the barriers of the gate,
Where the deep caverned rocks afford a passage.
A hundred chosen Greeks pursued my steps;
We forced an entrance; the devoted guard
Fell victims to our rage; but, in that moment,
Down from the walls superior numbers came.
The tyrant led them on. We rushed upon him,
If we could reach his heart, to end the war.
But Heaven thought otherwise. Melanthon, say—
I fear to ask it—lives Evander still?

Melan. Alas! he lives, imprisoned in the rock.
Thou must withdraw thee hence; regain once more
Timoleon's camp; alarm his slumbering rage;
Assail the walls; thou, with thy phalanx, seek
The subterraneous path; that way at night
The Greeks may enter, and let in destruction
To the great work of vengeance.

Pho. Wouldst thou have me
Basely retreat, while my Euphrasia trembles
Here on the ridge of peril? She, perhaps,
May fall unknown, unpitied, undistinguished,
Amidst the general carnage. Shall I leave her
To add that beauty to the purple heap?
No; I will seek her in these walls accurst,
Even in the tyrant's palace; save that life,
My only source of joy; that life, whose loss
Would make all Greece complotter in a murder,
And damn a righteous cause.

Melan. Yet hear the voice
Of sober age. Should Dionysius' spies
Detect thee here, ruin involves us all:
'Twere best retire, and seek Timoleon's tents;
Tell him, dismay and terror fill the city;
Even now in Syracuse the tyrant's will
Ordains with pomp oblations to the gods.
His deadly hand still hot with recent blood,
The monster dares approach the sacred altar:
Thy voice may rouse Timoleon to the assault,
And bid him storm the works.

Pho. By heaven I will;
My breath shall wake his rage; this very night,
When sleep sits heavy on the slumbering city,
Then Greece unsheathes her sword, and great revenge
Shall stalk with death and horror o'er the ranks
Of slaughtered troops, a sacrifice to freedom!
But first let me behold Euphrasia.
Melan. Hush
Thy pent up valour: to a secret haunt
I'll guide thy steps: there dwell, and in apt time
I'll bring Euphrasia to thy longing arms.
Pho. Wilt thou?
Melan. By Heaven I will; another act
Of desperate fury might endanger all.
The tyrant's busy guards are posted round;
In silence follow; thou shalt see Euphrasia.
Pho. Oh! lead me to her; that exalted virtue
With firmer nerve shall bid me grasp the javelin,
Shall bid my sword, with more than lightning's swiftness,
Blaze in the front of war, and glut its rage
With blows repeated in the tyrant's veins.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Temple, with a monument in the middle.*

Enter EUPHRASIA, ERIXENE, *and other female attendants.*

Euph. This way, my virgins, this way bend your steps.
O! the sad sepulchre, where, hearsed in death,
The pale remains of my dear mother lie.
There, while the victims at yon altar bleed,
And with your prayers the vaulted roof resounds,
There, let me pay the tribute of a tear,
A weeping pilgrim o'er Eudocia's ashes.
Erix. Forbear, Euphrasia, to renew your sorrows.
Euph. My tears have dried their source; then let me here
Pay this sad visit to the honoured clay
That moulders in the tomb. These sacred viands
I'll burn, an offering to a parent's shade,
And sprinkle with this wine the hallowed mould.
That duty paid, I will return, my virgins.
[*She goes into the tomb.*
Erix. Look down, propitious powers! behold that virtue,
And heal the pangs that desolate her soul.

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. Mourn, mourn, ye virgins; rend your scattered garments;
Some dread calamity hangs o'er our heads.
In vain the tyrant would appease with sacrifice
The impending wrath of ill-requited Heaven.
Ill omens hover o'er us: at the altar
The victim dropt, ere the divining seer
Had gored his knife. The brazen statues tremble,
And from the marble drops of blood distil.
Erix. Now, ye just gods, if vengeance you prepare,
Now find the guilty head!
Phil. Amidst the throng
A matron labours with the inspiring god;
She stares, she raves, and, with no mortal sound,
Proclaims around—'Where, Phœbus, am I borne?
'I see their glittering spears; I see them charge;
'Bellona wades in blood; that mangled body,
'Deformed with wounds and weltering in its gore,
'I know it well; Oh! close the dreadful scene!
'Relieve me, Phœbus! I have seen too much.'
Erix. Alas! I tremble for Evander's fate.
Avert the omen, gods, and guard his life!

Enter EUPHRASIA *from the tomb.*

Euph. Virgins, I thank you—Oh! more lightly now
My heart expands; the pious act is done,
And I have paid my tribute to a parent.
Ah! wherefore does the tyrant bend this way?
Phil. He flies the altar; leaves the unfinished rites.
No God there smiles propitious on his cause.
Fate lifts the awful balance; weighs his life,
The lives of numbers, in the trembling scale.
Euph. Despair and horror mark his haggard looks,
His wild, disordered step—He rushes forth;
Some new alarm demands him! Even now
He issues at yon portal! Lo! see there,
The suppliant crowd disperses; wild with fear,
Distraction in each look, the wretched throng
Pours through the brazen gates.—Do you retire,
Retire, Philotas; let me here remain,
And give the moments of suspended fate
To pious worship and to filial love.
Phil. Alas! I fear to yield: awhile I'll leave thee,
And at the temple's entrance wait thy coming.
[*Exit.*
Euph. Now, then, Euphrasia, now thou may'st indulge
The purest ecstacy of soul. Come forth,
Thou man of woe, thou man of every virtue!

Enter EVANDER *from the monument.*

Evan. And does the grave thus cast me up again,
With a fond father's love to view thee? Thus
To mingle rapture in a daughter's arms?
Euph. How fares my father now?
Evan. Thy aid, Euphrasia,
Has given new life. Thou, from this vital stream
Derivest thy being; with unheard-of duty
Thou hast repaid it to thy native source.
Euph. Sprung from Evander, if a little portion

Of all his goodness dwell within my heart,
Thou wilt not wonder.
Evan. Joy and wonder rise
In mixed emotions! Though departing hence,
After the storms of a tempestuous life,
Though I was entering the wished-for port,
Where all is peace, all bliss, and endless joy,
Yet here contented I can linger still,
To view thy goodness, and applaud thy deeds,
Thou author of my life! Did ever parent
Thus call his child before? My heart's too full;
My old fond heart runs o'er; it aches with joy.
Euph. Alas, too much you over-rate your daughter;
Nature and duty called me—Oh! my father,
How didst thou bear thy long, long sufferings? How
Endure their barbarous rage?
Evan. My foes but did
To this old frame, what Nature's hand must do.
In the worst hour of pain, a voice still whispered me,
Rouse thee, Evander; self-acquitting conscience
Declares thee blameless, and the gods behold thee.
I was but going hence, by mere decay,
To that futurity which Plato taught,
Where the immortal spirit views the planets
Roll round the mighty year, and, wrapt in bliss,
Adores the ideas of the eternal mind.
Thither, oh! thither was Evander going,
But thou recall'st me; thou!
Euph. Timoleon too
Invites thee back to life.
Evan. And does he still
Urge on the siege?
Euph. His active genius comes
To scourge a guilty race. The Punic fleet,
Half lost, is swallowed by the roaring sea.
The shattered refuse seek the Libyan shore,
To bear the news of their defeat to Carthage.
Evan. These are thy wonders, Heaven! Abroad thy spirit
Moves o'er the deep, and mighty fleets are vanished.
Euph. Ha!—hark!—what noise is that? It comes this way;
Some busy footstep beats the hallowed pavement.
Oh! Sir, retire—Ye powers!—Philotas!—ha!

Enter PHILOTAS.

Phil. For thee, Euphrasia, Dionysius calls.
Some new suspicion goads him. At yon gate
I stopt Calippus, as with eager haste
He bent this way to seek thee.—Oh! my sovereign,
My king, my injured master, will you pardon
The wrongs I've done thee? [*Kneels to Evander.*
Evan. Virtue such is thine,
From the fierce trial of tyrannnic power,
Shines forth with added lustre.
Phil. Oh! forgive
My ardent zeal; there is no time to waste.
You must withdraw; trust to your faithful friends.
Pass but another day, and Dionysius
Falls from a throne usurped.
Evan. But ere he pays
The forfeit of his crimes, what streams of blood
Shall flow in torrents round! Methinks I might
Prevent this waste of nature—I'll go forth,
And to my people shew their rightful king.
Euph. Banish that thought; forbear; the rash attempt
Were fatal to our hopes; oppressed, dismayed,
The people look aghast, and, wan with fear,
None will espouse your cause.
Evan. Yes, all will dare
To act like men;—their king, I gave myself
To a whole people. I made no reserve;
My life was theirs; each drop about my heart
Pledged to the public cause; devoted to it:
That was my compact; is the subject's less?
If they are all debased, and willing slaves,
The young but breathing to grow grey in bondage,
And the old sinking to ignoble graves,
Of such a race no matter who is king.
And yet I will not think it; no! my people
Are brave and generous; I will trust their valour.
Euph. Yet stay; yet be advised.
Phil. As yet, my liege,
No plan is fixed, and no concerted measure.
The fates are busy: wait the vast event.
Trust to my truth and honour. Witness, gods,
Here, in the temple of Olympian Jove,
Philotas swears——
Evan. Forbear: the man like thee,
Who feels the best emotions of the heart,
Truth, reason, justice, honour's fine excitements,
Acts by those laws, and wants no other sanction.
Euph. Again the alarm approaches; sure destruction
To thee, to all, will follow:—hark! a sound
Comes hollow murmuring through the vaulted aisle.
It gains upon the ear. Withdraw, my father!
All's lost if thou art seen.
Phil. And, lo! Calippus
Darts with the lightning's speed across the aisle.
Evan. Thou at the senate-house convene my friends.
Melanthon, Dion, and their brave associates,
Will shew that liberty has leaders still.
Anon I'll meet them there: my child, farewell;
Thou shalt direct me now.
Euph. Too cruel fate!
The tomb is all the mansion I can give;
My mother's tomb! [*Evander enters the tomb.*
Phil. You must be brief; the alarm
Each moment nearer comes. In every sound
Destruction threatens. Ha! by Heaven this way
Calippus comes——Let me retard his speed.
[*Exit.*

Euph. [*Coming forward.*] How my distracted heart throbs wild with fear!
What brings Calippus? wherefore? save me Heaven!

Enter CALIPPUS.

Cal. This sullen musing in these drear abodes
Alarms suspicion: the king knows thy plottings,
Thy rooted hatred to the state and him.
His sovereign will commands thee to repair,
This moment, to his presence.

Euph. Ha! what means
The tyrant!——I obey [*Exit Calippus*] and, oh! ye powers,
Ye ministers of Heaven! defend my father;
Support his drooping age; and when anon
Avenging justice shakes her crimson steel,
Oh! be the grave, at least, a place of rest;
That, from his covert in the hour of peace,
Forth he may come to bless a willing people,
And be your own just image here on earth.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter MELANTHON *and* PHILOTAS.

Mel. AWAY! no more; pernicious, vile dissembler!
Phil. Wherefore this frantic rage?
Melan. Thou canst not varnish,
With thy perfidious arts, a crime like this.
I climbed the rugged cliff; but, oh! thou traitor,
Where is Evander! Through each dungeon's gloom
I sought the good old king: the guilt is thine;
May vengeance wait thee for it!
Phil. Still, Melanthon,
Let prudence guide thee.
Melan. Thou hast plunged thee down
Far as the lowest depth of hell-born crimes;
Thou hast out-gone all registers of guilt;
Beyond all fable hast thou sinned, Philotas.
Phil. By Heaven thou wrong'st me: didst thou know, old man——
Melan. Could not his reverend age, could not his virtue,
His woes unnumbered, soften thee to pity?
Thou hast destroyed my king.
Phil. Yet wilt thou hear me?
Your king still lives.
Melan. Thou vile deceiver!—Lives!
But where! Away; no more. I charge thee, leave me.
Phil. We have removed him to a sure asylum.
Melan. Removed!—Thou traitor! what dark privacy——
Why move him thence? The vile assassin's stab
Has closed his days—calm, unrelenting villain!
I know it all.
Phil. By every power above,
Evander lives; in safety lives. Last night,
When in his dark embrace sleep wrapt the world,
Euphrasia came, a spectacle of woe;
Dared to approach our guard, and with her tears,
With vehemence of grief, she touched my heart.
I gave her father to her.
Melan. How, Philotas!
If thou dost not deceive me——
Phil. No, by Heaven!
By every power above—But hark! those notes
Speak Dionysius near: anon, my friend,
I'll tell thee each particular; thy king,
Mean while, is safe—but lo! the tyrant comes;
With guilt like his I must equivocate,
And teach even truth and honour to dissemble.

Enter DIONYSIUS, CALIPPUS, *&c.*

Dion. Away each vain alarm; the sun goes down,
Nor yet Timoleon issues from his fleet.
There let him linger on the wave-worn beach;
Here, the vain Greek shall find another Troy,
A more than Hector here. Though Carthage fly,
Ourself, still Dionysius here remains.
And means the Greek to treat of terms of peace?
By Heaven, this panting bosom hoped to meet
His boasted phalanx on the embattled plain.
And doth he now, on peaceful councils bent,
Dispatch his herald?—Let the slave approach.

Enter the Herald.

Dion. Now, speak thy purpose; what doth Greece impart?
Her. Timoleon, sir, whose great renown in arms
Is equalled only by the softer virtues
Of mild humanity, that sway his heart,
Sends me, his delegate, to offer terms,
On which even foes may well accord; on which
The fiercest nature, though it spurn at justice,
May sympathise with his.
Dion. Unfold thy mystery;
Thou shalt be heard.
Her. The generous leader sees,
With pity sees, the wild destructive havock
Of ruthless war; he hath surveyed around
The heaps of slain that cover yonder field,
And, touched with generous sense of human woe,
Weeps o'er his victories.
Dion. Your leader weeps!
Then, let the author of those ills thou speak'st of,
Let the ambitious factor of destruction,

Timely retreat, and close the scene of blood.
Why doth affrighted peace behold his standard
Upreared in Sicily? and wherefore here
The iron ranks of war, from which the shepherd
Retires appalled, and leaves the blasted hopes
Of half the year, while closer to her breast
The mother clasps her infant?

Her. 'Tis not mine
To plead Timoleon's cause; not mine the office
To justify the strong, the righteous motives,
That urge him to the war: the only scope
My deputation aims at, is, to fix
An interval of peace, a pause of horror,
That they, whose bodies on the naked shore
Lie weltering in their blood, from either host
May meet the last sad rites to nature due,
And decent lie in honourable graves.

Dion. Go tell your leader, his pretexts are vain.
Let him, with those that live, embark for Greece,
And leave our peaceful plains; the mangled limbs
Of those he murdered, from my tender care
Shall meet due obsequies.

Her. The hero, sir,
Wages no war with those, who bravely die.
'Tis for the dead I supplicate; for them
We sue for peace: and to the living, too,
Timoleon would extend it; but the groans
Of a whole people have unsheathed his sword.
A single day will pay the funeral rites.
To-morrow's sun may see both armies meet
Without hostility, and all in honour;
You, to inter the troops, who bravely fell;
We, on our part, to give an humble sod
To those, who gained a footing on the isle,
And by their death have conquered.

Dion. Be it so;
I grant thy suit: soon as to-morrow's dawn
Illume the world, the rage of wasting war
In vain shall thirst for blood: but mark my words;
If the next orient sun behold you here,
That hour shall see me, terrible in arms,
Deluge yon plain, and let destruction loose.
Thou know'st my last resolve, and now, farewell.
Some careful officer conduct him forth.

[*Exit Herald.*

By Heaven, the Greek hath offered to my sword
An easy prey; a sacrifice to glut
My great revenge. Calippus, let each soldier,
This night, resign his wearied limbs to rest,
That ere the dawn, with renovated strength,
On the unguarded, unsuspecting foe,
Disarmed, and bent on superstitious rites,
From every quarter we may rush undaunted,
Give the invaders to the deathful steel,
And, by one carnage, bury all in ruin.
My valiant friends, haste to your several posts,
And let this night a calm unruffled spirit
Lie hushed in sleep: away, my friends, disperse!
Philotas, waits Euphrasia, as we ordered?

Phil. She's here at hand.

Dion. Admit her to our presence.
Rage and despair, a thousand warring passions,
All rise, by turns, and piecemeal rend my heart.
Yet every means, all measures must be tried,
To sweep the Grecian spoiler from the land,
And fix the crown, unshaken, on my brow.

Enter EUPHRASIA.

Euph. What sudden cause requires Euphrasia's presence?

Dion. Approach, fair mourner, and dispel thy fears.
Thy grief, thy tender duty to thy father,
Has touched me nearly. In his lone retreat,
Respect, attendance, every lenient care
To soothe affliction, and extend his life,
Evander has commanded.

Euph. Vile dissembler!
Detested homicide! [*Aside.*]—And has thy heart
Felt for the wretched?

Dion. Urgencies of state
Abridged his liberty; but, to his person
All honour hath been paid.

Euph. The righteous gods
Have marked thy ways, and will in time repay
Just retribution.

Dion. If to see your father,
If here to meet him in a fond embrace,
Will calm thy breast, and dry those beauteous tears,
A moment more shall bring him to your presence.

Euph. Ha! lead him hither! Sir, to move him now,
Aged, infirm, worn out with toil and years—
No, let me seek him rather—If soft pity
Has touched your heart, oh! send me, send me to him!

Dion. Controul this wild alarm; with prudent care
Philotas shall conduct him; here I grant
The tender interview.

Euph. Disastrous fate!
Ruin impends!—This will discover all;
I'll perish first; provoke his utmost rage. [*Aside.*
Though much I languish to behold my father,
Yet now it were not fit—the sun goes down;
Night falls apace; soon as returning day—

Dion. This night, this very hour, you both must meet.
Together, you may serve the state and me.
Thou see'st the havock of wide wasting war;
And more, full well you know, are still to bleed.
Thou may'st prevent their fate.

Euph. Oh! give the means,
And I will bless thee for it.

Dion. From a Greek,
Torments have wrung the truth. Thy husband, Phocion—

Euph. Oh! say, speak of my Phocion!

Dion. He; 'tis he
Hath kindled up this war; with treacherous arts
Inflamed the states of Greece, and now the traitor
Comes, with a foreign aid, to wrest thy crown.

Euph. And does my Phocion share Timoleon's glory?
Dion. With him invests our walls, and bids rebellion
Erect her standard here.
Euph. Oh! bless him, gods!
Where'er my hero treads the paths of war,
List on his side; against the hostile javelin
Uprear his mighty buckler; to his sword
Lend the fierce whirlwind's rage, that he may come
With wreaths of triumph, and with conquest crowned,
And his Euphrasia spring with rapture to him,
Melt in his arms, and a whole nation's voice
Applaud my hero with a love like mine!
Dion. Ungrateful fair! Has not our sovereign will
On thy descendants fixed Sicilia's crown?
Have I not vowed protection to your boy?
Euph. From thee the crown! From thee! Euphrasia's children
Shall on a nobler basis found their rights;
On their own virtue, and a people's choice.
Dion. Misguided woman!
Euph. Ask of thee protection!
The father's valour shall protect his boy.
Dion. Rush not on sure destruction; ere too late,
Accept our proffered grace. The terms are these:
Instant send forth a message to your husband;
Bid him draw off his Greeks, unmoor his fleet,
And measure back his way. Full well he knows
You and your father are my hostages;
And for his treason both may answer.
Euph. Think'st thou, then,
So meanly of my Phocion?——Dost thou deem him
Poorly wound up to a mere fit of valour,
To melt away in a weak woman's tear?
Oh! thou dost little know him: know'st but little
Of his exalted soul. With generous ardour
Still will he urge the great, the glorious plan,
And gain the ever honoured, bright reward,
Which fame entwines around the patriot's brow,
And bids for ever flourish on his tomb,
For nations freed, and tyrants laid in dust.
Dion. By Heaven! this night Evander breathes his last!
Euph. Better for him to sink at once to rest,
Than linger thus beneath the gripe of famine,
In a vile dungeon, scooped, with barbarous skill,
Deep in the flinty rock; a monument
Of that fell malice, and that black suspicion,
That marked your father's reign; a dungeon drear
Prepared for innocence!—Vice lived secure,
It flourished, triumphed, grateful to his heart;
'Twas virtue only could give umbrage; then,
In that black period, to be great and good
Was a state crime; the powers of genius, then,
Were a constructive treason.
Dion. Ha! beware,
Nor with vile calumny provoke my rage.
Euph. Whate'er was laudable, whate'er was worthy,
Sunk under foul oppression; freeborn men
Were torn in private from their household gods,
Shut from the light of heaven in caverned cells,
Chained to the grunsel edge, and left to pine
In bitterness of soul; while, in the vaulted roof,
The tyrant sat, and, through a secret channel,
Collected every sound; heard each complaint
Of martyred virtue; kept a register
Of sighs and groans by cruelty extorted;
Noted the honest language of the heart;
Then on the victims wreaked his murderous rage,
For yielding to the feelings of their nature.
Dion. Obdurate woman! obstinate in ill!
Here ends all parley. Now your father's doom
Is fixed, irrevocably fixed.
Euph. Thy doom, perhaps,
May first be fixed: the doom that ever waits
The fell oppressor, from a throne usurped
Hurled headlong down. Think of thy father's fate
At Corinth, Dionysius!
Dion. Ha! this night
Evander dies; and thou, detested fair!
Thou shalt behold him, while inventive cruelty
Pursues his wearied life through every nerve.
I scorn all dull delay. This very night
Shall sate my great revenge. [*Exit.*
Euph. This night, perhaps,
Shall whelm thee down, no more to blast creation.
My father, who inhabit'st with the dead,
Now let me seek thee in the lonely tomb,
And tremble there with anxious hope and fear.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The inside of the Temple.*

Enter PHOCION *and* MELANTHON.

Pho. Each step I move, a grateful terror shakes
My frame to dissolution.
Melan. Summon all
Thy wonted firmness; in that dreary vault
A living king is numbered with the dead.
I'll take my post, near where the pillared aisle
Supports the central dome, that no alarm
Surprise you in the pious act. [*Exit.*
Pho. If here
They both are found; if, in Evander's arms,
Euphrasia meets my search, the fates atone
For all my sufferings, all afflictions past.
Yes, I will seek them—ha!—the gaping tomb
Invites my steps—Now be propitious, Heaven!
[*He enters the tomb.*

Enter EUPHRASIA.

Euph. All hail, ye caves of horror!——In this gloom
Divine content can dwell, the heartfelt tear,
Which, as it falls, a father's trembling hand
Will catch, and wipe the sorrows from my eye.

Thou Power supreme! whose all pervading mind
Guides this great frame of things; who now beholdst me,
Who, in that cave of death, art full as perfect
As in the gorgeous palace, now, while night
Broods o'er the world, I'll to thy sacred shrine,
And supplicate thy mercies to my father.
Who's there?—Evander?—Answer—tell me—speak——

Enter PHOCION, *from the Tomb.*

Pho. What voice is that?—Melanthon!
Euph. Ha! those sounds——
Speak of Evander! tell me that he lives,
Or lost Euphrasia dies.
Pho. Heart-swelling transport!
Art thou Euphrasia? 'Tis thy Phocion, love;
Thy husband comes.
Euph. Support me! reach thy hand!
Pho. Once more I clasp her in this fond embrace!
Euph. What miracle has brought thee to me?
Pho. Love
Inspired my heart, and guided all my ways.
Euph. Oh! thou dear wanderer! But wherefore here?
Why in this place of woe? My tender little one,
Say, is he safe? oh! satisfy a mother;
Speak of my child, or I grow wild at once!
Tell me his fate, and tell me all thy own.
Pho. Your boy is safe, Euphrasia; lives to reign
In Sicily; Timoleon's generous care
Protects him in his camp; dispel thy fears;
The gods once more will give him to thy arms.
Euph. My father lives sepulchred, ere his time,
Here in Eudocia's tomb; let me conduct thee.
Pho. I came this moment thence.
Euph. And saw Evander?
Pho. Alas! I found him not.
Euph. Not found him there?
And have they, then—have the fell murderers—
Oh! [*Faints away.*
Pho. I've been too rash; revive, my love, revive!
Thy Phocion calls; the gods will guard Evander,
And save him, to reward thy matchless virtue.

Enter EVANDER *and* MELANTHON.

Evan. Lead me, Melanthon, guide my aged steps:
Where is he? Let me see him.
Pho. My Euphrasia!
Thy father lives!—Thou venerable man!
Behold—I cannot fly to thy embrace!
Euph. These agonies must end me; ah, my father!
Again I have him; gracious Powers! again
I clasp his hand, and bathe it with my tears!
Evan. Euphrasia! Phocion too! Yes, both are here;
Oh! let me thus, thus strain you to my heart.
Pho. Protected by a daughter's tender care,
By my Euphrasia saved! That sweet reflection
Exalts the bliss to rapture.
Euph. Why, my father,
Why thus adventure forth? The strong alarm
O'erwhelmed my spirits.
Evan. I went forth, my child,
When all was dark, and awful silence round,
To throw me prostrate at the altar's foot,
And crave the care of Heaven for thee and thine.
Melanthon there——

Enter PHILOTAS.

Euph. Philotas! ha! what means——
Phil. Inevitable ruin hovers o'er you!
The tyrant's fury mounts into a blaze;
Unsated yet with blood, he calls aloud
For thee, Evander; thee his rage hath ordered
This moment to his presence.
Evan. Lead me to him:
His presence hath no terror for Evander.
Euph. Horror! it must not be.
Phil. No; never, never!
I'll perish rather. But the time demands
Our utmost vigour; with the lightning's speed
Decisive, rapid. With the scorpion stings
Of conscience lashed, despair and horror seize him,
And guilt but serves to goad his tortured mind
To blacker crimes. His policy has granted
A day's suspense from arms; yet even now
His troops prepare, in the dead midnight hour,
With base surprise, to storm Timoleon's camp.
Evan. And doth he grant a false, insidious truce,
To turn the hour of peace to blood and horror?
Euph. I know the monster well: when specious seeming
Becalms his looks, the rankling heart within
Teems with destruction. Like our mount Ætna,
When the deep snows invest his hoary head,
And a whole winter gathers on his brow,
Looking tranquillity; even then, beneath,
The fuelled entrails summon all their rage,
Till the affrighted shepherd round him sees
The sudden ruin, the vulcano's burst,
Mountains hurled up in air, and molten rocks,
And all the land with desolation covered.
Melan. Now, Phocion, now, on thee our hope depends.
Fly to Timoleon; I can grant a passport:
Rouze him to vengeance; on the tyrant turn
His own insidious arts, or all is lost.
Pho. Evander, thou, and thou, my best Euphrasia,
Both shall attend my flight.
Melan. It were in vain;
The attempt would hazard all.
Euph. Together, here,
We will remain, safe in the cave of death;
And wait our freedom from thy conquering arm.

Evan. Oh! would the gods roll back the stream of time,
And give this arm the sinew that it boasted
At Tauromenium, when its force resistless
Mowed down the ranks of war; I then might guide
The battle's rage, and, ere Evander die,
Add still another laurel to my brow.
Euph. Enough of laurelled victory your sword
Hath reaped in earlier days.
Evan. And shall my sword,
When the great cause of liberty invites,
Remain inactive, unperforming quite?
Youth, second youth rekindles in my veins:
Though worn with age, this arm will know its office;
Will shew that victory has not forgot
Acquaintance with this hand. And yet—O shame!
It will not be: the momentary blaze
Sinks, and expires: I have survived it all;
Survived my reign, my people, and myself.
Euph. Fly, Phocion, fly; Melanthon will conduct thee.
Melan. And when the assault begins, my faithful cohorts
Shall form their ranks around this sacred dome.
Pho. And my poor captive friends, my brave companions
Taken in battle, wilt thou guard their lives?
Melan. Trust to my care: no danger shall assail them.
Pho. By Heaven, the glorious expectation swells
This panting bosom! Yes, Euphrasia, yes;
Awhile I leave you to the care of Heaven.
Fell Dionysius, tremble! ere the dawn
Timoleon thunders at your gates; the rage,
The pent-up rage of twenty thousand Greeks,
Shall burst at once, and the tumultuous roar
Alarm the astonished world. The brazen gates
Asunder shall be rent; the towers, the ramparts,
Shall yield to Grecian valour; death and rage
Through the wide city's round shall wade in gore,
And guilty men awake to gasp their last.
Melanthon, come.
Evan. Yet, ere thou goest, young man,
Attend my words: though guilt may oft provoke,
As now it does, just vengeance on its head,
In mercy punish it. The rage of slaughter
Can add no trophy to the victor's triumph;
Bid him not shed unnecessary blood.
Conquest is proud, inexorable, fierce;
It is humanity ennobles all.
So thinks Evander, and so tell Timoleon.
Pho. Farewell; the midnight hour shall give you freedom.
[*Exit with Melanthon and Philotas.*
Euph. Ye guardian deities, watch all his ways.
Evan. Come, my Euphrasia, in this interval
Together we will seek the sacred altar,
And thank the god, whose presence fills the dome,
For the best gift his bounty could bestow,
The virtue he has given thee; there we will pour
Our hearts in praise, in tears of adoration,
For all the wondrous goodness lavished on us.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter DIONYSIUS *and* CALIPPUS,

Dion. ERE the day closed, while yet the busy eye
Might view their camp, their stations, and their guards,
Their preparations for approaching night,
Didst thou then mark the motions of the Greeks?
Cal. From the watch-tower I saw them: all things spoke
A foe secure, and discipline relaxed.
Their arms thrown idly by, the soldiers strayed
To one another's tents; their steeds no more
Stood near at hand caparisoned for war;
And from the lines numbers poured out, to see
The spot where the besieged had sallied forth,
And the fierce battle raged; to view the slain,
That lie in heaps upon the crimson beach.
There, the fond brother, the afflicted father,
And the friend, sought some vestige of the face
Of him who died in battle; night came on;
Some slowly gained their tents: dispersed around
Whole parties loitered, touched with deep regret;
War, and its train of duties, all forgot.
Dion. Their folly gives them to my sword; are all
My orders issued?
Cal. All.
Dion. The troops retired,
To gain recruited vigour from repose?
Cal. The city round lies hushed in sleep.
Dion. Anon
Let each brave officer, of chosen valour,
Forsake his couch, and, with deliberate spirit,
Meet at the citadel. An hour at farthest
Before the dawn, 'tis fixed to storm their camp;
And whelm their men, their arms, and steeds and tents,
In one prodigious ruin. Haste, Calippus,
Fly to thy post, and bid Euphrasia enter.
[*Exit Calippus.*
Evander dies this night: Euphrasia, too,
Shall be disposed of. Curse on Phocion's fraud,
That from my power withdrew their infant boy.
In him the seeds of future kings were crushed,
And the whole hated line at once extinguished.

Enter EUPHRASIA.

Dion. Once more approach and hear me; 'tis not now
A time to waste in the vain war of words.
A crisis big with horror is at hand.
I meant to spare the stream of blood, that soon
Shall deluge yonder plains. My fair proposals
Thy haughty spirit has with scorn rejected.
And now, by Heaven, here, in thy very sight,
Evander breathes his last.

Euph. The truce you have granted,
Suspends the rage of war: mean time, send forth
The orators of peace with olive crowned.
Timoleon, good and just, and ever willing
To conquer rather by persuasive truth,
Than by devouring slaughter, will agree
In friendly parley to assert his rights,
And compromise the war.

Dion. And must I sue
For terms of peace? To an invader sue?
Since you, the fiend of Syracuse and Greece,
Since you thus urge me on to desperate daring,
Your father first—of him I'll be assured—
Your father meets his fate.

Euph. If yet there's wanting
A crime to fill the measure of thy guilt,
Add that black murder to the dreadful list;
With that complete the horrors of thy reign.

Dion. Woman, beware: Philotas is at hand,
And to our presence leads Evander. All
Thy dark complottings, and thy treacherous arts,
Have proved abortive.

Euph. Ha! What new event?
And is Philotas false? Has he betrayed him?
[*Aside.*

Dion. Evander's doom is sealed—What, ho! Philotas;
Now shalt thou see him die in pangs before thee.

Enter PHILOTAS.

Euph. How my heart sinks within me!

Dion. Where's your prisoner?

Phil. Evander is no more.

Dion. Ha! death has robbed me
Of half my great revenge.

Phil. Worn out with anguish,
I saw life ebb apace. With studied art,
We gave each cordial drop, alas! in vain;
He heaved a sigh; invoked his daughter's name,
Smiled, and expired.

Dion. Bring me his hoary head.

Phil. You'll pardon, sir, my over-hasty zeal.
I gave the body to the foaming surge,
Down the steep rock, despised.

Dion. Now rave and shriek,
And rend your scattered hair. No more Evander
Shall sway Sicilia's sceptre.

Euph. Mighty gods!
The hardened heart, the man elate with pride,
View with compassion! To the bad extend
Some portion of your mercy; crimes and blood
Have made their souls a seat of desolation,
Of woe, despair, and horror! Turn to them
An eye of pity: whom your bounty formed
To truth, to goodness, and to generous deeds,
On them no more from your bright stores of bliss
You need dispense: their virtue will support them.

Dion. Now, then, thou feelest my vengeance.

Euph. Glory in it;
Exult and triumph. The worst shaft is sped.
Yet still the unconquered mind with scorn can view thee;
With the calm sunshine of the breast can see
Thy power unequal to subdue the soul,
Which virtue formed, and which the gods protect.

Dion. Philotas, bear her hence; she shall not live.
This moment bear her hence; you know the rest.
Go, see our will obeyed; that done, with all
A warrior's speed, attend me at the citadel;
There meet the heroes, whom this night shall lead
To freedom, victory, to glorious havoc,
And the destruction of the Grecian name. [*Exit.*

Euph. Accept my thanks, Philotas; generous man!
These tears attest the emotions of my heart.
But oh! should Greece defer——

Phil. Dispel thy fears;
Phocion will bring relief; or should the tyrant
Assault their camp, he'll meet a marshalled foe.
Let me conduct thee to the silent tomb.

Euph. Ah! there Evander, naked and disarmed,
Defenceless quite, may meet some ruffian stroke.

Phil. Lo! here's a weapon: bear this dagger to him.
In the drear monument should hostile steps
Dare to approach him, they must enter singly;
This guards the passage; man by man they die.
There may'st thou dwell amidst the wild commotion.

Euph. Ye pitying gods, protect my father there! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Citadel.*

CALIPPUS *and several Officers.*

1*st. Offi.* What new event thus summons us together?

Cal. 'Tis great occasion calls; Timoleon's ardour
Comes rushing on; his works rise high in air,
Advance each day, and tower above our walls.
One brave exploit may free us—Lo! the king.

Enter DIONYSIUS.

Dion. Ye brave associates, who so oft have shared
Our toil and danger in the field of glory,
My fellow-warriors, what no god could promise,
Fortune hath given us. In his dark embrace
Lo! sleep envelops the whole Grecian camp.
Against a foe, the outcasts of their country,
Freebooters roving in pursuit of prey,
Success by war, or covert stratagem,
Alike is glorious. Then, my gallant friends,
What need of words? The generous call of freedom,
Your wives, your children, your invaded rights,
All that can steel the patriot breast with valour,
Expands and rouses in the swelling heart.
Follow the impulsive ardour; follow me,
Your king, your leader; in the friendly gloom
Of night, assault their camp; your country's love,
And fame eternal, shall attend the men,
Who marched through blood and horror, to redeem,
From the invader's power, their native land.

Cal. Lead to the onset; Greece shall find we bear
Hearts prodigal of blood, when honour calls,
Resolved to conquer or to die in freedom.

Dion. Thus I've resolved: when the declining moon
Hath veiled her orb, our silent march begins.
The order thus:—Calippus, thou lead forth
Iberia's sons, with the Numidian bands,
And line the shore. Perdiccas, be it thine
To march thy cohorts to the mountain's foot,
Where the wood skirts the valley; there make halt,
Till brave Amyntor stretch along the vale.
Ourself, with the embodied cavalry
Clad in their mailed cuirass, will circle round
To where their camp extends its furthest line;
Unnumbered torches there shall blaze, at once,
The signal of the charge; then, oh! my friends,
On every side let the wild uproar loose;
Bid massacre and carnage stalk around,
Unsparing, unrelenting; drench your swords
In hostile blood, and riot in destruction.

Enter an Officer.

Ha! speak; unfold thy purpose.

Offi. Instant arm;
To arms, my liege; the foe breaks in upon us;
The subterraneous path is theirs; that way
Their band invades the city, sunk in sleep.

Dion. Treason's at work; detested, treacherous villains!
Is this their promised truce? Away, my friends,
Rouse all the war; fly to your several posts,
And instant bring all Syracuse in arms.
[*Exeunt.—Warlike music.*

Enter MELANTHON.

Cal. Melanthon, now collect your faithful bands.

Melan. Do thou pursue the king; attend his steps:
Timoleon lords it in the captive city.
[*Exit Calippus.*

Enter PHILOTAS.

Melan. Philotas, vengeance has begun its work.

Phil. The gods have sent relief; dismay, and terror,
And wild amaze, and death in every shape,
Fill the affrighted city.

Melan. Tyrant, now
The inevitable hour of fate is come.
Philotas, round the dome that holds Evander
We will arrange our men; there fix our post,
And guard that spot, till, like some god, Timoleon
Still the wild uproar, and bid slaughter cease.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter DIONYSIUS.

Dion. Why sleep the coward slaves? All things conspire;
The gods are leagued; I see them raze my towers
My walls and bulwarks fall; and Neptune's trident
From its foundation heaves the solid rock.
Pallas directs the storm; her gorgon shield
Glares in my view, and from the fleet she calls
Her Greeks enraged. In arms I'll meet them all.
What, ho! my guards; arise, or wake no more.

Enter CALIPPUS.

Cal. This way, my liege; our friends, a valiant band,
Assemble here.

Dion. Give me to meet the Greek!
Our only safety lies in brave despair. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The inside of the temple. A monument in the middle.*

Enter EUPHRASIA, ERIXENE, *and female Attendants.*

Euph. Which way, Erixene, which way, my virgins,
Shall we direct our steps? What sacred altar
Clasp on our knees?

Erix. Alas! the horrid tumult
Spreads the destruction wide. On every side
The victor's shouts, the groans of murderde wretches,
In wild confusion rise. Once more descend
Eudocia's tomb; there thou may'st find a shelter.

Euph. Anon, Erixene, I mean to visit,
Perhaps, for the last time, a mother's urn.

This dagger there, this instrument of death,
Should fortune prosper the fell tyrant's arms,
This dagger, then, may free me from his power,
And that drear vault intomb us all in peace.
[*Puts up the dagger.*
Hark! how the uproar swells! Alas! what numbers
In Dionysius' cause shall yield their throats
To the destructive sword! Aloft I climbed
The temple's vaulted roof; the scene beneath
Is horrible to sight; the domes and palaces
Blaze to the sky; and where the flames forbear,
The Greeks, enraged, brandish the gleaming sword.
From the high roofs, to shun the raging fire,
Wretches precipitate their fall. But, oh!
No pause, no mercy; to the edge of the sword
They give their bodies; butchered, gashed with wounds,
They die in mangled heaps, and, with their limbs,
Cover the sanguine pavement.
Erix. Hark!
Euph. The din
Of arms with clearer sound advances. Hark!
That sudden burst! Again! They rush upon us!
The portal opens; lo! see there; behold!
War, horrid war invades the sacred fane;
No altar gives a sanctuary now. [*Warlike music.*

Enter DIONYSIUS *and* CALIPPUS, *with several Soldiers.*

Dion. Here will I mock their siege; here stand at bay,
And brave them to the last.
Cal. Our weary foes
Desist from the pursuit.
Dion. Though all betray me,
Though every god conspire, I will not yield.
If I must fall, the temple's ponderous roof,
The mansion of the gods combined against me,
Shall first be crushed, and lie in ruin with me.
Euphrasia here! Detested, treacherous woman!
For my revenge preserved! By Heaven 'tis well;
Vengeance awaits thy guilt, and this good sword
Thus sends thee to atone the bleeding victims,
This night has massacred.
Cal. [*Holding Dionysius's arm.*] My liege, forbear;
Her life preserved may plead your cause with Greece,
And mitigate your fate.
Dion. Presumptuous slave!
My rage is up in arms; by Heaven she dies!

Enter EVANDER *from the tomb.*

Evan. Horror! forbear! Thou murderer, hold thy hand!
The gods behold thee, horrible assassin!
Restrain the blow; it were a stab to Heaven;
All nature shudders at it! Will no friend
Arm, in a cause like this, a father's hand?
Strike at this bosom rather. Lo! Evander
Prostrate and grovelling on the earth before thee;
He begs to die; exhaust the scanty drops
That lag about his heart; but spare my child!
Dion. Evander!—Do my eyes once more behold him?
May the fiends seize Philotas! Treacherous slave!
'Tis well thou liv'st; thy death were poor revenge
From any hand but mine. [*Offers to strike.*
Euph. No, tyrant, no;
[*Rushing before Evander.*
I have provoked your vengeance; through this bosom
Open a passage; first on me, on me
Exhaust your fury; every power above
Commands thee to respect that aged head;
His withered frame wants blood to glut thy rage;
Strike here; these veins are full; here's blood enough;
The purple tide will gush to glad thy sight.
Dion. Amazement blasts and freezes every power!
They shall not live. Ha! the fierce tide of war
[*A flourish of trumpets.*
This way comes rushing on.
[*Goes to the stop of the stage.*
Euph. [*Embracing Evander.*] Oh! thus, my father,
We'll perish thus together.
Dion. Bar the gates;
Close every passage, and repel their force.
Evan. And must I see thee bleed? Oh! for a sword!
Bring, bring me daggers!
Dion. [*Advancing*] Guards, seize the slave,
And give him to my rage.
Evan. [*Seized by the guards.*] Oh! spare her, spare her!
Inhuman villains!
Euph. Now, one glorious effort!
Dion. Let me dispatch; thou traitor, thus my arm——
Euph. A daughter's arm, fell monster, strikes the blow. [*Stabs him.*
Yes, first she strikes; an injured daughter's arm
Sends thee devoted to the infernal gods.
[*He falls.*
Dion. Detested fiend! Thus by a woman's hand!
Euph. Yes, tyrant, yes; in a dear father's cause,
A woman's vengeance towers above her sex.
Dion. May curses blast thy arm! May Ætna's fires
Convulse the land; to its foundation shake
The groaning isle! May civil discord bear
Her flaming brand through all the realms of Greece;
And the whole race expire in pangs like mine!
[*Dies.*
Euph. Behold, all Sicily, behold! The point
Glows with the tyrant's blood. Ye slaves, [*To the guards.*] look there!

Kneel to your rightful king: the blow for freedom
Gives you the rights of men! And oh! my father,
My ever honoured sire, it gives thee life.
Evan. My child! my daughter! saved again by thee! [*Embraces her.*

A flourish of Trumpets.—Enter PHOCION, MELANTHON, PHILOTAS, *&c.*

Pho. Now, let the monster yield. My best Euphrasia!
Euph. My lord! my Phocion! welcome to my heart.
o! there the wonders of Euphrasia's arm!
Pho. And is the proud one fallen! The dawn shall see him
spectacle for public view. Euphrasia!
vander too! Thus to behold you both——
Evan. To her direct thy looks; there fix thy praise,
nd gaze with wonder there. The life I gave her,
h, she has used it for the noblest ends!
o fill each duty; make her father feel
he purest joy, the heart-dissolving bliss
o have a grateful child. But has the rage
f slaughter ceased?
Pho. It has.
Evan. Where is Timoleon?
Pho. He guards the citadel; there gives his orders
To calm the uproar, and recall from carnage
His conquering troops.
Euph. Oh! once again, my father,
Thy sway shall bless the land. Not for himself
Timoleon conquers; to redress the wrongs
Of bleeding Sicily the hero comes.
Thee, good Melanthon, thee, thou generous man,
His justice shall reward. Thee, too, Philotas,
Whose sympathizing heart could feel the touch
Of soft humanity, the hero's bounty,
His brightest honours, shall be lavished on thee.
Evander, too, will place thee near his throne;
And shew mankind, even on this shore of being,
That virtue still shall meet its sure reward.
Phil. I am rewarded: feelings such as mine
Are worth all dignities; my heart repays me.
Evan. Come, let us seek Timoleon; to his care
I will commend ye both: for now, alas!
Thrones and dominions now no more for me.
To thee I give my crown: yes, thou, Euphrasia,
Shall reign in Sicily. And oh! ye powers,
In that bright eminence of care and peril,
Watch over all her ways; conduct and guide
The goodness you inspired; that she may prove,
If e'er distress like mine invade the land,
A parent to her people; stretch the ray
Of filial piety to times unborn,
That men may hear her unexampled virtue,
And learn to emulate THE GRECIAN DAUGHTER!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

MATILDA.

BY

FRANKLIN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
MORCAR, *earl of Mercia.*	MATILDA, *a prisoner in the camp of Morcar.*
EDWIN, *earl of Northumberland.*	BERTHA, *her friend.*
SIWARD, *Morcar's friend.*	
Officers, &c.	

Scene—Morcar's camp, and the environs near Nottingham.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Matilda's tent, with a view of the distant country.*

MATILDA, BERTHA.

Mat. I thank thee, gentle Bertha, for thy goodness;
If aught could soothe the anguish of my soul,
Or raise it, from the horrors of despair,
To hope and joy, 'twould be thy generous friendship:
But I am sunk so deep in misery,
That comfort cannot reach me.
Ber. Talk not thus,
My sweet Matilda; innocence, like thine,
Must be the care of all-directing Heaven.
Already hath the interposing hand
Of Providence redeemed thee from the rage
Of savage war, and sheltered thee within
This calm asylum. Mercia's potent earl,
The noble Morcar, will protect thy virtues;
And, if I err not, wishes but to share
His conquests with thee.
Mat. O my friend, oft times
The flowery path, that tempts our wandering steps,
But leads to misery; what thou fondly deem'st
My soul's best comfort, is its bitterest woe.
Earl Morcar loves me. To the generous mind
The heaviest debt is that of gratitude,
When 'tis not in our power to repay it.
Ber. Oft have I heard thee say, to him thou owest
Thy honour and thy life.
Mat. I told thee truth.
Beneath my father's hospitable roof
I spent my earlier, happier days, in peace
And safety: When the Norman conqueror came,
Discord, thou know'st, soon lit her fatal torch,
And spread destruction o'er this wretched land.
The loyal Ranulph flew to William's aid,
And left me to a faithful peasant's care,
Who lived, sequestered, in the fertile plains
Of rich Northumbria: There, awhile, I dwelt
In sweet retirement, when the savage Malcolm
Rushed on our borders.
Ber. I remember well
The melancholy hour. Confusion raged
On every side, and desolation spread
Its terrors round us. How didst thou escape?
Mat. A crew of desperate ruffians seized upon me,
A helpless prey: For, O! he was not there,
Who best could have defended his Matilda.
Then had I fallen a wretched sacrifice

To brutal rage, and lawless violence,
Had not the generous Morcar interposed
To save me: Though he joined the guilty cause
Of foul rebellion, yet his soul abhorred
Such violation. At his awful voice,
The surly ruffians left me, and retired.
He bore me, half expiring, in his arms,
Back to his tent; with every kind attention
There strove to soothe my griefs, and promised, soon
As fit occasion offered, to restore me
To my afflicted father.

Ber. Something, sure,
Was due to generous Morcar for his aid,
So timely given.

Mat. No doubt: But mark what followed.
In my deliverer, too soon I found
An ardent lover, sighing at my feet.

Ber. And what is there the proudest of our sex
Could wish for more? To be the envied bride
Of noble Morcar, first of England's peers
In fame and fortune.

Mat. Never trust, my Bertha,
To outward shew. 'Tis not the smiles of fortune,
The pomp of wealth, or splendour of a court,
Can make us happy. In the mind alone
Rests solid joy, and true felicity,
Which I can never taste: For, oh, my friend!
A secret sorrow weighs upon my heart.

Ber. Then pour it in the bosom of thy friend;
Let me partake it with thee.

Mat. Generous maid!
Know, then, for nought will I conceal from thee,
I honour Mercia's earl, revere his virtues,
And wish I could repay him with myself:
But, blushing, I acknowledge it, the heart
His vows solicit, is not mine to give.

Ber. Has, then, some happier youth———

Mat. Another time
I'll tell thee all the story of our loves.
But, oh, my Bertha! didst thou know to whom
My virgin faith is plighted, thou wouldst say
I am, indeed, unhappy.

Ber. Could Matilda
Bestow the treasure of her heart on one
Unworthy of her choice?

Mat. Unworthy! No.
I glory in my passion for the best,
The loveliest of his sex. Oh! he was all
That bounteous nature, prodigal of charms,
Did on her choicest favourite e'er bestow.
His graceful form, and sweet deportment, spoke
The fairer beauties of his kindred soul,
Where every grace and every virtue shone.
But thou wilt tremble, Bertha, when I tell thee,
He is earl Morcar's brother.

Ber. Ha! his brother!
The noble Edwin! Often have I heard
My father———

Mat. Did lord Edrick know him, then?

Ber. He knew his virtues, and his fame in arms,
And often would lament the dire effects
Of civil discord, that could thus dissolve
The ties of nature, and of brethren make
The bitterest foes. If right I learn, lord Edwin
Is William's firmest friend, and still supports
His royal master.

Mat. Yes, my Bertha, there
I still find comfort: Edwin ne'er was stained,
As Morcar is, with foul disloyalty,
But stands betwixt his sovereign and the rage
Of rebel multitudes, to guard his throne.
If, nobly fighting in his country's cause,
My hero falls, I shall not weep alone;
The king, he loved and honoured, will lament him,
And grateful England mix her tears with mine.

Ber. And doth earl Morcar know of Edwin's love?

Mat. Oh, no! I would not, for a thousand worlds,
He should suspect it, lest his fiery soul
Should catch the alarm, and kindle to a flame,
That might destroy us all.

Ber. I know his warmth
And vehemence of temper; unrestrained
By laws, and spurning at the royal power,
Which he contemns, he rules despotic here.

Mat. Alas! how man from man, and brother oft
From brother, differs! Edwin's tender passion
Is soft and gentle, as the balmy breath
Of vernal zephyrs; whilst the savage north,
That curls the angry ocean into storms,
Is a faint image of earl Morcar's love:
'Tis rage, 'tis fury all. When last we met,
He knit his angry brow, and frowned severe
Upon me; then, with wild distracted look,
Bade me beware of trifling with his passion,
He would not brook it—trembling I retired,
And bathed my couch in tears.

Ber. Unhappy maid!
But time, that softens every human woe,
Will bring some blest event, and lighten thine.

Mat. Alas! thou know'st not what it is to love.
Haply thy tender heart hath never felt
The tortures of that soul-bewitching passion.
Its joys are sweet and poignant; but its pangs
Are exquisite, as I have known too well:
For, oh, my Bertha! since the fatal hour
When Edwin left me, never hath sweet peace,
That used to dwell, with all its comforts, here,
E'er deigned to visit this afflicted breast.

Ber. Too plain, alas! I read thy sorrows; grief
Sits in sad triumph on thy faded cheek,
And half obscures the lustre of thy beauties.

Mat. Talk not of beauty, 'tis our sex's bane,
And leads but to destruction. I abhor
The fatal gift. Oh! would it had pleased Heaven
To brand my homely features with the mark
Of foul deformity, or let me pass
Unknown, and undistinguished from the herd
Of vulgar forms, save by the partial eye

Of my loved Edwin; then had I been blest
With charms unenvied, and a guiltless love.
Ber. Where is thy Edwin now?
Mat. Alas! I know not.
'Tis now three years, since last these eyes beheld
Their dearest object. In that humble vale,
Whence, as I told thee, Malcolm's fury drove me,
There first we met. Oh! how I cherish still
The fond remembrance! There we first exchanged
Our mutual vows; the day of happiness
Was fixt; it came, and in a few short hours
He had been made indissolubly mine,
When fortune, envious of our happiness,
And William's danger, called him to the field.
Ber. And since that parting have ye never met?
Mat. O never, Bertha, never but in thought.
Imagination, kind anticipator
Of love's pleasures, brings us oft together.
Oft as I sit within my lonely tent,
And cast my wishful eyes o'er yonder plain,
In every passing traveller I strive
To trace his image, hear his lovely voice
In every sound, and fain would flatter me
Edwin still lives, still loves his lost Matilda.
Ber. Who knows but fate, propitious to thy love,
May guide him hither.
Mat. Gracious Heaven forbid!
Consider, Bertha, if the chance of war
Should this way lead him, he must come in arms
Against his brother: Oh! 'tis horrible
To think on. Should they meet, and Edwin fall,
What shall support me? And if victory smiles
Upon my love, how dear will be the purchase
By Morcar's blood! Then must I lose my friend,
My guardian, my protector—every way
Matilda must be wretched.
Ber. Is there aught
In Bertha's power?
Mat. Wilt thou dispatch, my friend,
Some trusty messenger with these?—Away.
[*Gives her letters.*
I'll meet thee in my tent—Farewell.
[*Exit Bertha.*
Mean time,
One hope remains, the generous Siward—he
Might save me still. His sympathetic heart
Can feel for the afflicted.—I have heard,
(Such is the magic power of sacred friendship)
When the impetuous Morcar scatters fear
And terror round him, he, and he alone,
Can stem the rapid torrent of his passion,
And bend him, though reluctant, to his will——
And see, in happy hour, he comes this way.
Now fortune, be propitious! if there be,
As I have heard, an eloquence in grief,
And those can most persuade, who are most wretched,
I shall not pass unpitied.

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Ha! in tears,
Matilda! What new grief, what cruel foe
To innocence and beauty, thus could vex
Thy gentle spirit?
Mat. Canst thou ask the cause,
When thou behold'st me still in shameful bonds,
A wretched captive, friendless and forlorn,
Without one ray of hope to soothe my sorrows?
Siw. Can she, whose beauteous form and fair demeanour
Charm every eye, and conquer every heart,
Can she be wretched? can she want a friend,
Whom Siward honours, and whom Morcar loves?
Oh! if thou knew'st with what unceasing ardour,
What unexampled tenderness and truth,
He doats upon thee, sure thou mightst be wrought
At least to pity.
Mat. Urge no more, my lord,
The ungrateful subject; but too well I know
How much thy friend deserves, how much, alas,
I owe him!—If it be earl Morcar's wish
To make me happy, why am I detained
A prisoner here; Spite of his solemn promise
He would restore me to my royal master,
Or send me back to the desiring arms
Of the afflicted Ranulph, who, in tears
Of bitterest anguish, mourns his long-lost daughter?
Surely, my lord, it ill becomes a soldier
To forfeit thus his honour and his word.
Siw. I own it; yet the cause pleads strongly for him.
If, by thy own too powerful charms misled,
He deviates from the paths of rigid honour,
Matilda might forgive. Thou know'st he lives
But in thy smiles; his love-enchanted soul
Hangs on those beauties, he would wish to keep
For ever in his sight.
Mat. Indulgent Heaven
Keep me for ever from it! Oh, my lord!
If e'er thy heart with generous pity glowed
For the distressed; if e'er thy honest zeal
Could boast an influence o'er the man you love:
Oh! now exert thy power, assist, direct,
And save thy friend from ruin and Matilda.
There are, my lord, who most offend, where most
They wish to please. Such often is the fate
Of thy unhappy friend, when he pours forth
His ardent soul in vows of tenderest passion;
'Tis with such rude and boisterous violence
As suits but ill the hero or the lover.
Siw. I know his weakness, know his follies all,
And feel them but too well: He loves with transport,
And hates with fury. Warmed with fierce desire,
Or strong resentment, his impetuous soul
Is hurried on, till reason quits her seat,
And passion takes the loosely-flowing rein;
Then all is rage, confusion, and despair.
And yet, when cool reflection hath removed

The veil of error, he will weep his faults
With such a sweet contrition, as would melt
The hardest heart to pity and forgiveness.
Oh! he has virtues that may well atone
For all his venial rashness, that deserve
A sovereign's love, and claim a nation's praise;
Virtues, that merit happiness and thee.
Why wilt thou thus despise my noble friend?
His birth and fortune, with the rank he bears
Among the first of England's peers, will raise thee
As far above thy sex, in wealth and power,
As now thou art in beauty.

Mat. Oh, my lord!
'Tis not the pride, the luxury of life,
The splendid robe and glittering gem, that knits
The lasting bonds of mutual happiness:
Where manners differ, where affections jar,
And will not kindly mix together, where
The sweet harmonious concord of the mind
Is wanting, all is misery and woe.

Siw. By Heaven! thou plead'st thy own and virtue's cause,
With such bewitching eloquence, the more
Thy heart, alarmed by diffidence, still urges
Against this union with my friend, the more
I wish to see him blest with worth like thine.

Mat. My lord, it must not be; for grant him all
The fair perfections you already see,
And I could wish to find, there is a bar
That must for ever disunite us—Born
Of Norman race, and from my earliest years
Attached to William's cause, I love my king,
And wish my country's peace: That king, my lord,
Whom Morcar wishes to dethrone; that peace,
Which he destroys: Had he an angel's form,
With all the virtues that adorn his sex,
With all the riches fortune can bestow,
I would not wed a traitor.

Siw. Call not his errors by so harsh a name;
He has been deeply wronged, and souls, like his,
Must feel the wounds of honour, and resent them.
Alas! with thee I weep my country's fate,
May wish, perhaps, as well to William's cause,
And England's peace, as can the loyal daughter
Of gallant Ranulph; and would, therefore, joy
To see Matilda lend a gracious ear
To Morcar's suit. Thy reconciling charms
Might soothe his troubled soul, might heal the wounds
Of bleeding England, and unite us all
In one bright chain of harmony and love.
The gallant Edwin too——

Mat. Ha! what of him?
Know'st thou that noble youth?

Siw. So many years
Have past since last we met, by different views
And our unhappy feuds so long divided,
I should not recollect him; but report
Speaks loudly of his virtues. He, no doubt,
If yet he lives——

Mat. Yet lives! why, what, my lord?

Siw. You seem much moved.

Mat. Forgive me, but whene'er
This sad idea rises to my mind,
Of brother against brother armed, my soul
Recoils with horror.

Siw. 'Tis a dreadful thought:
Would I could heal that cruel breach! but then,
Thou might'st do much; the task is left for thee.

Mat. For me? Alas! it is not in my power.

Siw. In thine, and thine alone. O think, Matilda!
How great thy glory, and how great thy praise,
To be the blessed instrument of peace;
The band of union 'twixt contending brothers.
Thou see'st them, now, like two descending floods,
Whose rapid torrents meeting, half o'erwhelm
The neighbouring plains: thy gentle voice might still
The angry waves, and bid their waters flow,
In one united stream, to bless the land.

Mat. That flattering thought beams comfort on my soul
Amidst my sorrows; bear me witness, Heaven!
Could poor Matilda be the happy means
Of reconcilement: could these eyes behold
The noble youths embracing and embraced
In the firm cords of amity and love,
Oh! it would make me ample recompense
For all my griefs, nor would I more complain,
But rest me in the silent grave, well pleased
To think, at last, I had not lived in vain.

Siw. Cherish that virtuous thought, illustrious maid!
And let me hope my friend may still be happy.

Mat. I wish it from my soul: but see, my lord,
Earl Morcar comes this way, with hasty steps,
Across the lawn. I must retire: farewell!
You'll not forget my humble suit.

Siw. Oh! no.
I will do all that loveliest innocence
And worth, like thine, deserve. Farewell: mean time,
Remember, Siward's every wish, the bliss
Of Morcar, Edwin's life, the public peace,
And England's welfare, all depend on thee.
[*Exit Matilda.*
There's no alternative but this; my friend
Must quit Matilda, or desert the cause
We have lavishly promised to support—perhaps
The last were best——both shall be tried——he comes.

Enter MORCAR.

Mor. O Siward! was not that
The fair Matilda, whom you parted from?

Siw. It was.

Mor. What says she? the dear, cruel maid!
Is she still deaf? inexorable still?

Siw. You must not think of her.

Mor. What say'st thou, Siward?
Not think of her!
Siw. No. Root her from thy heart,
And gaze no more. I blush to see my friend
So lost to honour: Is it for a man,
On whom the fate of England may depend,
To quit the dangerous post, where duty calls,
And all the business of the war, to sigh
And whine in corners for a captive woman?
Resume the hero, Morcar, and subdue
This idle passion.
Mor. Talk not thus of love,
The great refiner of the human heart,
The source of all that's great, of all that's good;
Of joy, of pleasure—if it be a weakness,
It is a weakness, which the best have felt:
I would not wish to be a stranger to it.
Siw. Let me entreat thee, if thou valuest life,
Or fame, or honour, quit Matilda.
Mor. Yes;
I thank you for your counsel. 'Tis the advice
Of cold unfeeling wisdom, kindly meant
To make me prudent, and to leave me wretched:
But thus it is, that proud exulting health
Is ever ready to prescribe a cure
For pain and sickness, which it never knew.
Siw. There, too, thou err'st; for I have known its joys
And sorrows too. In early life, I lost
The partner of my soul. E'er since that hour,
I bade adieu to love, and taught my soul
To offer her devotions at the shrine
Of sacred friendship; there my vows are paid:
Morcar best knows the idol of my worship.
Mor. I know and love thee for it: but Oh! my friend,
I cannot force this tyrant from my breast;
E'en now I feel her here, she sits enthroned
Within the foldings of my heart, and he,
Who tears her thence, must draw the life-blood from me.
My morning slumbers, and my midnight dreams,
Are haunted by Matilda.
Siw. To be thus
The slave of one, that scorns thee! Oh! 'tis base,
Mean, and unworthy of thee.
Mor. I will bear
That scorn no longer: thou hast rouzed me, Siward;
I will enjoy the glorious prize; she's mine,
By right of conquest, mine. I will assert
A victor's claim, and force her to be happy.
Siw. That must not be. It ill becomes the man,
Who takes up arms against a tyrant's power,
To adopt a tyrant's maxims; force and love
Are terms, that never can be reconciled.
You will not, must not do it.
Mor. Must not! who
Shall dare oppose me?
Siw. Honour, conscience, love,
The sense of shame, your virtue, and your friend.
Whilst I have life, or power, I will not see
Matilda wronged.
Mor. You are her champion, then,
It seems, her favoured, happy friend, perhaps
Her fond admirer, too. Ill-fated Morcar!
I see it but too well. I am lost, abandoned;
Alike betrayed by friendship, and by love.
I thank you, sir, you have performed your office,
And merit your reward.
Siw. Unkind reproach!
Did I for this desert my sovereign's cause,
My peaceful home, and all its joys, to serve
Ungrateful Morcar? Why did I rebel?
The haughty William never injured me.
For thee alone I fought, for thee I conquered;
And, but for thee, long since I had employed
My gallant soldiers to a nobler purpose,
Than loitering, thus, in idle camp, to hear
A love-sick tale, and soothe a madman's phrensy.
Mor. You could? Away, and leave me, then: withdraw
Your boasted aid, and bid Northumbria's sons
Bend to the tyrant's yoke, whilst I alone
Defend the cause of freedom, and my country.
Here let us part. Remove your loiterers,
And join the usurper.
Siw. Mark the difference, now,
Betwixt blind passion and undaunted friendship:
You are impatient of the keen reproof,
Because you merit: I can bear it all,
Because I've not deserved it.

Enter an Officer.

Of. Good my lords,
Forgive this rough intrusion; but the danger,
I trust, will plead my pardon. As I watched
From yonder tower, a dusky cloud appeared,
As if from distant troops advancing; soon
I saw their armour glitter in the sun;
With rapid motion they approached; each moment
We must expect them here.
Siw. Why, let them come!
Already I have ordered fit disposal
Of all our little force. Away, good Osmond,
Be silent and be ready. [*Exit officer.*
Now, my friend,
Thou art as welcome to thy Siward's breast,
As dear as ever. When the man I love
Walks in the paths of error, I reprove him
With honest freedom; but when danger comes
Upon him, I forget his faults, and flee
With all a lover's ardour to his rescue;
His sorrows and his wants alone remembered,
And all his follies buried in oblivion.
Mor. Thou hast disarmed me now. This pierces more
Than all the bitter poison of reproach,
Which thou hast poured upon me. Oh! 'twas treason
Against the sacred majesty of friendship,

To doubt thy honour, or suspect thy virtue:
Thou wilt forgive: but, when the wounded mind
Is torn with passion, every touch is pain;
You should not probe so deeply.
Siw. 'Twas my duty.
But come, no more of that. The foe advances.
If we succeed, as my prophetic soul
Foretells we shall——I have some comfort for you——
If not, we'll borrow courage from despair,
And die like men. Thou stand'st upon the rock
Of danger, and the yawning precipice
Opens before us; I will snatch thee from it,
Or leap the gulph, and perish with my friend.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A fortress belonging to* MORCAR.

EDWIN *alone (in chains.)*

Edw. IT is the will of Heaven, and must be done.
The hard-fought field is lost; and here I am
A prisoner in my brother's camp: alas!
That fortune thus should guide me to a foe,
Whom most I wished to shun! We little thought
The troops, by Morcar led, had this way bent
Their ill-directed course: but Providence
Hath so ordained, perhaps, to heal the wounds
Of civil discord. Oh! unhappy Edwin,
For what art thou reserved? No matter what.
Since fate deprived me of my dear Matilda,
Whom I for three long years have sought in vain,
Life hath been irksome to me: this, perchance,
May end it—for, who knows if nature yet
May live within the conqueror's breast, to plead
A brother's pardon! Yet he knows me not,
But soon he must—ha! who comes here? earl Siward!
The second in command, to whom, o'erpowered
By circling foes, and fainting with my wounds,
I yielded up my sword. If fame say true,
He bears a mind too great to look with scorn
On the oppressed, or triumph o'er misfortune.

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Stranger, whoe'er thou art, be comforted;
Thy fate hath thrown thee into noble hands,
Who know thy merit. May I ask thy name?
Edw. I am a poor abandoned wretch, the sport
Of fortune; one, whose last affliction is
To be a captive, and from every eye
Would wish to hide the story of my fate:
Too soon my name and sorrows will be known.
Siw. Respect is ever due to misery:
I will not urge thee further; all, I hope,
That generous pity could afford to soothe
Calamity, like thine, by my command,
Hath been extended to thee. Here, awhile,
You must remain a prisoner. But, ere long,
I hope to greet thee by a fairer name,
And rank thee as our friend.
Edw. Your generous orders
Have been obeyed, and I acknowledge it
With grateful heart. May I not ask the fate
Of him, who fought so nobly by my side,
That brave old man?
Siw. The gallant Ranulph——
Edw. Yes;
My fellow captive.
Siw. He is safe and free.
Edw. Ha! free! Thank Heaven!
Siw. The generous Morcar, urged
By my entreaties, pardoned and released him,
Though much our soldiers murmured, and demanded
His life and your's; a sacrifice, they said,
Due to the manes of their slaughtered friends;
But mercy has prevailed.
Edw. Whate'er becomes
Of an unhappy wanderer, like me,
For your kind treatment of the aged Ranulph,
Accept my thanks; it was a precious boon;
Morcar may find me not unworthy of it.
To-day I am his captive, but, to-morrow
May see me his deliverer: for, know,
My royal master, the victorious William,
With eagle swiftness, soon will follow me
With twenty times your force. As this shall prove
Or true or false, so deal with me; remember
I warned you of it.
Siw. And remember thou,
That I with joy receive the welcome news:
Welcome to me, for I am William's friend.
Edw. Thou canst not then be mine, or England's foe:
With such a heart as thine, so nobly formed
To feel for the afflicted, satisfied,
For so thou seemest, of William's royal right,
What could engage thee in this foul revolt,
This base rebellion?
Siw. What, but the great bond
Of kindred souls, inviolable friendship!
The only solid bliss on this side heaven,
That doubles all the joys of human life,
And, by dividing, lessens every woe.
Edw. Who knows but this day's sad event may prove
The happy means to heal a nation's wounds,
And soothe our jarring factions into peace?
Siw. Had Morcar thought with me, long since that end
Had been obtained; but Morcar is——
Edw. Inexorable;
So I have heard, and therefore little hope

To change his nature. O! could he be wrought
To sweet oblivion of his wrongs; to bury
His deep resentment; mine should be the task,
A task, Heaven knows, I would, with joy, perform,
To reconcile offended majesty;
To soften all his errors, plead his pardon,
And give my sovereign one brave soldier more.
Siw. When next we meet I trust it shall be so:
Meantime, let me prepare him for the change;
Retire a while—ere long we'll send for thee,
For every moment I expect him here:
Thy freedom and thy happiness shall be
My first concern, for thou hast well deserved it.
Edw. Farewell! Be quick in your resolves; the time
Requires it; and be wise ere 'tis too late.
[*Exit Edwin.*
Siw. [*Alone.*] I hope we shall. This well-timed victory,
If rightly used, may smooth our way to peace.
Now, Morcar, all thy happiness depends
Upon thyself alone. Now, friendship, raise
Thy powerful voice, and force him to be happy.
He will, he must—he comes——

Enter MORCAR.

Siw. My conqueror, welcome!
Mor. Thrice welcome to my arms, my noble Siward;
At length we meet in joy; the day is ours;
Thanks to thy friendly aid.
Siw. We must not boast;
'Twas hardly purchased, and has cost us dear:
You followed them too close.
Mor. I own 'twas rash;
My youthful ardour urged the keen pursuit
Too far; and, but for thee, I had been lost.
In war thy arm protects me, and in peace
Thy counsels guide. O! how shall I return
Thy goodness? Thou wert born to save thy friend.
Siw. Away! I'll not be thanked. I've done my duty,
And if thou think'st thyself indebted for it,
Repay me not with flattery, but with love.
E'er since my soul with thine congenial met
In social bands, and marked thee for her own,
Thy interest and thy happiness have been
My first ambition; and when thou art blest
With all thy soul can wish for, Siward, then,
And then alone, will have his full reward.
Mor. O, unexampled faithfulness and truth!
But say, my Siward, is our loss so great?
Siw. The flower of half our troops. But 'tis not now
A time to weep, for I have glorious tidings,
That much import thy happiness.
Mor. Ha! what?
Siw. Know, that amongst our captives, I have ta'en
A noble prize, will make us full amends
For every loss—the gallant Ranulph.
Mor. Ha!
Matilda's father! then I'm satisfied.
The wily chief! by Heaven he shall repay me
For her unkindness: Give him to my rage,
To my resentment, to my injured love.
Where is he, Siward?
Siw. I have set him free.
Mor. Ha! free! Thy ill-timed mercy hath betrayed
Our cause. The tyrant would have ransomed him
With half his kingdom.
Siw. Still thy rapid passions
O'erpower thy reason. What if it should serve
A better purpose; smooth thy paths to bliss,
And gain Matilda for thee!
Mor. O, my friend!
My Siward, do not flatter me: By Heaven,
Her kind consent would give my ravished soul
More true and heart-felt happiness, than could
A thousand victories o'er the proud usurper.
Siw. Know, then, I gave him liberty and life,
On these conditions—That he should withdraw
His powers from William's aid, and never more
Assist his cause; the time would come, I told him,
That he should know to whom he owed the boon,
And how he might repay it.
Mor. That was kind,
Indeed, my Siward; that was like a friend.
O! thou reviv'st my drooping heart; but tell me,
Did my Matilda, let me call her mine,
Did she acknowledge, did she thank thee for it?
Siw. O! I assumed no merit; but to thee,
And to thy generous, unexampled love,
Did I attribute all. She sighed, and wept,
Poured forth a thousand blessings on thy head.
Mor. And dost thou think, my Siward, that one ray
Of hope remains?
Siw. The clouds already vanish;
The prospect brightens round thee; haste and seize
The lucky moment. When the generous mind
Is soothed by obligation, soon it opens
To the mild dictates of humanity,
And softens into sympathy and love.
Mor. O, Siward! could'st thou teach me but to win
That lovely maid——
Siw. The task is half performed
Already, and my friend shall soon be blessed.
One thing, and one alone, remains to fix
Her doubtful heart, if yet a doubt remains.
Mor. O! name it, Siward; if 'tis in the power
Of wealth to purchase, or of victory
In the fair field of glory to acquire,
It shall not long be wanting.
Siw. It requires
No price, but such as Morcar well can pay;
No victory, but the victory o'er thyself,

And thy own passions—Give up thy resentment,
Make peace with William, and Matilda's thine.
Mor. Matilda mine! and must I purchase her
At the dear price of honour? with the loss
Of all my soul holds dear, my country's welfare?
My word——
Siw. Away! whilst prudence warranted
Our honest zeal, I was the first to aid
Thy just revenge; but valour ill-advised,
And ill-exerted in a hopeless cause,
Degenerates into rashness. You mistake
The pride of honour for the pride of virtue.
Mor. And would'st thou have me bend beneath the yoke
Of ignominious slavery, quit the cause
Of heaven-born freedom, and betray my friends?
Siw. I'd have thee just and happy—We have been
Successful, let us now be generous,
Whilst we have something to bestow; nor wait
Till fickle fortune from our brows shall tear
The blasted wreath, and leave us nought to give.
Too long already have we sacrificed,
At proud Ambition's altar, to revenge;
Now let us offer at the shrine of Peace,
And sacrifice——
Mor. To love, and to Matilda;
It shall be so—the struggle's past—away,
My Siward, haste, and tell her, I obey;
Her laws, her king, her master, shall be mine;
I have no will but her's, and in her eyes
Will read my duty—Yet a moment stay—
What will my brave companions of the war,
My fellow soldiers, say? Will they approve
This unexpected change?
Siw. I know them firm
In their obedience, and resolved to act
As you command—But I will see them straight,
And urge such powerful reasons as may best
Secure them to our purpose. Fare thee well.
Mor. Siward, thy kind anticipating care
Prevents my every wish—But say, my friend,
Where is the gallant chief whom we subdued,
Who fought so hardly, and so nobly fell?
Siw. In yonder tent, a wretched prisoner still;
He counts the tedious hours; a heavy gloom
Sits on his brow, as if some deep-felt sorrow
Oppressed his noble mind—We must release him.
Mor. Thou know'st, my Siward, thrice we had o'erpowered
His troops, and thrice his single valour turned
The fortune of the day: Since first I trod
The paths of glory, ne'er did I behold
Such deeds of valour wrought by mortal hand;
I almost envied, though I conquered him.
He wore his beaver up, nor could I trace
His features; but he bears a noble form:
Know'st thou his quality or name?
Siw. Not yet;
He seems industrious to conceal them both
From every eye.

Mor. Some deity protects him,
As its peculiar care; for, as I raised
My sword against him, whether the soft passion,
That triumphs o'er me, had unmanned my soul,
I know not; but, bereft of all its power,
My nerveless arm dropped ineffectual down,
And let him 'scape me.
Siw. 'Tis most true; I saw
And wondered at it. When you left the field,
With desperate rage he rushed intrepid on,
And seemed to court his fate, till circling foes
Compelled him to resign, and yield his sword.
Mor. Away! I burn with ardour to forgive,
To free, and to embrace him: fly, my Siward.
Let him approach; he could not wish to meet
In happier hour the master of his fate,
For now, methinks, I could be reconciled
To every foe. Away, my Siward, haste
And send him to me.
Siw. Treat him like a friend,
He may be useful. Such distinguished merit
Must have its influence; he commands, no doubt,
The royal ear, and may procure such terms
As William may with honour yield, and we
Without a blush accept. [*Exit Siward.*
Mor. Farewell! And now,
How stands the great account? Can I acquit
Myself, or shall I be condemned before
Thy great tribunal, all-repaying Justice?
But fair Matilda wipes out every stain;
'Tis she commands me to forgive, and she
Must be obeyed; I'm not the first apostate
From honour's cause the tyrant love has made.
My friend too urged the change—

Guards bring in EDWIN *chained.*

He's here—Strike off
Those ignominious chains—he has deserved
A better fate. [*Guards unchain him.*
Stranger, whoe'er thou art, [*Turning to Edwin.*
Thy gallant bearing in the unequal conflict,
For we had twice thy numbers, hath endeared
A soldier to a soldier. Vulgar minds
To their own party, and the narrow limits
Of partial friendship, meanly may confine
Their admiration; but the brave will see,
And, seeing, praise the virtues of a foe.
Edw. [*Aside.*] O, powerful nature, how thou work'st within me!
Mor. Still silent! still concealed! perchance thou fear'st,
Knowing thy rank and name, I might recal
My promised pardon; but be confident;
For, by that sacred honour, which I hold
Dearer than life, I promise, here, to free
And to protect thee: Didst thou hide from me
My deadliest foe; should William's self appear
Before me, he, who hath so deeply wronged me,
So long opposed; nay, should I hear the voice
Of that adventurous, rash, misguided youth,
Whom yet I cannot hate—my cruel brother,
I could forgive him.

Edw. [*discovering himself.*] Then—behold him here.

Mor. Edwin! Amazement! By what wondrous means,
Mysterious Providence, dost thou unfold
Thy secret purposes! I little thought,
When last we met, what heaven-protected victim
Escaped my sword.

Edw. With horror I recall
That dreadful circumstance. Throughout the battle
I knew, and carefully avoided thee.

Mor. O, Edwin! how, on this propitious day,
Have victory, fame, and friendship, fortune, love
And nature, all conspired to make me blest!
We have been foes too long—Of that no more.
My Edwin, welcome! Once more to thy arms
Receive thy brother.

Edw. Yet a moment stay:
By nature touched, the same accordant string,
That vibrates on thy heart, now beats on mine;
But honour, and the duty, which I owe
The best of kings, restrains the fond embrace
I wish to share, and bids me ask, if yet
In Morcar I behold my sovereign's foe.
If it be so, take back thy proffered freedom,
Take back my forfeit life: I would not wish
To be indebted for it to—a traitor.

Mor. Perhaps I may deserve a better name;
Perhaps I may be changed.

Edw. I hope thou art;
For this I came, for this I yielded to thee,
To tell thee William's strength is every hour
Increasing: if thou mean'st to make thy peace,
Now is the crisis—

Mor. Edwin, stop! nor urge
Such mean unworthy motives as alone
Could thwart my purpose. Morcar cannot fear,
But Morcar can be generous: for, know,
Before I saw thee here, I had resolved
To sheath my sword, and be the conqueror's friend;
For, O! there is a cause——

Edw. Whate'er the cause——
The effect is glorious. Now thou art again
My brother. Here, let us once more unite
The long-dissevered cord. [*They embrace.*

Mor. And never more
May blind resentment, faction, party, rage,
Envy, or jealous fear, dissolve the tie!
And now, my Edwin, blushing, I confess,
Not to thy tender care for Morcar's safety,
To friendship's council, or to reason's voice,
Owe we this wished-for change. A female hand
Directs and wills it.

Edw. Ha! a woman!

Mor. Yes,
If such I ought to call that form divine,
Which triumphs here, who rules my every thought,
My every action guides. In yonder tent
A beauteous captive dwells, who hath enslaved
Her conqueror: She demands the sacrifice;
She would not give her hand to William's foe,
And therefore, only, Morcar is his friend.

Edw. I could have wished, that this important change
Were to the hero, not the lover, due.

Mor. I am above deceit, and own my weakness;
But thou shalt see her—Yes, my Edwin, thou
Shalt bear the welcome tidings to my love.
Thy presence will bear witness to the change;
Thy freedom, and the joyful news thou bring'st
Of our blest union will confirm it to her,
Wilt thou, my Edwin?—

Edw. Do not ask me what
I must refuse. I would do much to serve
A friend and brother; but a task of joy
Ill suits a soul oppressed with griefs like mine.
O! I could tell thee—but 'twould be unkind,
When thou art entering on the paths of bliss,
To stop thee with my melancholy tale.

Mor. Whate'er thy griefs, I pity, and hereafter
May find the means to lessen or remove them;
Mean time, this tender office may divert
Thy sorrows; nay, if thou deniest me, Edwin,
I shall not think our union is sincere.

Edw. Then be it so.

Mor. I'll send a trusty slave,
That shall conduct thee to her. Soon I mean
To follow thee—away—begone and prosper.
But, O, my brother! if thou hast a heart,
That is not steeled with stoic apathy
Against the magic of all-conquering love,
Beware of beauty's power; for she has charms
Would melt the frozen breast of hoary age,
Or draw the lonely hermit from his cell
To gaze upon her.

Edw. Know, thy fears are vain;
For long, long since, by honour's sacred ties,
United to the loveliest of her sex,
Edwin, like Morcar, is to one alone
Devoted, and my heart is fixed as thine.

Mor. Then I am blest. Thy sympathetic soul,
With warmer feelings, shall express my passion,
Waked by the fond remembrance of thy own.
Go, then, thy kind returning friendship prove,
Go, plead with all the eloquence of love,
And, as thou dost thy brother's anguish tell,
Still on thy lips may soft persuasion dwell!
Urge my fond suit with energy divine,
Nor cease till thou hast made the lovely captive mine.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—MATILDA's *tent, with a distant view of the camp.*

MATILDA *and* BERTHA.

Mat. O, Bertha! I have had such frightful dreams!
They harrowed up my soul.
Ber. It is the work
Of busy fancy in thy troubled mind;
Give it no heed.
Mat. O! it was more, much more
Than fancy ever formed; 'twas real all;
It haunts me still, and every circumstance
Is now before me; but I'll tell thee all.
Scarce had I closed my eyes, to seek that rest,
Which long had been a stranger, when methought
Alone I wandered through a mazy wood,
Beset with thorns and briars on every side;
The mournful image of my wretched state:
When, from a winding walk, the beauteous form
Of my loved Edwin seemed to glide across,
And ran with haste to meet me: But, behold!
A tyger rushed between, and seized upon him:
I shrieked aloud.
Ber. 'Twas terrible.
Mat. But mark
What followed; for a gleam of light broke in,
And saved me from despair: When cross the glade
A generous lion, as with pity moved
At the unequal conflict, darted forth,
And sprung with vengeance on the spotted beast,
Who turned with fury on his natural foe,
And loosed my Edwin; he escaped, and fled:
I waked in agonies.
Ber. Be comforted;
The dream presages good: Some generous friend
Shall save him from the perils of the war,
And give him to thy longing arms again.
Mat. O never, never!

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Noble lady, one
From William's camp, by Morcar's orders sent,
Would crave a minute's conference, and says
He bears some news that may be welcome.
Mat. Ha!
From William's camp! O, flattering hope! who knows
But he may bring some tidings of my love!
Tidings, perhaps, I may not wish to hear.
Perhaps he comes to speak of Edwin's death,
Or Edwin's falsehood—Be it as it may,
I cannot be more wretched than I am.
Conduct him hither. [*Exit Officer.*
O, my fluttering heart!
Look yonder! how imagination forms
What most we wish for; see! he comes! It is,
It is my Edwin—Save me, Bertha! O!——
[*As he enters, she faints.*

Enter EDWIN.

Edw. What do I see? Matilda here! she faints!
Am I deserted, then? abandoned, lost,
Betrayed by her I love! She breathes, she lives!
But not for me—for Morcar! for my brother!
Mat. [*To Bertha.*] Where is he? O! it was delusion all;
The form deceived me. Had it been my love,
He would have flown with rapture to me—See,
He stands far off, and will not look upon me.
Edw. I dare not.
Mat. Is it thus we meet again?
Is this the kind, the tender, faithful Edwin?
Edw. Art thou Matilda? Speak—for I am lost
In wild astonishment. It cannot be.
In Morcar's camp! Is this the lovely captive,
That I should meet?
Mat. All-seeing Heaven,
Bear witness for me: If, from that sad hour
When last we parted, this devoted heart
Hath ever wandered, ever cast one thought,
Or formed a wish for any bliss but thee,
Despise me, Edwin; slight me, cast me off
To infamy and shame.
Edw. I must, I must
Believe thee; yet 'tis strange—when thou shalt know
From whom I came, and what my errand here.
Thou wilt not call me cruel or unkind,
When I shall tell thee I am come to claim
Another's right—O heaven! another's right
To my Matilda! to request thy hand
For Morcar.
Mat. For thy brother!
Edw. Yes, even now
We parted. Here, he told me, I should meet
A beauteous captive; little did I think
It was Matilda, whom he long had wooed;
Whose generous heart, he hoped, would now accept
A convert made to loyalty by love;
She only waited for that blest event,
With mutual ardour to return his passion.
Can it be thus? Alas! thy presence here
Confirms it but too well.
Mat. Appearance oft,
By strange events and causeless jealousy,
Confounds the guilty with the innocent.
But sure my Edwin's noble mind disdains
To cherish low suspicion; 'tis a vice
Abhorrent to thy nature, and Matilda
Will never practise it on thee. True love
Knows not distrust, or diffidence, but rests
On its own faith secure, and hopes to meet
The truth it merits.

Edw. Can this be the voice
Of falsehood? Can those lips——
Mat. Mistaken man!
Could'st thou e'er credit the delusive tale?
Could'st thou believe I had so soon forgot
My plighted faith? But, since I am suspected,
Return, and bear this answer back to Morcar.
First say, I thank him for the choice he made
Of thee to be the herald of his love:
For what is there Matilda can refuse,
That Edwin could request?
Edw. O! that recalls
A thousand tender thoughts——
Mat. Go tell him too,
Whate'er I rashly promised, but to gain
A few short moments, to preserve my king,
And save a father's life, I never meant
To feign a passion, which I could not feel;
For I was destined to another's arms;
To one, who now regardless of his vows
To poor Matilda, after three long years
Of cruel absence from her, comes, at last,
To doubt her honour, and suspect her love.
Edw. O! never, never!——Sooner will I doubt
The powers of nature, and believe these eyes
Can misinterpret every object here,
Than think thee false. O! take me to thy arms,
And bury all my doubts. Canst thou forgive
The jealous warmth of agonizing passion?
Mat. I can; I must. But say, to what blest chance
Am I indebted for this happy moment?
Edw. The chance of war. I am a prisoner here,
And but for thee——
Mat. When I shall tell thee all
That I have suffered, since we parted last,
Thou wilt not blame, but pity poor Matilda.
Meanwhile be calm; it is not now a time
For idle doubts and visionary fears,
When real dangers threat. I see already,
By thy imperfect tale, what misery
Must soon await us, when the fiery earl
Shall know this strange event.
Edw. And wherefore know it?
Why not conceal our passion, till some means
Of freedom offer?
Mat. I abhor the thought.
No, Edwin, no. The crisis of our fate
Approaches. Never let us stain our loves
With crooked fraud and base dissimulation.
Hark! didst thou hear a voice in yonder grove?
Siward in conference with the haughty earl;
Behold them——see—they part—and Morcar hastes,
With quick impatient step, to know his fate.
Now, summon all thy powers.
Edw. I am prepared.
He comes: a few short minutes will determine
Whether Matilda plays the hypocrite,
Or is deserving of her Edwin's love.

Enter MORCAR.

Mor. At length, I hope, Matilda's satisfied.
Edwin has told thee what a sacrifice
My heart hath made. Ambition, glory, pride,
And fierce resentment bend beneath thy power,
And yield the palm to all-subduing love.
Yes, thou hast conquered. I am William's friend;
The struggle's past. I have performed the task
Assigned, and come to claim my just reward.
Mat. By virtuous acts the self-approving mind
Is amply paid, nor seeks a recompense
From aught beside. You have redeemed your honour,
Turned to the paths of duty, and discharged
The debt you owe your country, and your king:
England and William will be grateful for it.
What can you wish for more?
Mor. There is a prize,
More welcome far, beyond whate'er a king
Or kingdom can bestow——thy love——
Mat. My lord!
Mor. If, to have saved thee from the brutal rage
Of pitiless ruffians; if, to have renounced
A victor's claim, and be myself the slave
Of her I conquered; if to have released
My bitterest foe, because allied to thee;
If, after all my cruel wrongs, to accept
The proud oppressor's hand, can merit aught,
I am not quite unworthy of the boon.
Mat. The good and just, my lord, demand our praise,
And generous deeds will claim the tribute due,
The debt of humble gratitude; but love,
Love, that must mark the colour of our days
For good or ill, for happiness or woe,
'Tis not the gift of fortune, or of fame,
Nor earned by merit, nor acquired by virtue.
All the rich treasures, which, or wealth or power
Have to bestow, can never purchase that,
Which the free heart alone itself must give.
Mor. Give it with freedom, then, to him, who most
Hath studied to deserve——
Mat. You talk, my lord,
As if the right of conquest could bestow
A right more precious, and a dearer claim;
But know, for now 'tis time to throw aside
The veil, that long hath hid from Morcar's eyes
The secret of my soul; and say, at last,
I never can be thine.
Mor. Ha! never! Oh,
Recall that word!
Mat. I must not: Edwin knows
There is a bar of adamant between,
That must for ever part us.
Mor. Ha! for ever!
Distraction! can it be? Take heed, Matilda,
I am not to be mocked thus. Oh, my brother!
Didst thou not hear her? But astonishment
Has closed thy lips in silence—Never mine!

And wherefore not be mine?
[*Turning to Matilda.*
Mat. Because I am
Another's—Well I know our hapless sex
(So custom wills, and arbitrary man),
Is taught, in fearful silence, to conceal
The honest feelings of a tender heart:
Else, wherefore should Matilda blush to own
A virtuous passion for the best of men?
Mor. A virtuous passion! grant me patience, Heaven!
I am betrayed, abandoned, lost. Another's!
Some fawning slave, some Norman plunderer,
Rich with the ravished spoils of English valour,
Hath snared her easy heart, and tortured mine.
But I will drag him from his dark abode;
Where'er he lurks, he shall not 'scape my vengeance.
Thou hearest her, Edwin.
Edw. Aye: Who would not wish
To hear the voice of nature, and of love,
Thus nobly pleading by the lips of truth?
Mor. Amazement! Thou art linked with the vile slave,
That hath usurped my right. All, all conspire
To make me wretched.
Edw. Why should Morcar think,
That lovely maid would act beneath herself,
And make so mean a choice? Now, on my soul,
I doubt not but the object of her love
Hath earned the glorious prize, and will be found
Deserving of it.
Mor. Thou know'st him, then?
Edw. I do;
Know him as brave, as noble as thyself:
One who would scorn, howe'er the outward act
Might seem unworthy of him, to do aught
That should disgrace his family and name.
A man he is of yet untainted honour,
Of birth and valour equal to thy own,
Though fortune frowns upon him.
Mor. Now, by Heaven,
But that I know thy eyes were never blest
With my Matilda's charms, I should suspect
Thou hadst betrayed the sacred trust reposed
In thy false heart, by unsuspecting friendship,
And wert thyself the traitor.
Edw. Think so still.
Let fancy, ever busy to torment
The jealous mind, alarm thee with the thought
Of seeing him, whom thou hast thus reviled.
Stand forth and dare the proof; suppose him here
Before thee, ready to assert his claim,
His prior right, to all the joys that love
And fair Matilda can bestow: Then look
On me, and know thy rival in—thy brother.
Mor. Confusion! horror! misery! O, Heaven!
Canst thou behold such complicated guilt,
Such unexampled perfidy, and yet
Withhold thy vengeance? Let thy lightnings blast
The base betrayer! Oh, Matilda! false,
Deceitful, cruel woman!
Mat. 'Tis the lot
Of unprotected innocence to meet
The cruel censure, which to guilt alone
Is due. I've not deceived, I've not betrayed thee;
And, wouldst thou listen to the artless tale
I could unfold———
Mor. Away! I will not hear,
Nor see, nor think of thee. Deceitful villain!
Was this thy kind concern for Morcar's safety?
Was it for this, that subtle Edwin came
A willing captive? Boasted William's strength,
And lured me to a base, inglorious peace,
That, like a midnight ruffian, he might steal,
Unseen and unsuspected, on my love,
And rob me of Matilda?
Edw. I abhor
A thought so mean; the bare suspicion stains,
With such foul blot, my honour and my name,
I will not deign to answer thee. My birth
Alone might prove to any sense but thine,
That I disdain it: 'Tis enough to say,
I am earl Morcar's brother.
Mor. I disclaim
All ties of nature, or of friendship, with thee,
And henceforth hold thee as my deadliest foe:
As such, I will pursue thee, slave; for, know,
Thou art my prisoner still.——Who waits there? Seize
And guard this traitor———
[*Guards enter, and seize on Edwin.*
Mat. [*Kneeling to Morcar.*] Oh, my lord! if e'er
Soft pity touched thy breast, if e'er thy heart
Felt the warm glow of sympathetic grief
For the unhappy, do not let the rage
Of thoughtless passion urge thee to a deed
Of horror, which, too late, thou wilt repent.
Oh, spare a guiltless brother! spare thyself
The bitter pangs of sad remorse, that soon
Shall harrow up thy soul, when radiant truth
Shall flash conviction on thee. Oh! forgive
And pity———
Edw. Rise, Matilda: 'Tis beneath
The dignity of innocence to kneel
Before proud guilt, and supplicate a tyrant.
Mat. [*Rising.*] I feel the just reproach—Forgive me, Edwin;
Henceforth, I never will disgrace thy love,
By mean submission, Morcar, if thou hop'st
For future peace, or pardon, set us free.
Mor. I'll hear no more; convey her to her tent.
Mat. Edwin, adieu! If honour, virtue, truth,
And mutual love, protect the innocent,
We yet shall meet in happiness—Farewell!
[*Exit Matilda, guarded.*
Mor. Let none have entrance there, but faithful Siward.
Would he were here, that I might pour my sorrows
Into his friendly bosom! Oh, Siward!
Where art thou?—Ha, he comes!

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. My lord, the troops,
Flushed with their late success, refuse all terms
Of peace with William, and cry out for war
And vengeance———
Mor. They shall have it. Now, by Heaven!
Thou bring'st me glorious tidings—Well, what more?
Siw. They have discovered that the noble prisoner,
Who had surrendered, is thy brother Edwin:
This hath alarmed them; they suspect you both
Of vile collusion, to betray their cause,
And yield them to the tyrant. If, they say,
You mean them fair, let Edwin be confined,
And answer for the treason with his life.
Mor. And so he shall: They could not ask a boon,
Which Morcar would more readily bestow;
Already their request is granted.—See,
The traitor is secured. All-seeing Heaven!
Thou seest how justice will o'ertake the wicked!
Siw. What can this mean? Since last I saw my friend,
How the fair day, that shone so bright upon us,
Is suddenly o'ercast!
Mor. Alas, my Siward!
When thou shalt know—but 'tis enough to say
Matilda's false, and Edwin is—a villain!
Siw. Amazement! can it be?
Mor. It is too true;
And I am lost for ever. Oh, Matilda!
Deceitful woman!
Siw. 'Tis not now a time
For idle plaints: consult your safety: fly
This moment to the camp—your presence there,
And that alone, may quell the rising storm:
Leave Edwin to my care.
Mor. I go, my Siward,
Safe in thy friendship; I entrust to thee
My just revenge. Yon mose-grown tower, that hangs
O'er the deep flood—'tis under thy command—
Place double guard—he must not 'scape—his fate
Shall be determined soon. Whate'er it prove,
It cannot be more wretched than my own.
[*Exit Morcar.*
Edw. [*Pointing to the guards.*] Where is my dungeon? my conductors here
Wait but your orders; give them their commission;
For you, it seems, sir, are to execute
The friendly office: do it, and be happy.
Siw. Guards, set your prisoner free—thou little know'st
Of Siward's soul, to think it joys in sighs,
That gives another pain. I have learnt too well,
In sad affliction's hard, but wholesome school,
The lesson of humanity.
Edw. O generous Siward, if thou hast a heart
To feel for others' miseries, pity mine,
And poor Matilda's: she has not deserved
A fate like this.
Siw. Alas! it rives my soul
To see the tender bonds of amity
Thus torn asunder, by the very means,
I fondly thought for ever would unite them;
And the fair structure, which my hopes had raised,
Of love and friendship, in a moment shrunk
From its weak base, and buried all in ruin.
If thou can'st prove thy innocence, as yet
I hope thou wilt, for in that noble mien
I read a conscious pride, that would not stoop
To aught that's base—still may I hope to heal
These bleeding wounds, and soothe him to forgiveness.
Mean time be free. Give me thy sacred word,
The soldier's oath, thou wilt be found where'er
I call upon thee; and yon tent alone
Shall be thy prison; free to range around,
Far as my guard extends.
Edw. Accept my thanks,
The humble tribute of a grateful heart;
'Tis all I have to give. The time may come,
When Edwin shall repay thee as he ought.
Siw. Is there aught more, which honour, and the duty
I owe my friend, permits me to bestow,
That thou would'st ask?
Edw. Oh! grant me to behold
That injured maid, to take my last farewell!
Then act as fate and Morcar shall determine.
I give the pledge of safety thou requir'st,
And will be found——speak, wilt thou listen to me?
Siw. Of that we will talk hereafter—come within
I'll hear thy story—thou but know'st me yet
As Morcar's friend; hereafter thou may'st find
I am still more the friend——of truth and virtue.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment belonging to* SIWARD, *opening to a wood.*

Enter EDWIN *and* MATILDA.

Edw. THANKS to the noble Siward's generous pity
For the distressed; once more we meet, Matilda,
But only meet, alas! to mourn our fate,
To feel each others woes, and to be wretched.
Mat. Eternal blessings wait on him, who thus
Could sweeten sorrow's bitter draught, and make
Captivity a blessing! Oh, my Edwin!
A few short moments, spent with those we love,
Is worth an age of common life.
Edw. With thee,
Indeed, it is; but we are on the verge
Of a dark precipice, and every step
Is dangerous. If Morcar should return,
And find us here together, we are lost
For ever; thou hast seen, and seen with horror,
The desperate rage of his tumultuous soul;
Let us avoid it, let us——
Mat. What, my love?
Thou art my guide, protector, guardian, all
I have to boast on earth. Oh! teach me where
To find some blest asylum for my woes,
And guide my footsteps to the paths of peace.
Edw. Let me entreat thee, then——
Mat. Oh, speak! thou know'st
I have no will but thine.
Edw. Then leave me, leave
This hated roof: I have a friend within,
Who shall conduct thee to the royal camp
In safety; bear this signet to the king;
He will protect thee, and whatever fate
Decrees for me, Matilda may be happy.
Mat. Oh! never, never! safety dwells with thee,
And thee alone. Without my faithful Edwin,
The peopled city, and the crowded court,
Would be a desert to me. No, my love,
We will not part: the same benignant power,
That led thee hither, that, beyond my hopes,
Brought my lost Edwin to these arms again,
Will still protect that virtue, which it loves.
Edw. Did'st thou not tell me, that this very morn
Thou had'st determined, as the only means
To shun my brother's love, on sudden flight?
Mat. But then I should have fled in search of thee.
Edw. Thou winning softness! how shall I reward
Such unexampled tenderness and truth!
Mat. By flying with me. Come, my love, lead on!
I'll follow thee to dangers and to death;
Nor perils shall affright, nor labours tire,
When thou art with me.
Edw. No: It must not be.
Mat. Why? What should keep thee here?
Edw. The ties of honour.
Mat. And are they stronger than the bonds of love?
Edw. To Siward's kind indulgence, well thou know'st,
I owe this little interval of peace,
This transient gleam of happiness with thee;
And should I break my sacred word, his life
Might answer for it; would'st thou have me thus
Repay his kindness? No, my love; I may
Be wretched, but I cannot be ungrateful.
Mat. Must thou return, then, to that hateful prison,
When Morcar comes?
Edw. I must. Oh! think, when I
Am pent within a loathsome dungeon, who
Shall shelter, then, thy unprotected virtue?
No Edwin there to succour thee: who knows
What brutal lust and power may dare to act,
On a deserted, beauteous, friendless woman?
Distracting thought! A monarch's vengeance then
Would come too late; would make me poor amends
For my Matilda's violated charms.
Mat. He cannot be so mean, so base of soul;
Or, if he should, I have a dagger here
To save me from dishonour.
Edw. What! by death?
Dreadful alternative! Oh! hazard not
Thy precious life, but seize the lucky moment,
Which fortune gives us, ere it be too late.
Mat. Urge me no more; already I have felt,
Too deeply felt, the pangs of absence from thee:
Another separation would be worse
Than death, and all its terrors. No, my love;
We are embarked on a tumultuous sea,
And must abide the fury of the storm.
The waves of angry fortune may o'erwhelm,
But shall not part us: we will stem the torrent,
Brave the proud ocean's rage, and gain the harbour
Of peace and happiness, or sink together.
Edw. Thou hast foretold the tempest, and behold
It rushes on us.

Enter MORCAR *and* HAROLD.

Mat. Ha! earl Morcar here!
Mor. Harold, I thank thee; thy intelligence
Was but too true.
Traitor! who set thee free? [*Turning to Edwin.*
They would have escaped my vengeance—false Matilda!
'Tis thus I am rewarded for my love,
My ill-timed mercy to a thankless brother.

Back to thy dungeon, slave! guards, drag him hence,
To prison, and to death! [*To the soldiers.*
Edw. Or death, or life,
Are equal to me, if I must be torn
From my Matilda. But, whate'er thy purpose,
Be speedy in thy vengeance, nor delay
The cruel work; for know, thy master comes,
William approaches—to revenge my cause.
Mor. But not to save thee.
Edw. Then, farewell, Matilda,
Perhaps for ever—if we meet no more,
Thou wilt remember—but I will not doubt
Thy honour, or thy love. I know thy truth;
Know thou wilt act as best becomes thy fate,
Whate'er it be, and worthy of thyself.
Mat. Of thee, my Edwin, rather say, of thee.
Yes; I will copy well thy bright example;
I'll not disgrace thy love with woman's weakness,
But part without a tear. I will but stay
To tell thy tyrant brother how I hate,
How I despise him, and then follow thee.
Mor. I'll hear no more—begone! away with him. [*Exeunt guards with Edwin.*
Mat. What for me remains
I know too well; thy odious love, reproach
Unmerited, and threats, which I despise.
Thou think'st I have deceived thee—think so still.
Enjoy thy error. Thou believ'st us guilty;
'Twill make thee happy now. Perchance, to find
Us innocent, may be thy punishment hereafter.
Mor. Aye, 'twas a proof of innocence to fly,
Thou and thy paramour together.
Mat. No;
I scorn a thought so mean. Could I have left
My Edwin, long ere this I might have been
Beyond the reach of tyranny; beyond
Thy hated power; and safe beneath the wing
Of sacred majesty, in William's care.
Mor. In William's care!
Mat. Thy conqueror's—for know
The hero comes—to scatter blessings round him,
To heal his country's wounds, chastise rebellion,
And punish false perfidious slaves like thee.
Mor. By Heavens! she braves my wrath, insults my weakness,
And triumphs o'er her slave.
Mat. There was a time,
When, with an eye of pity, I beheld
Thy hopeless love; when I concealed my passion
For the dear idol of my heart, because
I feared 'twould make thee wretched; but thy rage,
Thy cruel treatment of a guiltless brother,
Has cancelled all.
Mor. Then, mark me: If thou hop'st
For Edwin's freedom, shake off this vile passion;
Yield thy proud heart to him, who best deserves it,
And meet me at the altar—Two hours hence,
I shall expect thee there—Beyond that time,
He may not live to thank thee for thy bounty.
Mat. Then let him perish—glut thy tyrant soul
With vengeance: bathe it in a brother's blood.
All ruffian, all barbarian, as thou art,
Thou canst not murder his immortal fame:
Thou canst not rob him of Matilda's love.
But know—when he, for whom alone this pulse
Would wish to beat, this lazy blood to flow
Within my veins—when he shall be no more,
Another life shall satiate thy revenge;
Another victim shall attend thy triumph.
Mor. Thou talk'st it nobly—'tis the common trick,
The affectation of thy sex, to boast
A fancied firmness, which ye never knew;
But with affrighted nature thou wouldst shrink,
When death approaches.
Mat. Put me to the proof.
If thou wouldst punish Edwin, know he lives
Within this breast—strike home, and pierce him there.
Mor. Imperious woman! thou defy'st my power,
And let it crush thee. If thy country bleeds
In every vein; if perjured Edwin falls,
As soon he shall, a victim to my rage;
Thou art the murderer; thou the parricide.
I stand absolved; the guilt is all thy own.
Mat. If it be guilt to suffer keen reproach,
Pain, persecution, terror, chains and death,
For him I love, rather than stain my soul
With foul disloyalty, I am indeed
The guiltiest of my sex, and well deserve
The pangs I feel.
Mor. Thou'st driven me to the pit
Of black despair, and I will drag thee down,
To share the dreadful ruin thou hast made.
Mat. I know thy savage purpose; but, remember,
The hour approaches, when thou shalt repent
This base, unmanly triumph. William comes:
Hear that and tremble, thou unnatural brother!
Nor rocks, nor caves, shall hide thee from his vengeance;
Inglorious, and unpitied, shalt thou fall,
And after ages shall consign thy name
To endless scorn, and infamy immortal.
[*Exit Matilda.*
Mor. Inexorable judge! I stand condemned,
And shall await my doom; but not alone,
Or unrevenged, shall Morcar fall—henceforth
I bid adieu to love, and all his train
Of fond delusions. Vengeance! I am thine,
And thine alone: Thou daughter of despair!
Destructive goddess! come, possess my soul
With all thy terrors—Yes; it shall be so.
A few short hours are all that niggard fate
Will deign to spare me; I'll employ them well,
For I will crowd into the narrow circle
A little age of misery and horror.
Ha! Siward here! what brought thee hither?

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Pity
For the distressed. I knew thou wert unhappy,
And came where duty called, to pour the balm
Of friendship in, and heal thy wounded heart.
Mor. O, they have pierced too deep; even thou, my friend,
Thou hast betrayed me: was it not unkind
To set my prisoner free; to let him meet
Matilda, and conspire against my life?
Siw. Impossible! by Heaven, the artful story
He told, so wrought upon my easy soul,
I thought him innocent.
Mor. Hast thou not heard—
Siw. From Harold only an imperfect tale;
So strange I could not credit it.
Mor. Alas!
'Tis all too true: I am the veriest slave,
The meanest wretch, that e'er was trampled on
By an imperious woman: O, my friend!
My Siward! I have nought on earth but thee:
Shouldst thou forsake me in this hour of terror!
But sure thou wilt not!
Siw. No: whate'er the will
Of wayward fortune may determine for us,
Behold me ready to partake thy fate.
If we must sue for peace, let Siward bear
The olive for thee: if once more we cast
The desperate dye of battle, let me perish
By Morcar's side. Come, let us on together;
Shake off this load of unavailing sorrow,
And seek the field; there, if we fall, we fall
With honour: if we rise, we rise to—glory.
Mor. Talk not of glory to a wretch like me,
Bereft of every hope. There was a time,
When that enlivening call would have awaked
My active spirit, and this drooping heart
Bounded with joy; but, my Matilda lost,
Revenge alone——

Enter a Messenger to SIWARD *with letters.*

Siw. From Walstcoff these?
'Tis well—retire. [*Exit Messenger.*
Reads.]——How's this? then all is lost.
He writes me here, that William's fame in arms,
Spite of his cruel and oppressive laws,
Hath raised him friends in every part: already
The northern rebels are dispersed, and thousands
Flock to the royal standard. To resist
Were madness.
Mor. And to yield were cowardice
More shameful.
Siw. What must we resolve on?
Mor. Death:
The wretch's only hope, the wished-for end
Of every care: but I would meet him clothed
In all his terrors, with his reeking spear,
Dipt in the blood of an ungrateful mistress,
And a false happy rival: Then, my Siward,
Shalt thou behold me welcome the kind stroke,
And smile in agony.
Siw. Unhappy youth!
The storm beats hard upon thee; but our fate
Will soon be fixt, for William comes to-morrow.
Mor. To-morrow! ha! then something must be done,
And quickly too. If William comes, he comes
To triumph over us: then, my Siward, who
Shall punish Edwin? who—shall wed Matilda?
I cannot bear it—If thou lov'st me, Siward—
For now I mean to try thy virtue—swear
By all the powers, that wait on injured honour,
Whate'er my anxious soul requests of thee,
Thou'lt not refuse it.
Siw. By the hallowed flame
Of sacred friendship, that within this breast,
Since the first hour I sealed thee for my own,
With unremitted ardour still hath glowed,
I will not—Speak, my Morcar, here I swear
To aid thy purpose.
Mor. 'Tis enough; and now
Come near, and mark me: Thou command'st the tower
Where Edwin is confined.
Siw. I do.
Mor. Methinks
It were an easy task—you understand me—
Justice is slow, and William comes to-morrow.
Thy friendly hand——
Siw. My lord!——
Mor. Thou tremblest——Well, another time, my Siward,
We'll talk on it—shall we not? Thou mean'st to do
As thou hast promised?
Siw. Certainly.
Mor. Then speak,
And do not trifle with me.
Siw. Sure, my lord,
You cannot mean to——
Mor. Is he not a villain?
Siw. I fear he may be so.
Mor. A hypocrite?
Siw. He hath, perhaps, deceived you, and deserves——
Mor. To perish.
Siw. No; To suffer, not to die;
Or, if to perish, not by Morcar's hand,
Or Siward's—Oh! 'tis horrible to shed
A brother's blood——
Mor. A rival's.
Siw. Nature——
Mor. Love——
Siw. Humanity——
Mor. Matilda——
Siw. [*Aside.*] Gracious Heaven!
That passion thus should root up every sense
Of good and evil in the heart of man,
And change him to—a monster!
Mor. Hence! away!
And leave me—From this moment I will herd
With the wild savage in yon leafless desert,
Nor trust to friendship—but another hand——

Siw. [*Musing.*] Ha! that alarms me—then it must be so;
And yet how far———
Mor. You pause.
Siw. I am resolved——
Mor. On what?
Siw. To serve, to honour, to—obey you.
Edwin shall ne'er disturb thy peace again.
Mor. O glorious instance of exalted friendship!
My other self, my best, my dear-loved Siward—
Conscience! thou busy monitor, away
And leave me—Siward, when shall it be done?
To-night, my Siward, shall it not?
Siw. Or never.
Mor. Let me but see the proud Matilda weep;
Let me but hear the music of her groans,
And sate my soul with vengeance—For the rest
'Tis equal all. But tell me, Siward, say,
How shall I know the bloody moment? What
Shall be the welcome signal?
Siw. When thou hearest
The solemn curfeu sound, conclude
The business done—Farewell. When I return,
With tears of joy thou shalt my zeal commend,
And own, that Siward was indeed thy friend.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Gothic hall.*

Enter MORCAR *and* HAROLD.

Mor. TREASON and foul rebellion in my camp!
But I was born to be for ever wretched,
The sport of fortune. These base mutineers—
Har. Your presence on the battlements, my lord,
Dispersed them soon; they hung their heads in silence,
And all is peace.
Mor. [*Aside.*] It is not so within.
Would it were done, or——
Har. What, my lord?
Mor. No matter.
What urged my soldiers to rebel?
Har. 'Tis thought
The gallant captive did, by secret means,
Excite them to revolt.
Mor. It must be so.
By Heaven! thou makest me happy with the tidings:
His head shall pay the forfeit.
Har. Whilst he lives
We are not safe.
Mor. No more we are, good Harold;
'Tis fit he perish, is it not? What say'st thou?
Har. Prudence demands his life to save your own.
Mor. Oh! thou hast given such comfort to my soul——
Har. My lord——
Mor. Be watchful: Bring me early notice
Of every motion. Go. [*Exit Harold.*
Or I must fall,
Or Edwin.—Hence! ye visionary fears;
Ye vain chimeras, hence!—It is no matter:
Conscience, I heed thee not; 'tis self-defence,
Nature's first law, and I must stand acquitted.
The prudent Siward seemed to hesitate,
As if he wished, but knew not how to shun
The office. He, who could behold my tortures
With all that cold tranquillity, would ne'er
Have ventured to remove them. But I've trusted
The sword of vengeance to a safer hand.
What ho! Who waits?

Enter an Officer.

That soldier, whom thou saw'st
In private conference with me, is he gone
As I directed him?
Offi. My lord, even now
I saw him hastening toward the tower.
Mor. 'Tis well.
When he returns, conduct him to me—Stay;
If Siward comes this way, I'm not at leisure:
I will not see him [*Starts*]. Hark! didst thou not hear
The solemn curfeu?
Offi. No, my lord.
Mor. Not hear it!
It shocks my soul with horror—Hark! again!
Hollow and dreadful! Sure thy faculties
Are all benumbed.
Offi. Indeed, I heard it not.
Mor. Away! and leave me to myself.
[*Exit Officer.*
Methought
I heard a voice cry—stop—it is thy brother!
We loved each other well; our early years
Were spent in mutual happiness together:
Matilda was not there—I do remember
One day, in sportive mood, I rashly plunged
Into the rapid flood, which had well nigh
O'erwhelmed me; when the brave, the gallant Edwin
Rushed in, and saved me.—Shall I, in return,
Destroy my kind preserver? Horrid thought!
Forbid it, Heaven! [*Pauses.*] I am myself again.
All powerful nature! once more I am thine.
He shall not die—Who's there?

Enter an Officer.

My Oswald! fly,
Fly to the tower this moment, haste and save
My brother—Some base ruffian——
Offi. If, my lord,
You mean the noble prisoner there, I fear
It is too late: This moment, as I passed

The citadel, I saw a mangled corse
Drawn forth by Siward's order——
Mor. Slave, thou liest!
Away this moment, bring me better news
On peril of thy life! [*Exit Officer.*
Who knows, but Heaven,
In gracious pity, still may interpose,
And save me from the guilt? It is not done;
It shall not—must not be—All's quiet yet;
I have not heard the signal. [*The bell tolls.*
Hark! he's dead:
My brother's dead!—Oh! cover me, ye shades
Of everlasting night! Hide, if ye can,
A murderer from himself. Ha! see, he comes:
His wounds are bleeding still! his angry eyes
Glare full upon me! Speak—what wouldst thou have?
Matilda shall be thine—He smiles, and leaves me——
[*He pauses, and recovers himself.*
'Twas but the error of my troubled soul.
Oh! guilt, guilt, guilt! [*Throws himself down.*
Here will I lay me down,
And end my days in bitterness and anguish.

Enter SIWARD.

Who's there? Ha! Siward here! [*Rises.*
Speak, murderer, speak!
Where is my brother? Villain, thou hast snared
My soul; my honour's stained, my fame destroyed,
And my sweet peace of mind is lost for ever!
Siw. Matilda will restore it.
Mor. Never, never!
The price of blood! No: Could Matilda bring
The vanquished world, in dowry with her charms,
I would not wed her. O! could I recall
One hasty moment, one rash, cruel act—
But 'twas thy savage hand that——
Siw. I received
Your orders: 'Twas my duty to obey them.
Mor. Where slept thy friendship then? Thou know'st despair
And madness urged me to it—but for thee—
Thy callous heart had never felt the pangs,
The agonies of disappointed love;
Thou did'st not know Matilda—Cursed obedience!
How often has thy insolence opposed
Thy master and thy prince! how often dared
To thwart my will, and execute thy own:
But, when I bade thee do a deed of horror,
And shed a brother's blood—thou could'st obey me.
Siw. Away! this is the trick of self-delusion,
The common cant of hypocrites, who rail
At others' guilt, to mitigate their own.
I've been the mean, the servile instrument
Of thy base vengeance; but thou had'st prepared
Another, a low ruffian, to perform
The bloody office; I detest thee for it,
Despise, abhor thee.
Mor. Thou wert once my friend.
Siw. Henceforth I am thy foe—Thou hast destroyed
The best of brothers, and the best of men.
Mor. Despised by Siward—then my cup of sorrow
Is full, indeed—But this shall—
[*Attempts to kill himself, Siward wrests the sword from him.*]
Ha! disarmed!
But coward guilt is weak as infancy;
It was not so before I murdered Edwin.
Siw. The murderer's punishment should be to live,
And shall be thine; thou know'st not half thy guilt,
Nor half thy sorrows: I shall read thy soul.
Prepare thee for another deeper wound,
And know that Edwin loved thee! In his hand,
Whilst mine was lifted up for his destruction,
I found this paper; 'tis the counterpart
Of one he had dispatched to William: read it,
And tremble at thy complicated guilt.
Mor. [*taking the paper.*] What's here? He pleads my pardon with the king,
Ascribes my frantic zeal, in Edgar's cause,
To ill-advised warmth, and recommends
His murderer to mercy! Horrid thought!
I am the vilest, most abandoned slave,
That e'er disgraced humanity—O Siward!
If thou hast yet, among the dying embers
Of our long friendship, one remaining spark
Of kind compassion for the wretched Morcar,
Lend me thy aid, to shake off the sad load
Of hated life, that presses sore upon me.
Siw. Though thou'rt no longer worthy of my friendship,
Deaf to the cries of nature, and the voice
Of holy truth, that would have counselled thee
To better deeds, yet hath my foolish heart
Some pity for thee—After crimes, like these,
There is but one way left. Say, wilt thou patient wait
Till I return?
Mor. I will.
Siw. Remember, Morcar,
You promised me—I have a draught within,
Of wondrous power, that in a moment lulls
The tortured soul to sweet forgetfulness
Of all its woes: I'll haste and bring it thee;
'Twill give thee rest and peace. [*Exit Siward.*
Mor. I hope for ever.
But where's the lost Matilda? who shall comfort
That dear unhappy maid, whom I have robbed
Of every bliss. O, save me from the sight,
Ye pitying powers!

Enter MATILDA.

She comes—distraction!
Mat. Oh!
My lord, permit—
Mor. Away—I know thee not.

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From these polluted hands, one precious gift?
'Twill make thee full amends for all thy wrongs.
Accept her, and be happy.
[He joins the hands of Edwin and Matilda, then turning to Siward,
That vile slave
Whom I employed—
Siw. I guessed his horrid purpose,
Watched every step, and as the villain aimed
His poniard at the guiltless Edwin's breast,
Turned sudden round, and plunged it in his own.
The bloody corse was dragged—
Mor. I know the rest.
O, Siward! from what weight of endless woe
Hath thy blest hand preserved me!
Edw. O, my Matilda! how shall we repay
Our noble benefactor? Much I owe
To gallant Siward, but to Morcar more:
Thou gav'st me life, but my kind, generous brother
Enhanced the gift, and blessed me with Matilda.
Mat. [*To Morcar.*] Words are too poor to thank thee as I ought;
Accept this tribute of a grateful heart,
These tears of joy; and, O! may every curse
My frantic grief for Edwin poured upon thee,
Be changed to dearest blessings on thy head!
Mor. Alas! thy blessings cannot reach me. Guilt
May plead for pardon, but can never boast
A claim to happiness: I only ask
A late forgiveness. If a life of sorrow,
And deep remorse, can wash my crimes away,
Let them be buried, with me, in oblivion,
And do not curse the memory of Morcar.
[Turning to Edwin.
O, Edwin! say, canst thou forgive the crime
Of frantic love, of madness and despair?
Edw. As in my latest hour from Heaven I hope
Its kind indulgence for my errors past,
Even so, my brother, from my soul, I pardon
And pity thee.
Mor. Then I shall die in peace.
Edw. Talk not of death, my brother; thou must live
To see our happiness complete, to hear
My sweet Matilda pour forth all her heart
In rapturous thanks to thee, and to thy friend;
And grateful Edwin bless thee for thy bounties.
Mor. It must not be: I know too much already,
Of Morcar's weakness, and Matilda's power;
They are not to be trusted. No, my Edwin,
Morcar shall never interrupt thy joys.
Far from thy sight, and from the haunts of men,
In some deep distant solitude retired,
To pious sorrow will I dedicate
My short remains of wretched life, and strive
To make my peace with Heaven and wronged Matilda.
And if, perchance, in after-times, some bard,
Struck with the native horrors of my tale,
Should bid the historic muse record it—let him,
By my example, teach a future age
The dire effects of loose, unbridled rage;
Teach thoughtless men their passions to controul,
And curb the sallies of the impetuous soul,
Lest they experience worse than Morcar's woe,
Nor find a Siward—to prevent the blow.
[Exeunt omnes.

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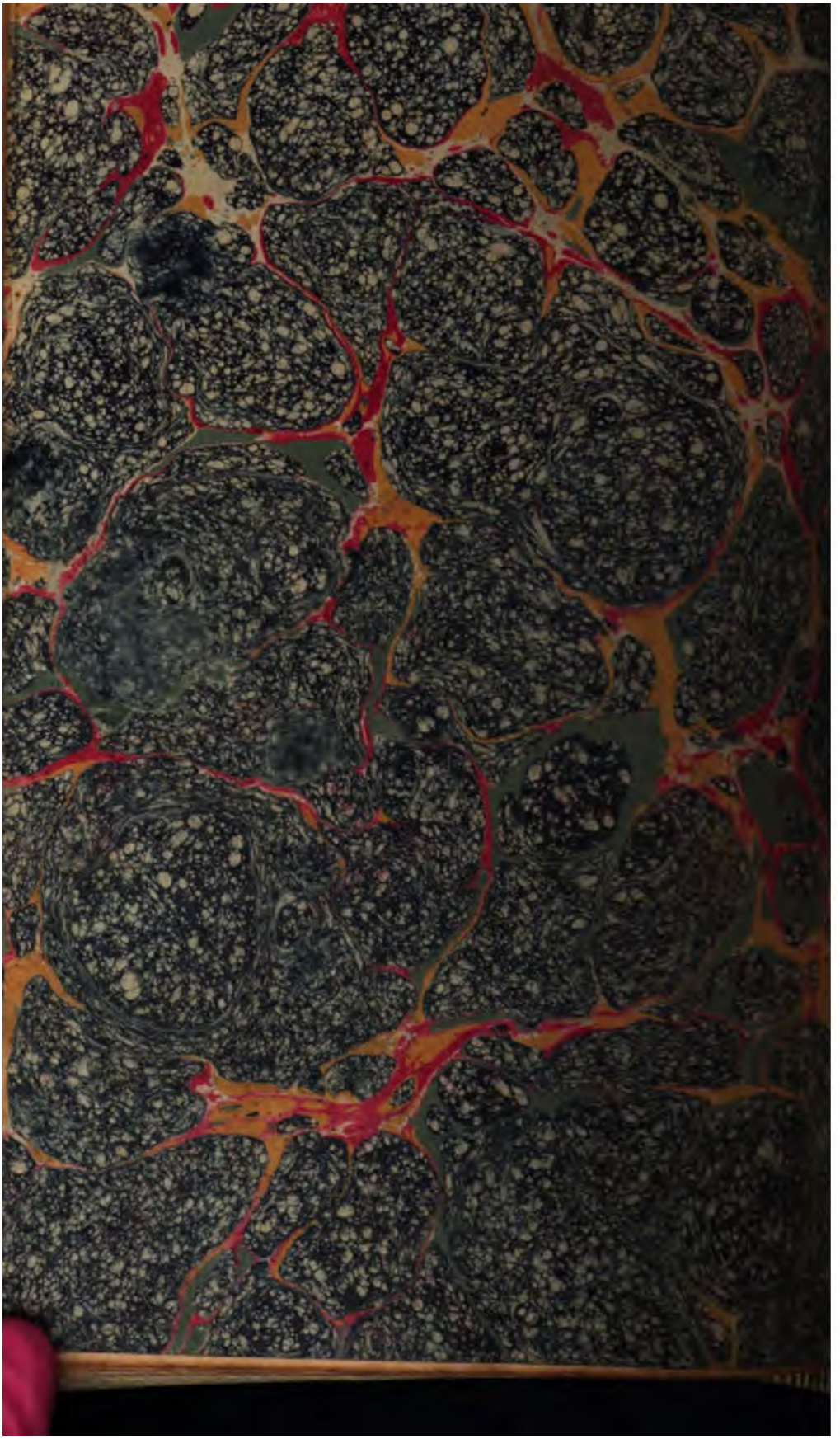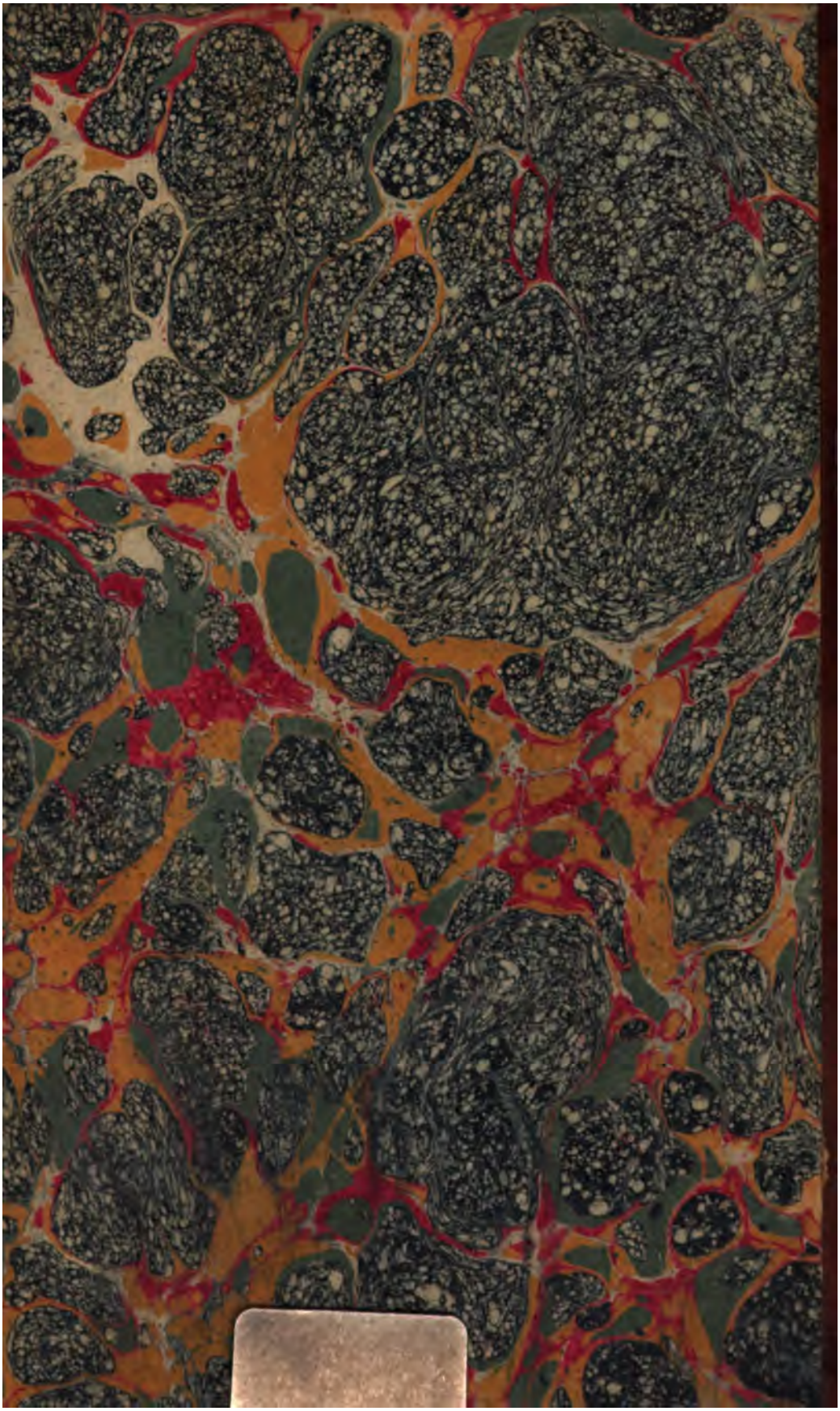
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